

“All rise!” The bailiff’s call roused the gathered Arconans from their seats as the wide double doors opened, letting the Shadow Lady enter into the courtroom. Dressed in a black gown complete with a black cap, the miraluka passed along the nave with calm, steady steps before taking up her position at the bench.

The bailiff, a grim-faced Iktotchi named Decima, slammed the hilt of her warglaive onto the stone floor and the gathered crowd finally took their seats. One shape, however, towering over the rest like a hairy pillar of justice, remained standing. Dressed in a similar black gown as Atyiru and with a curled, if somewhat disheveled white tangle of a wig on his head, Kelviin the Wookiee stood as the prosecution with his trusty datapad in hand to act as translator.

Sitting to his right behind the defence’s desk, Tali Sroka had eschewed her usual attire for the court-demanded black dress. However, unlike the unsightly atrocities against fashion that both the Wookiee and their blind judge wore, hers was far more form-fitting and elegant. The Arconan justice system was so archaic and built on layers upon layers of procedure and decrees that getting this change to proper court attire sanctioned had been a court case in its own right. However, in her mind it was all worth it, as being fashionable was already half the victory.

Their Miraluka judge picked up the ceremonial hammer and banged it twice against her desk, signaling the commencement of the proceedings. Receiving a folder from the bailiff, she opened it while clearing her throat before reading out the charges.

“Tali’s lekku, you are hereby formally charged with one case of willful manslaughter. How plead you?”

Tali stood up from her seat, brushing the creases from her dress and adjusting her hat before replying. “Your honor, my client pleads Not Guilty.”

“Very well then. Prosecution, you have the floor.” The Miraluka’s face did not betray any emotion one way or another as she picked up the hammer once more and banged it against the desk. “The court is now in session.”

The wookiee, who had remained standing thus far mostly due to the fact he found it very awkward to sit on the ceremonially small chairs provided to both the defence and prosecution, nodded and strode towards the center of the courtroom. “Rrrawwr. Raawwr-raw-raaaaw...” He began, gesturing calmly with his hands as the courtroom fell silent under a spell of utter confusion before the translator finally kicked in and began to drone in its monotone voice.

“[YOU HONOR, WHO HAS PRETTY EYES-FOLD. PROSECUTION MAINTAINS LEKKU DID DELIBERATELY, CALLOUSLY AND WITH BEASTLINESS OF FORETHOUGHT CAUSE THE DEATH OF ONE XAVIER SPENDABLE, BOTHAN SPY WORKING FOR ARCONA AS FREE-LANCER.]”

The courtroom audience gave a collective gasp of shock upon hearing the accusation, some murmurings about what this whole rigmarole was even about faintly audible afterwards.

“These are serious accusations, Prosecutor.” Atyiru spoke from her podium. “Do you have any evidence to support that claim?”

“[YES, YOU HONOR.]” Kelviin replied via his translator. “[PRESENT EXHIBITION A.]”

The Miraluka gave a soft smile and cleared her throat. “It’s pronounced Exhibit, dear.”

Momentarily perplexed, the gray-haired Wookiee gave a boyish blush before correcting himself.
“[PRESENT EXHIBIT A.]”

A holoprojector was hauled into the courtroom, man-handled personally by the bailiff who dumped the manhole cover -sized device in the middle of the room with a grunt of exertion, muttering something about Wookiee tech under her breath. The projector sputtered to life after Kelviin applied a few gentle rotations of a hand-crank attached to its side and began to play what looked like a security recording from an Ol'val bar.

The pale blue holograph image showed a crowded dance floor next to a bar counter where a number of patrons, in varying states of inebriation, were busy dancing to the hottest tunes. Among them was a scruffy looking Bothan, wearing brown pants and a red shirt, much in the guise of a nerf-herder. As he made his way through the crowd, moving his body in half-hearted attempts at dancing, he passed by an enthusiastically bouncing Twi'lek who seemed to be boogying down with wild abandon. The Bothan made an attempt to rouse her attention and ask for passage, but the Twi'lek seemed oblivious to his speech, most likely due to the blaring sound of the loudspeakers nearby. As he tired of his attempts and began to move past her, however, the Twi'lek's head snapped sharply to the side in tune with the beat and one of her lekku slapped the man in the muzzle with surprising force.

Letting out a cry and clutching his face, the man stumble backwards and toppled over, twisting in mid-fall to land face-first on the bar counter amidst stunned patrons. For a few shocked moments the man lay upon the counter, his body twitching and spasming before it ceased all motion, a dark trail of blood welling up from beneath his chin where an unfortunately placed tab-spike had impaled him with lethal consequence.

The audience in the courtroom gave a shocked gasp as the recording ended, showing the Twi'lek clasping her hands to cover her mouth alongside the rest of the club's patrons, much like she was now. As the shocked moments of silence dragged on, the Tali finally managed to regain a semblance of self-control.

“Yes, ve are all shockedt andt apalledt by the tragedyt displayedt here, but if anything, the true culprit shouldt be the club andt the bartender that left the tab-spike in such a location.” She retorted, earning some murmurs from the audience. “Although my client deeply regrets the loss of life andt has already made provisions to send tail-warmers to the surviving next of kin, they maintain that this vas but an unfortunate series of events in which no such maliciousness, as claimedt by the prosecutiyon, can be displayedt.”

The Wookiee nodded sagely before groaning some more. “Wrawraaah wraaa wrah. Rrrrawr wraw rrrraaawr! Wrrawr wraa rrrawr wraaaawh whraa...”

“[BOLLOCKS]” The machine summarized courtly to a stunned audience.

“Objection, your honor! Prosecution is slandering the defendant!” Tali cried out as she covered her lekku with her hands in a vain attempt to stop them from hearing the synthesized voice.

“Sustained.” Atyiru sighed, striking the podium with her mallet before turning to look at the Twi'lek. “Prosecutor, would you please elaborate on your claims, or else your previous comment will be stricken form court records.”

Tali and Kelviin glanced at each other and silently changed places before the Wookie typed in his reply. “[WILL EXFOLIATE... EXTRAPOLATE... ELABORATE.]” The hulking grey pillar of fur gave a boyish grin before typing in a few more words. “[FINGER SLIP ON PAD.]”

The Miraluka waved her hand in a gesture for him to proceed and the Wookie proceeded to uncover a second datastick which he placed into the projector and played the second recording.

The scene was once again from the club, though the timestamp identified it about fifteen minutes prior. The angle showed the camera having been situated behind the bar counter against which Tali was leaning. While she swayed her body gently to the tune of the music, idly Hoovering up the dregs of her cocktail, her lekku kept on twisting this way and that until suddenly, seemingly at random, the left one reached out and wrapped around the tab-spike, pulling it closer to the counter's edge where it let go and proceeded to sway normally once more.

The recording ended as Tali put away her cocktail and headed to the dancefloor.

A ripple of shocked gasps raced through the audience, a sign of stunned disbelief at what they had just witnessed. Even if it had been an accident, the lekku had been far more implicated in it than one might originally have expected. The Defence was up for a serious up-hill struggle.

Tali could not believe her eyes upon seeing the recording and for a moment she thought it must have been faked, but even though her memory of that night was a tad hazy, she recalled that moment in time and knew it was a possibility that she, nay, her lekku might have done such a thing. However, that was not incriminating evidence and she knew it. She had not taken a whole afternoon off to study law on the HoloNet to be bested by such trickery!

Clearing her throat and stepping forward once more past the increasingly pleased looking Wookie, Tali crossed her fingers with her lekku mimicking the motion and turned to address the audience for dramatic effect. “Esteemed Judge, the Defence acknowledges the Prosecution's evidence and does not attempt to disclaim it, however, the Defence requests that the esteemed Judge recount the necessary burden of proof required for conviction in matters of manslaughter or murder.”

Atyiru sat in stunned silence for a moment before nodding ever so slowly. “Very well, attorney Sroka, however I hope you are going somewhere with this, since let me remind you that wasting the court's time is a punishable offence.” She replied before turning to the bailiff to fetch the Book of Arconan Judgement.

The Iktotchi bowed and disappeared for a moment before returning amidst heavy grunts of exertion, hauling a roughly Kordath-sized tome of ancient parchment which she bench-pressed onto the blind Miraluka's podium. The woman nodded her thanks to the profusely sweating bailiff as she gently levitated the book to the left by an inch or so and swung it open down the middle.

A high definition computer screen flickered to life within the tome and allowed the Judge to swiftly find the necessary laws governing capital offences. Her unseeing gaze observing the glowing lines of text upon the tome-screen for the required amount of time, she turned her attention towards the Wookie.

“As concerns the Prosecution's burden of proof in matters of capital offence, the need to establish Venue, Weapon, Identity and Motivation are paramount for judgement to be rendered.” Atyiru spoke in a clear, calm tone, her finger tracing the line of text upon the screen.

“Precisely, your honor, and though the Prosecution has managed the first three, it has crucially failed to deliver the fourth. Motivation. And this is where the Prosecution will fail, since there is no motivation for my client to have murdered the victim. They did not know each other, nor did my client have any prior history of such acts. There is not even a single shred of evidence to support this act having been anything but a series of unfortunate events.” Tali declared victoriously. “The Defence rests.” She announced with a beaming smile as a couple people behind her clapped enthusiastically, but were quickly silenced.

Kelviin nodded thoughtfully, pacing back and forth in front of his desk and picking up a glass of water provided for him and emptying half of it in one go. Pausing, he shook his index finger like he’d come up with something and headed back behind his desk to rummage through a worn satchel. Bits and bobs of various mechanical knickknack and paraphernalia clattered on the floor, much to the chagrin of the bailiff who knew she’d be tasked with cleaning it all up after the trial, before the victorious Wookiee held aloft yet another datapad and let out a bellowing roar. The datapad helpfully translated the exclamation as: “[YES.]”

“[STEAMED JUDGE. PROSECUTION PRESENT EVIDENCE OF MOTIVATION.]” The datapad explained as the Wookiee proceeded to growl and grunt around the holoprojector until yet another surveillance feed showed a very familiar Twi’lek walking around a busy conference hall among many other visitors.

“Vh... How do you even have access to all of these tapes?!” Tali blurted, earning herself a stern look from the blind Miraluka.

“One more interruption from you, attorney Sroka, and I shall hold you in contempt and have your name stricken from my birthday invitation list!” The Judge declared sharply before turning back to the adorable Wookiee. “Go on, dear.”

“Justice may be blind, but not Too blind...” Tali muttered under her breath, folding her arms in a pout.

“What was that, attorney Sroka?” The Miraluka inquired sharply.

“Erm, nothing! Nothing! Please, Prosecution, you have the floor.” The Twi’lek hurriedly replied as the Wookiee finally un-paused the feed.

What was shown was Tali walking around the convention halls, enjoying the exhibitions of Twi’lek and Togruta fashion, and seemingly having a regular day off. As the tape kept rolling, the Miraluka seemingly enthralled by this evidence, Tali could not help but grow weary of it all.

“Esteemed Judge, if I may, what is the Prosecution’s point with all of this?” She inquired as politely as she could manage.

“[TO SHOW MOTIVATION.]” Kelviin replied bluntly as he stopped the footage just as Tali was about to leave, the camera showing her back as she headed for the doors. “[CRUCIAL. FOCUS.]” He declared as he continued the recording at a reduced pace. Seemingly almost frame-by-frame, the footage showed Tali heading for the doors where she passed by a stand for another, up-coming convention that seemed neglected by almost everyone present.

As she slipped past, her lekku moved on their own to snatch a brochure from the stand and proceed to leaf through it as the Twi’lek walked away, blissfully unaware of what was transpiring literally behind her back.

"T-that is certainly a very oddt thing for them to do, I vill admit, but this hardly..." Tali began, but was silenced by a sharp "Ssssh!" from the Judge who was by now pointing her hammer at the Twi'lek.

"[EXCELLENT 'SSSH' YOU HONOR.]" Kelviin commended with a bow before returning to tinkering on the holoprojector and zooming in upon the booth in question. "[HERE IS MOTIVATION.]" He declared as the grainy picture filtered in to show the unmistakable insignia of the Iron Throne!

"[STEAMED JUDGE, HAVE REPORT FROM CONGRESS CENTER ON PAST INHIBITION... EXHIBITION. AFTER LEKKU-LINE FASHION SHOW, IRON THRONE POLITICAL RALLY.]" The synthetic voice spoke in its breathless monotone as the Wookiee let out jubilant cries, turning to point at Tali's face with a long, hairy finger. "Rraw-ruuu! Rraw-ruuu!"

"[J'ACCUSE. J'ACCUSE.]"

The room exploded in gasping, a few of the frailer men fainting upon the revelation which was by now as clear as day. The Prosecution had just proven that Tali's lekku were, in fact, Iron Throne sympathizers!

"Order! Order! I shall have order!" Atyiru cried out in her soft voice, banging the hammer upon her podium until the attending crowd had gasped their last. "Attorney Sroka, this is some very convincing evidence levied upon your client. What say you in their defence?"

"Ummm..." Tali was stunned for words, glancing up at her own lekku in shocked disbelief. Surely this couldn't be true? Her own lekku?!

"The Defence's argument has been catalogued and dismissed as gibberish." The Judge declared matter-of-factly before turning to look at the Wookiee once more. "Well done, *Special* Prosecutor, an excellent, watertight case."

Kelviin beamed a smile at the praise, letting out a series of affectionate grunts which the datapad dutifully translated. "[KELVIIN AM SPECIAL.]"

Returning to address the entire courtroom, she adjusted her hat and grabbed the hammer. "Having seen all the evidence presented today and after measured and collected contemplation, taking into account the nuanced realities of life and different cultural viewpoints, I hereby find the defendant guilty as charged on one account of murder, 1st degree. As punishment for these heinous crimes, the defendant is sentenced to death." She slammed the hammer onto the desk and the secretary recorded the judgement as final.

The stunned Twi'lek was too shaken to even attempt to challenge the ruling as the bailiff advanced upon her, holding out a pair of lek-cuffs. "N-no, this has to be a mistake! I-I... My client didn't do it! Please, your honor, there must be something ve can do to settle this!" Tali cried out loud, but her protests fell on deaf ears as Decima closed in to cuff the sentenced lekku.

As the Iktotchi leaned in to grab the squirming appendages, one of them suddenly slapped her across the face while the other dived low, curling around the grip of a blaster pistol on her belt and pulling it out in one rather incredible feat of lek-based dexterity that even surprised Tali herself. "L-lekku?" She muttered, but fell silent as she felt the cold steel of the blaster pistol's muzzle against her temple.

"Nngh-nobody move!" Decima shouted, one hand clutching her face as the trained warrior assessed the hostage situation to the best of her ability, trying to find a way to disarm the captor.

Tali looked up at the purple appendages hanging on either side of her head, but felt the muzzle press harder against her head as she did so. "I-I can't believe you'd do this!" She spat as surprise and shock melted into hot anger. "*Et tu, mi lekku?*"

The left lek, unburdened by armaments, shifted before her face and twisted swiftly through a trio of poses that held meaning only to Twi'leks and Togruta. "It's a reference." Tali sighed, the lek proceeding to move once more. "To a famous betrayal." She added. "Is this really the ti..." Her words were cut short by another poke from the gun against her brow.

The lek proceeded to go through another series of writhing poses before finally halting and drooping limply by her side, clearly exhausted. "My client, erm, captor wishes to tell you that they demandt 200 000 unmarkedt credits andt a shuttle. Something sporty, where it can feel the solar vinds."

The Judge looked at her with a stunned expression as the Twi'lek shrugged. "I know, I know, but that's vhat it demandt."

Sighing, Atyiru slammed her hammer onto the podium once more. "Blackmail sustained. Bailiff, have the credits sent onto our fastest shuttle and let the hostage go."

Decima let out a low growl, but bowed her head, letting the slowly walking Twi'lek move past her as she headed for the door, the lekku still holding her at gunpoint. Just as they passed Kelviin's table, however, the Wookie suddenly grabbed his half-empty water glass and dumped the contents upon the floor, just in front of Tali's step.

The elegant high heels she'd chosen to wear to the court case held precious little friction against the damp floor and she lost her balance in a mighty flip, landing roughly on her back with a yelp of pain. The blaster pistol, loosened from the lekku's grip by the impact, clattered harmlessly to the side as Decima took the moment to immediately charge the stunned criminal and snap the lek-cuffs in place with a metallic 'clack' of finality.

A roaring applause exploded from the audience as Tali was hauled up to her feet and the bailiff began to walk her lekku away towards the cell that awaited, the Twi'lek deciding to follow rather than be forcefully separated from them on the spot. As the Miraluka beamed a proud smile upon the resourceful Prosecutor, the Wookie bowed and took off his wig, beginning to wipe the floor clean with it of the water he'd spilled.

Catching this from the corner of her eye, Tali realized something in that crucial moment. Her eyes lighting up with a glimmer of hope, she yelled "OBJECTION!" The entire courtroom fell silent and even Decima halted in her tracks as Atyiru turned to face the insubordinate Twi'lek.

"That is IT, Ms.Sroka! I will hold you in contempt and..." The Judge began, but was cut off by the brazen Twi'lek.

"Your Honor, please, inspect the Prosecutor's wig!" She cried.

"What?"

"The wig! Kelviin, show us your wig!" Tali demanded, the confused Wookie blinking slowly as he held up the damp tangle of fabric in one hairy hand.

“Ugh, I shall consider it your client’s last wish...” Atyiru groaned and leaned forward to accept the wig, which Kelviin duly provided. As her deft fingers inspected the fabric and its clumped folds, her expression grew from dreary to troubled, then disturbed, before she finally turned to Kelviin with a dire tone. “Prosecutor... Please tell me this is not a mop.”

“Rawruu!” “[IS MOP.]”

“Why, Special Prosecutor Kelviin? Why would you do such a thing?” Atyiru sighed, already knowing where this was going.

“[AM FORGET RENT WIG. SHOP CLOSE EARLY. BORROW MOP. IS SAME.]” He replied with an innocent smile.

“Ah-ha! The Prosecution admits that it did not wear appropriate attire for the trial!” Tali shouted victoriously. “Your honor, I motion to dismiss all charges on grounds of gross misconduct by the Prosecution in matters of wardrobe and etiquette!”

Atyiru rested her brow against her head for a moment before letting out a defeated sigh and letting the hammer in her hand fall limply upon the podium. “Sustained.”

As the last attendants to the shambles of a court case filed out of the courtroom, Tali signing the official verdict vindicating her client of all charges, Kelviin approached the tired Judge. “Raaaawwr?”

“[PERMISSION TO APPROACH JUDGE?]”

“Sustained, Kelviin.” Atyiru sighed.

“[AM HAVE QUESTION.]” Kelviin’s datapad translated his next series of growls.

“Yes, what is it?” The Judge inquired with a weary tone.

He hesitated for a moment before letting out a pair of short grunts. “[AM STILL SPECIAL PROSECUTOR?]”

Turning her head to look at the hulking Wookiee, the Miraluka shook her head ever so slightly before nodding. “Oh yes, you’re very special, alright...”