

## **Selen's Song Frigate**

### **The outskirts of Nancora System**

**Timeros Entar Arconae stood in the shuttle bay with his former apprentice standing a few steps behind him, holding stock still but narrowing her eyes slightly as he glanced over his shoulder at her. Hardly a handful of words had passed between them in the week since her return. The Adept was unsure what to think of her now but refused to give it more than a passing thought, so long as she obeyed without question. K'tana gave it even less. She had no concerns about how the Human viewed her and no concept of why she should. All she knew right now was that her insides itched to get into the fray.**

**Atyiru was dead. Maenaki had told her before sending her away. The Seeker had let the words slip with such hesitation, keeping K'tana at arm's length as she did so, and the Twi'lek had no idea why. The fate of Arcona's late Consul meant nothing to her. She merely shrugged and asked why it mattered. For some reason that had made Mae smile, but K'tana didn't care about that either. All that mattered was that it was war and someone would send her to fight for Arcona.**

**When the Sephi halfbreed told the K'tana to return to Timeros, the Twi'lek obliged without question. Upon resuming her place at his back, the Elder bequeathed her with a datapad and, again, the news of his sister's death. He did not meet her gaze as he spoke, instead focusing on the empty desk before him. She took the datapad, told him she knew and left to catch up on more important matters.**

**Now the Twi'lek took her place as the Lord Arconae's Shadow in the shuttle bay, awaiting the contact that would get them on board the *Braga*.**

*"Do you remember when we rode the Ryn down the halls of the Citadel?"*

**K'tana's fiery gaze glazed over as she tried to remember. Over the last few weeks she came to terms with the fact she couldn't recall whose voice spoke to her, but when the Shadow heard it, she could remember... *things*. Things that had been extracted from her mind to protect her. Things that had once been hers. Things that had been violently ripped away. The voice came to her in its soothing way, washing over her with it's calming and steady manner. With it came images of furry streaks, white flashes of teeth, laughter and a white headtail. They came in rapid bursts that K'tana couldn't grasp for longer than a heartbeat, but once she remembered she knew she could recall them again.**

**She held the image of the lek in her mind, seeing its disfigured form, how it twisted and turned in upon itself, weaved together with blue and gold fabric.**

**The sound of a ship approaching knocked her from her reverie, her attention snapping back to the shield of the shuttle bay. Timeros glanced over his shoulder at**

her again, and she nodded to him, signaling that she was ready. Once inside, the small vessel powered down and a short man with a crooked nose approached. He stood a few inches taller than the Twi'lek, who still hadn't moved, but dwarfed by the towering corpse-like build of the Elder. Grey speckled the closely cropped chestnut hair and gave way to a thinning spot near the back of his head. His eyebrows were thick, but not disheveled. A cybernetic optics system implant covered his right eye, and a large scar split his lip into a permanent grimace.

K'tana caught herself noticing these things and stopped it. It was irrelevant information that would do nothing for her in the future, so she looked to Timeros for guidance.

"Report," his voice was thin and sharp as a razor, but level and calm. The traitor held up a datapad, handing it to the Entar but it was quickly snatched away by the violet Twi'lek as she abruptly shouldered past the Elder and took a few steps closer to the former Technocrat. Timeros hadn't even attempted to reach for the device, allowing the small woman to do her duty as his weapon and shield.

"There's an access point to the starboard side. This external area is the only thing that was damaged in Arcona's last attack, and the outer defenses were destroyed. Internally there will be a small army, including whatever droids and turrets the *Braga* has inside that area. We should have little to no issue cutting through them."

K'tana turned her fiery gaze to the man, narrowing her eyes threateningly.

"What does this part of the ship contain? How much of a threat should we expect?"

The older man glared back at her but pointed at the datapad, indicating that she view the attachment.

"The blueprints are encoded in the attached page. The entry point should be connected to a series of barracks. You'll need to go through most of the army to get to...well, wherever it is you're trying to go." His voice was gruff, betraying the age and wear of the years he spent fighting alongside the enemy.

The Shadow forced a smile to her face, nodding as she asked; "anything else?"

"Yeah, my payment. The Tech-" his voice abruptly cut off as K'tana's lightsaber snapped into her palm and was swiftly thrust through his windpipe. He gurgled once as her blade withdrew and he slumped to the floor. Without hesitation, the Shadow turned to Timeros, noting his passive glance from the body and back to her.

"I don't trust this. It's too easy," K'tana hissed, glancing at the corpse and turning to face the newly acquired ship.

**“Underestimating them would be a mistake. Even if they are... mundane.”** Timeros, had he been capable of contempt, might have allowed it to drip acerbically when he spit the word. But the Arconae had more control than that, and his voice remained cold as stone.

**“Understood.”** The Twi’lek pulled her cloak over her lekku, wrapping them up and around her neck as the fabric draped over her brow. **“Just don’t forget that I cannot, and will not, protect your corpse.”**

Timeros said nothing as they boarded the *Veropal*.

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**“You’ve learned to fly.”**

K’tana understood that it wasn’t a question, and didn’t bother to answer. She merely dropped out of hyperspace and maneuvered the light freighter towards the *Braga*, giving Timeros a sideways glance as she flicked a switch that cut the vehicle's shields. With another switch, the Twi’lek activated the stealth drive.

**“This is the same style that Mae’s ship was. Less aesthetically pleasing, but that’s to be expected. She had a droid train me on the basics of piloting and maintenance. But should we get into a fight or a chase with another ship, I wouldn’t suggest thinking that I will be able to get us to safety. The chances are likely that this is a one-way trip. Though I suspect you knew that.”**

Timeros understood that wasn’t a question, and didn’t bother to answer. They would both do their duty. His to the Clan, and hers to him.

**“We got lucky,”** K’tana said, pointing ahead to the silhouette in the distance. The massive ship appeared to be facing away from them.

*“Do you remember the night we drank together until dawn?”*

The same laughter as before rang through her mind, flashes of skin-tight dresses and a burning sensation in the back of her throat. The Shadow swallowed it down, shaking the distraction away as the image of white bangs against dark skin sped away.

**“What is it?”** Timeros’ voice brought her back to the moment, and K’tana pointed out the main window, towards the looming vessel.

**“It’s turned from us. I have two options. I can drive this little hunk of metal into their vulnerable side, or we drop out of stealth and send them a message.”**

**She turned to look at Timeros. His pale blue eyes were locked on the abyssal view that surrounded them. The void of blackness was as empty and emotionless as he was. K’tana thought that they both had more in common with the vacuum than they did with anything else.**

**“Lord Arconae?”**

**“How quickly can you get into a suit?”**

**“Not anywhere near fast enough to be of use.”**

**“Then hail them.”**

**“I... this was a man’s ship.”**

**“A traitor’s ship.” He tore his eyes from the distant vessel, locking them onto the fiery gaze of the woman before him. She gave a dismissive sniff as she dropped the stealth cloak, turning away and flicking on the comm device.**

**“*Braga*, this is the *Veropal*, requesting permission to board.”**

**“State your designation number and mission.”**

**K’tana held her hand out, not taking her eyes off the ship before them. Timeros handed her the datapad, and she scanned it quickly. She gave the Adept a look that said “this works, or we die,” then promptly recited a series of designation numbers.**

**“Mission statement was the retrieval of captives.”**

**The Shadow and the Adept waited for lights to flash and death to take them. The silence between them and the *Braga* rivaled that of the silence between the stars that filled the vastness of darkness before them.**

**“Welcome back, *Veropal*. Glad to have you safely back and hope your mission was a success.”**

**A burst of energy hit the Twi’lek and, without knowing why, she turned and winked at Timeros, sticking her tongue out like a child. A flash of emerald touched her eyes too fast for the Elder to register and the expression was gone almost as quickly, being immediately replaced by a look of confusion. He watched her give her head a shake and then press the comm again.**

**“Copy that. See you soon, *Braga* command.”**

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**“Let me go first.” K’tana motioned to the exit as she slipped past the Adept. He looked down at her, watching as she checked and adjusted her equipment. His wordless response was enough for the Shadow to turn and look up at him.**

**“I’m quiet. I can move quickly and unseen. I can get to the dock command, bypass vetting and access the rest of the deck for you. From there-”**

**“From there, you will meet me on the engine deck,” Timeros said, nodding his acquiescence and gesturing towards the door. As the door opened and the ramp descended, the Twi’lek was already disappearing from view and leaping to the deck. The Adept heard the soft thunk as she landed and then nothing. A brief glimmer of distorted light caught his eye as he watched the door.**

**“*Veropal*, we request you exit the ship.” Timeros heard the comm and made his way back to the cockpit. He pressed the button and thought quickly.**

**“On our way, just gathering the captives. We will exit momentarily.”**

**K’tana’s silent boot heels barely made a whisper as she darted down the hall between droids and crew members, drawing no attention as she moved past. A few people turned to give a second glance to the blur they believed they saw, but she was already gone by the time they locked their eyes on the place she had been. Holding her concentration on staying out of visual comprehension while darting between the paths of others was difficult and straining. Yet she had practiced this for years, whether she remembered it or not.**

**She approached the dock command, turning her back to the door so she could monitor the hall, and pressed the entrance button with her elbow. The door opened, and four startled men scrambled as the empty corridor greeted them.**

**“What the?” sighed an older man with green eyes and auburn hair.**

**“Is that kriffin’ door on the fritz again?” said a bored looking blond, rolling his eyes as he smirked.**

**“For the love of-” the ignition of K’tana’s lightsabers startled the two men, cutting off whatever the one standing in the back was going to say. She was suddenly standing**

between them and in that moment the green-eyed man and the blond locked eyes on the Sith who seemed to stare at the floor. With a polite smile, she struck with alarming speed, her violet blades protruding through the chests of the workers, allowing the Twi'lek to target the nearest unharmed crewman before she unsheathed the lightsabers from his comrades' torsos. The remaining two stared at the curling wisps of smoke that rose up from the dead men's wounds. With a snarl, the blond went for his blasters, but the Twi'lek was unnaturally fast and fighting in an enclosed space against flailing mundanes wielding distance weapons. They should have seen it as futile and dropped to their knees before her.

But men are rarely that intelligent, and these two were no exception. They both pulled their guns as the Sith once again vanished.

"Where the frak!?" the auburn haired man hissed, training his sights on the corners of the room in a panic and blind fury. He heard a lilted giggle behind him and, without thinking, blindly shot towards it. The once bored blond stared at him in horror. They both looked down at the gut wound that pulsed once with a gush of blood before he also dropped to the ground.

"You shouldn't swear so much." The Sith smiled sweetly, suddenly right beside him. He tried to speak, to lift his weapon, to spit in her face out of rage and spite but found himself paralyzed. Then the pain hit. The burning anguish shot up his esophagus, leaving a trail of steaming blood as he coughed violently. The Twi'lek's orange gaze flickered once, and then everything went black.

K'tana extinguished her blade, dropping the Human to the floor in a crumpled pile.

"Timeros, time's up. Get moving."

"Very well."

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Unbeknownst to her, K'tana had once relished in causing havoc and anarchy on missions such as this. Her bloodlust was notorious, and her habit of getting harmed or captured had become quite the thorn in her Master's side. Now, however, she stalked unseen towards the stern of the massive cruiser. Her scanner was programmed to emit a limited range jammer to obscure communications around the area where she was to buy her some time on the off chance she was spotted.

The Shadow was nearly halfway to the engine when a small platoon of troopers came around a corner and began running in her direction, yelling demands as they moved.

**“Dock command! Three dead, one in critical condition. We need to find the infiltrator now!”**

**K’tana pressed herself against the wall, holding her breath and making herself as small as possible. Fortunately for her, that wasn’t hard. The group marched by her without a second glance.**

*“He’d better be there,” she thought to herself.*

*“Do you remember when you cried in my lap because you loved him?”*

**Visions of the Iron Throne and the feeling of a braid pressing against her tear-stained cheek forced their way into her thoughts. A single word echoed throughout her memories followed by a sensation of something K’tana couldn’t recall. *Atty*. Who was *Atty*? Why would she be important now? And why did it feel like she had just swallowed a large stone when she heard it?**

**The Twi’lek grunted, forcing the thoughts away for now and refocusing her attention on the task at hand. K’tana realized that she had stopped moving and several crew members were staring at her in mute horror.**

*“Oh, kark me.”*

**A woman a few feet from her started yelling down the corridor and without thinking, K’tana drove her fist into the woman’s nose. The sickening sound of cartilage being crushed against bone sounded down the hall. Blood gushed down the crewman’s face, and she choked once, sputtering streams of crimson as the Sith focused and bolted. She was a black and violet blur to the eyes of those who saw her. She quickly sped around a corner, ducking into an empty room, and pressed herself against another wall.**

**The Shadow made like her title and crept along the wall, slinking into a dark corner and bringing her datapad to her chin. She pressed a series of buttons and waited.**

**“Timeros?” she whispered as softly as she could manage, “Timeros, are you there?”**

**“Yes.” The reply was quiet, but not as quiet as she had hoped.**

**“Shh! I’ve been spotted. I’m going to make some noise and lure them away from the engine.”**

**“No point,” came the response and K’tana was certain she heard the sounds of blaster fire in rapid succession from his side of the comm. “Just get here. Now.”**

**“Frak,” she hissed, slipping the datapad back into her belt.**

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Timeros rounded the corner, firing a succession of wildly aimed shots towards a platoon of troops. It had the desired effect, and the group scattered, turning the corners and taking cover. The Adept ducked into a room and waited. The troopers' orders echoed down the hall, and then there was silence. The Marauder counted five beats of his heart then spun around the corner, aiming down the corridor and squeezing the triggers of his Westar 35s. Several rapid shots hit their mark as a few ricocheted off the wall and whizzed harmlessly past the heads of the men hidden in the far corners.

Ducking into the adjacent room, the Entar found himself face-to-face with a member of the engineering staff. The woman's hands went up, hoping to escape the fate that emanated off the larger man. Without taking his attention from the troopers in the hall, Timeros blasted her twice in the chest. He unhooked an adhesive grenade from his belt, pulling the pin with a moment of concentration, and lobbed it down the hall. With the guiding hand of the Force, the explosive device collided with a corner and ejected its bio-adhesive glue over enough area to incapacitate several of the soldiers.

As he checked the corner, he could feel the hairs on the back of his neck stiffen. A moment later the corridor was filled with the sound of static and screams. Blue electric arcs reflected off the sterile white walls, the pulsating light rebounding down the hall and giving Timeros forewarning that this battle was nearing its conclusion. The hum of lightsabers being activated assured him of their success. The Adept peered around the corner as a disembodied head rolled towards him. The look on the trooper's face, as it stopped spinning by Timeros' feet, was that of someone mortified to have suddenly met their death. The Marauder noted the deadman's shock and burned hair that stood up at all angles.

The sudden blaster fire, no longer aimed towards the Adept, drew Timeros from his cover. Corpses lay scattered across the floor, blood and smoke oozing from their mutilated bodies. A flash of violet. A grunt of pain. The thump of another man dropped to the ground. Behind the cacophony, the slightest sound of laughter.

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The pair avoided further battles by simply cutting down any staff and crew who crossed their paths, giving them no time to call for reinforcements. The Arconans knew that they were running out of time, but they were close enough to their target to slay their way through. Soon, it wouldn't matter how many were sent to stop them. The task was nearing fruition and they would do whatever it took to complete it.

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Once upon a time, the violet Twi'lek dreamt that she would be the ending of the Brotherhood. That one day she would take over and bring all of her vengeful fantasies to life. The cruelty that she endured, the callous dismissal of her Elders, the punches she pulled and false smiles she plastered on her face just to get her through the day. Then, she met the one man who taught her that none of it was worth it.

As they reached the engine, K'tana fully realized the pointlessness of it all. No matter what she did this time, none of it would make a difference. Another war would come, another year of Elder's and proteges pretending like it was some heroic feat and another kid with big dreams would get a battlefield promotion. In a few years those exceptional students would be made aware of just how unexceptional they were. How it was that the Brotherhood kept people from simply walking away.

The enemy troopers began to close in from the main hallway and Timeros gave the Twi'lek a cold look. Identical to the ones he always gave, but this one seemed to bear the heavy weight of finality. He shut the blast doors and waited for K'tana to complete their task.

With all the duty that she could muster, she shut out all sound and focused. She thought about Maenaki.

*"It's not easy, is it?" Atyiru's voice rang clearly in the Shadow's mind, almost as sorrowful as it was cold. "Dying for something that won't matter in the end. Losing everything for people who don't care."*

Rage boiled up inside the violet woman's core, expelling with electric force from her fingertips and into the engine's drive core. Her heart beat with all the fury and force of someone being slowly crushed to death, tears streaming painfully from her tightly shut eyes. She screamed with the burden of the memories, with the full understanding how her whole life had been leading to this final moment. She stole a final glance at Timeros, being overwhelmed by troopers; injured and bleeding.

The heat blast from the overloaded engine core knocked her off of her feet, singing

**her flesh from her bones and leaving her wheezing for breath. But no breath would come. Her one good eye, blood oozing down into it, saw Timeros' body lying several feet away. She tried to reach for him, her right arm stretching out in his direction, but there was nothing but a bloody stump from just below her bicep.**

*“And nothing you did will change anything.”*

**The last gasp of air fled from her lungs, her eyes refusing to close, and she felt her body shudder. Once. Twice. And then the cascading darkness consumed her.**