

The soft glow of firelight filled the hut as Luna slowly opened her eyes. She could hear the soft pounding of her husband's heart as she rested on his bare chest. For a fleeting moment the woman forgot where *and when* she was. Luna carefully turned so she could see Kuruk's face, the same one she kept in her mind's eye for over a decade. His square jaw, shoulder length raven hair and full beard were just as she remembered. *It felt so real.*

Kuruk stirred, "morning *riduur*¹, we need to get up, there's much to do."

Luna closed her eyes and clung tighter to the familiar warmth of her lover's firm torso. She was desperate to stay in this moment, even if in her heart of hearts she knew it wasn't real. "No, stay with me a little longer."

"You know I can't do that. Your people need you."

"I need you."

The Okami chieftain leaned down to kiss his wife. The vivid sensation of his beard tickling her face only served to pull the woman further into this reality.

"I will always be with you."

Luna opened her eyes to a harsh and dusty landscape, far from the chilly embrace of her childhood home on Kearls². The Okami was lying face down in a debris field of broken glass and durasteel. She looked over to see an escape pod behind her that had made a harder landing than it was designed to make. A sharp pain shot up her left leg as she tried to move it to stand.

I must have been thrown from the pod when it landed. Without my armor, I would have died.

The mandalorian sat up and instinctively began to assess her injuries. Her left leg had a hairline fracture just above the ankle. That would require immediate attention. She noticed tenderness in the left side of her abdomen, no broken ribs but some very heavy bruising. No signs of internal bleeding, that was good. There was no telling how hard she had impacted when thrown from the escape pod. If she hadn't landed in a patch of sand wearing her full armor her injuries would have been far worse. Satisfied with her quick diagnosis, Luna began to gingerly crawl toward the escape pod to find her medical backpack. Each movement shot fire up her torso and every time she placed weight on her left foot to push off lightning flashed in her ankle. The old wolf gritted her teeth and crawled through the debris to reach her goal.

¹ *Riduur* - Mando'a for partner, spouse, husband/wife

² [Kaerls](#) - The Ice moon of planet Kias, in the Kias system. Home to the Okami Mandalorian clan.

Her kit and weapons were still strapped into the interior of the pod. Thankfully they were within reach without her having to attempt to stand. Luna unfastened her medical backpack and opened it in her lap. She had to bite down when she removed her boot to treat the left ankle using a field expedient splint and bandages from the kit. Replacing the boot was more painful than taking it off.

The Okami paused for a moment to catch her breath before removing her chest armor and undershirt. There wasn't much that could be done with the bruising but she did apply a localized anesthetic and some batca to the skin to help dull the pain and keep the area clean. She replaced her armor and pulled herself up to stand, making sure to keep all her weight on her right foot. Luna retrieved her bo-rifle from the pod and placed the medical pack on her back. Something told her she'd need it if she encountered other survivors. She could barely remember the crash.

The Mandalorian spent a few minutes scouring the pod and wreckage as best she could. There was little of use: an intact datapad, a few ration bar, a canteen of water and a flare gun. She gathered the materials and placed them into her medical backpack. Luna double checked the gear on her person: her blaster pistol, dart launcher, dagger and grenades. All accounted for.

Luna extended her bo-rifle out into the weapon's staff mode and used it as a walking stick in its deactivated state. She wouldn't be able to fight with it and keep her balance but it was better than nothing. She could use her pistol in her off hand if it came to that.

The gray-haired woman leaned into the staff with her left hand while she reached for her fang necklace with her right. She pulled the two *strolik*³ fangs out by their chain and held them in her hand. The fangs had belonged to the *strolik* of her deceased husband and eldest son, Kuruk and Cetan.

Honored ancestors light my path and give me strength.

She had learned the prayer as a little girl, but it took on a deep meaning to her after losing two of three men in her life. The Okami didn't have a formalized belief system of their own, only a melting pot of spiritual customs they had acquired in their travels across the known galaxy before settling on Kaerls over a century ago. Luna was a physician, a woman of science, yet despite her training she *believed*. She had to. The idea that some part of her loved ones not only endured but watched over year kept her going all these lonely years.

³ Strolik - Wolf-like creatures native to the Kears moon and tamed as companions by Okami Mandalorians

Luna steeled her resolve and pulled up a map of the area on the datapad. She was over twenty four kilometers from any tactical landmarks or anything closely resembling civilization. Easily a day's journey in her condition.

Her thoughts were interrupted by an Odanite LAAT/i landing in front of her. The side door opened and a familiar magnaguard droid stepped out.

"Gurrri, your ship got REK'd. Need a ride?"