

A soft crackling of naked flames mingled with the hollow whispers of a tranquil forest, lazy embers rising amidst the column of smoke towards the emerging stars above. The last rays of a binary sunset shone beyond the mountains in the horizon, painting the sky with vivid violets and crimson.

The soft caress of a smile on her features, the Twi'lek tended the fire, stirring a flurry of sparks with her gentle movements. The comforting bubbling of a small pot next to the flames spoke promise of a warm meal, a far cry from lukewarm ration bars.

She had no exact knowledge of what planet she was on, or if it even was a planet, but it hardly mattered to her. After the war, things in Dajorra had seemed *suffocating* and she had chosen to make use of the leave she had so far left unused in the Clan's service. The *Lekmaster* had taken her here, or perhaps the Force, but all the same it was just what she needed. A quiet place far from everything where she could rest and reflect on what had happened.

Tali turned back to the flames, the dancing slivers casting a warm glow as the shadows grew long around her. For a moment, she was lost in the mesmerizing dance, high on the scent of smoke and the naked violence of combustion.

*"Leave him!"*

*"But he's still alive!"*

*"I said, leave him! He's dead. He just doesn't know it yet," Koliss snapped at her, hands bloody as he struggled to suture a gaping wound in a hysterical soldier's thigh.*

*"Stay still, damn it!" the Arconan medic growled, but the man was beside himself, face pale and skin clammy from shock.*

*Tali gave one final glance at the choking man in her lap, his mouth opening and closing as he struggled to draw breath. Scorching smoke had charred his lungs from the inside. They had no way of saving him.*

*She turned away, squeezing her eyes shut and tried to ignore his distress. There were others who needed her, others that might yet live. She rose up and let the choking man fall from her lap, reaching out into his mind momentarily and granting him peace in unconsciousness.*

*She shifted towards Koliss and the patient in his care, taking in the devastation on the Will of our Lady's flight deck. Mangled wrecks of LAATs and the shriveled lumps of burnt soldiers were alight with spilled fuel and lubricants, the hungry flames licking up the durasteel walls and seeking to spread deeper into the ship's interior. The blackened bulkheads and blood slick flight deck danced with reflections from the ravenous fires, devouring any that got too close.*

*“Tali,” Koliss shouted, though his voice remained distant. “Tali!”*

*It was like he was calling from some endless void, his voice as faint as an infant’s breath. He reached for her and slapped her lek.*

Tali jolted back with a muffled yelp, heart pounding in her chest and shocked by her surroundings. A bubbling hiss drew her attention to the pot by the campfire. Her food was burning.

Scrambling to remove the pot from the fire and drain its contents into a bowl, the Twi’lek took a moment to calm herself. It was over now. She’d done all she could. It was over now.

She kept reflexively stroking her lek, petting it as a calming gesture as she convinced herself there would be no more sudden explosions or attempts on her life waiting behind the next tree. It was a depressingly difficult thing to do, but eventually she managed. Picking up a fork and sitting down on the soft green grass, she poured herself a drink of cool banthamilk and began to dine.

The glow of the fire cast its warm rays on her and the crackling of firewood mixed pleasantly with the soft sounds of the forest beyond. The fresh, open air seemed like the finest spice for her noodles and even the banthamilk tasted somehow *better* than back at Ol’val. Although it might have had something to do with the cheeky sliver of flavored alcohol she’d slipped in it.

By the time she scraped up the last of her meal from her bowl, she felt content. For the first time in what felt like ages, she could relax and feel whole. Feel happy. The night air was pleasantly cool and the small fire kept her warm company. Without a care in the world, she stared up at the brilliant starlit sky and smiled as a shooting star raced across the heavens.

She smirked. Koliss would have told her to make a wish, but she hardly had need for wishes. At least not in that moment. The pulsing light of a million crystal dots filled her vision, shimmering and blinking like shards of glass. Shards of transparisteel. Raining down upon her. Falling down alongside her.

*She plummeted through the central courtyard of the Capital Enterprises building, security guards and Muun bankers alike firing wildly after her. The barrier she projected held, though barely, as shards from shattered transparisteel walkways rained off it. The flashes of crimson blaster bolts and soft zips of poisoned darts surrounded her from all sides and it took every ounce of her willpower to maintain the shield that kept her alive.*

*Freefalling past the floors towards the water fixture at the bottom of the corporate building’s lobby, she trusted in her repulsor belt to halt her before crashing into the bottom of the shallow pool, readying herself for the next part of her impromptu exit. Her mission had been compromised, but the majority of the damage had been done. Through a clever combination of some mind tricks and financial chicanery, she’d managed to create a ticking time-bomb within the Capital Enterprises’ holdings. In a few hours the deals would go live and the*

*money that had kept the Collective in the fight would suddenly be reinvested to Tatooinean moisture futures.*

*All she hoped for now was a very dry year on Tatooine.*

*The belt hummed to life around her waist, her fall decelerating swiftly as her boots breached the water and the rain of transparisteel shards scattered off her barrier. Dropping the shield, she dashed forward with saber drawn, deflecting a few stray bolts fired at her and making a beeline towards the exit. It was not the classiest of missions she'd pulled off, but the Collective would pay, quite literally.*

Tali blinked, twice. The faint after image of glass shards pattering against her lekku faded swiftly. She ran a finger over the small nick where a toxin dart had pierced her and sighed. She'd been careless and it had almost cost her life. She should have known better by now, but it wasn't the only teaching she'd gleaned from that mission.

In the brief interlude between manipulating bankers and letting them carry out her self-destructive bidding, she'd had time to think and ponder. In the brightly lit and pleasant foyers of the Capital Enterprises office building, surrounded by smartly dressed Muun men hurrying along on their daily routines, she'd come upon a profound epiphany.

Since the day she'd escaped Raoul Kar'Dannaa's captivity and became a free person for the first time since her childhood, she had fought to rid the galaxy of slavers and slavery. She'd been fairly successful, in her own opinion, despite a few crippling setbacks.

She touched the silver cup at the end of her left lek, the appendage slightly shorter than the right.

But for as long as she'd fought to take out the scum who exploited others for profit, she'd always felt like the battle was one she could not hope to win. Like every act she took was less than a pin prick against the hide of Krayt dragon. On that mission on Nancora, she'd realized why she'd felt so.

The problem did not lie solely with the slavers. They acted in their own selfish best interests to make money and indulge their twisted power fantasies. But where the true culprits lay were in those brightly lit, pleasant offices far away from the screams and blood of the trade that their credits financed.

She had been hunting small game. Much too small. It would be time to go after the big fish.

The Twi'lek glanced back at the stars and sighed. The war was over, but her own would probably never end. It was a fate she was beginning to accept. If it meant that others would not have to go through the undignifying horrors that she had, then so be it. She did not consider it her legacy, though others might have called it that. To her, it was simply the right thing to do.

“Leave the world a better place than you found it,” she muttered to herself as her eyelids slowly closed, a restful sigh slipping from her lips. Her hand traced down her belly, coming to a halt above her hips.

She smiled as she recalled the heat of their passion, the unconditional love of their reunion after the war.

There would someone else to be her legacy.