

Dasha wandered the streets, searching for a new place to sleep and food for her belly. It’s been over an year since her escape from death and she had been avoiding adults in the only way she knew how… running away. Her slim figure only became slimmer in that time with more bones showing if not for her small shell of clothing keeping her warm enough for the nights.

The young Sephi carefully and quietly dug through a dumpster with ears swiveling about in case someone came by. Something in a bag caught her eye and she shifted to go check what it is. Upon a gentle touch, a piece of clothing slipped out of the bag and she snatched at it as to make sure it didn’t touch any dumpster juice. It was a dress from an orphanage, her orphanage. On the tag was the name “Jala”.

Her heart dropped as she inspected the rest of the article of clothing and she held back an onslaught of negative emotions that emerged from inside with the hollowness. It was kept clean except for some old dried blood on the bottom half and odd slashes with blood in a pattern down the center of the dress. Dasha looked about quickly and folded it up just as Jala had taught her to put away in her satchel to find that the mark was more of a slit and through the folded result. Fear filled her as she stuffed it into her satchel securely and ran as fast as she could to a safe hiding place nearby that she spotted a bit ago.

Even with her peeking into the backdoors of the buildings near the dumpster, she spotted one that Jala may be in... and so the lost orphan snuck in to see if she can find her last friend in the galaxy. She entered a room of other girls around Jala’s age whom were immediately surprised. It didn’t take long for Dasha to find that there was a prostitute killed there long ago by the description provided. Shaken, Dasha only heard pieces: “arguing”, “insane client”, “private room”, “never saw her again”.

Footsteps were heard heading towards the back room and with a bit of a scuffle and jingling of chains, Dasha was pushed out the door by the prostitute to escape and the door closed. Saved… Dasha curled up near some trash bags outside as she pondered what to do next. As soon as some screams can be heard through the door, the hairs on little Dasha’s neck rose and she covered her ears while she ran as fast as she could away, unable to remove everything there from her mind.

Lights followed her in red and blue until she went into a very narrow alleyway and kept running after emerging through the other side right past a large collection of homeless and hid in the safest spot as she could find.

Footsteps ran past and she could hear interrogations as the other homeless claimed that there wasn’t a young Sephi that ran past a moment ago. Fighting can be heard as the interrogations continued for a little bit, then died down as the people searching for her went off elsewhere. Dasha hugged her knees as her ears pinned low to her head in fear, staying in the darkness.

It took a bit of time before she mustered up the courage to peek outside, relative silence as the homeless group tended to their wounds. Not wanting to be close to adults at all, Dasha tried to sneak up on one and place a loaf of bread she had stolen, but the newspapers crinkled as the bread was lowered onto the clean-ish looking piece of cloth on top causing her to just drop the bread onto the cloth and dash off as the group turned to look at the noise.

Not chased for the meantime, Dasha found herself on top of a dark roof and looking at the stars near said group as they would probably be safe to be near. She held the damaged and bloody dress of Jala and she murmured to herself.

“I don’t think anyone else is alive after that night I ran away. Are you still alive? Its… lonely. It was lonely after the night after your birthday… Did they sell you off somewhere else? Disappeared just like that night? Let’s escape all this one day, I’m looking for you… you’re always there for me at the orphanage, now it’s my turn to try to find you and let’s go find somewhere to live… free.”

Dasha hugged the bloody cloths as she breathed in the familiar scent and tears formed. The stars above twinkled above unknown to Dasha that Jala would never be found as she was no longer part of the material world.

From that day on, Dasha kept the piece of clothing with her as she hoped she would one day find the owner. Something that kept the child on her toes to avoid capture because if she was caught, all was lost.

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