Thank You Voidbreaker

---

The sight of her brother in the flesh was jarring. Vid-calls and holograms didn’t do him justice - his physical presence after fourteen years apart seemed like an impossible reality of a bygone era, but there he was. More importantly, there he was, unharmed and intact after her starship, the one he’d been serving in her place for months, had been shot down and damn near destroyed.

She hadn’t been there for him, her crew, or her ship; and not a day had gone by since she found out that it hadn’t haunted her. The Voidbreaker had become a ghost, and not the first in her life. Without the real, tangible faces of her people in front of her, she could hardly tell that they weren’t just memories, too. No digital display, however influenced by the people on the other side, could do that justice.

When her arms latched onto her twin brother’s stick-thin form, she didn’t see herself ever letting go.

“Eilen-- Hey,” he uttered, gently hugging her in turn.

Her arms only squeezed tighter. “You really don’t know how good it is to see you, Eiro.”

His hands patted and rubbed her bony back, settling into the embrace. “Says you,” he replied. For someone usually prone to sarcasm, the words sounded suspiciously genuine.

--

Eilen was still struggling to look at Sulith without pangs of secondhand guilt, despite that the Togorian’s demeanor hadn’t changed a bit. The scars, the metal arm - Sully’s hair had grown out and been shifted to cover most of the facial marks, but they still weren’t supposed to be there in the first place. As he gave her a blissful grin, it seemed strange that he didn’t even seem to acknowledge the damage creasing along his face.

“Ship’s just ahead,” he commented, pointing a thick, mechanical finger past Eilen. “The repair crews are supposed to be all over it, but they’ve let us move in and out. We were gonna come get your stuff, but Eiro said something about personal things and leaving them for you.”

Eilen’s distracted concerns were briefly forgotten as a fresh wave of embarrassment hit. It re-occurred to her that her *brother* had been *living in her room* for months. “Uh, y-yeah. Well… thanks, Sully. I really appreciate it.”

“Sure thing!” His hand shot up, waving toward faces Eilen assumed he recognized from the repair crews. That was probably all she needed to get on-board what was left of the ship.

As soon as they stepped out of the ducts passageway, the full extent of the damage to her beloved Voidbreaker was finally realized. The ship sat on makeshift stands, holding it up where broken remains of landing gear attempted to support its weight with the last of their metal. Its bow wasn’t even recognizable, with all its plating burnt, ripped, and crushed. So many holes lined the hull, she shuddered to think of the decompression alone that would have killed much of the crew. If the thrusters still worked, they certainly didn’t show it. Any defenses that survived the assault that brought it down must have been lost in the landing, because Eilen sure as hell couldn’t see any left.

A grimace involuntarily stretched her face as her ears fell flat. That ship had been a home - another home she’d helplessly lost. At this rate, part of her wondered if it was even possible to settle someplace for good.

Her feet stopped in place. The thought of seeing the damage from inside was more frightening than it should have been. She could still picture reading for hours in her bunk, reorienting the gym into an obstacle course, finally building the courage to dine with the crew instead of taking her food off alone. Those memories still existed, untainted. She’d been away so long - coming back home to all of that was a memory she could always look forward to. There would be no going back once she saw what was left.

“Hey,” Sully motioned back to her, “you okay over there?”

Eilen blinked back to reality. “I…”

No words came to her. Instead, her gaze fixated on the Togorian’s face. Beneath the mop of hair, in spite of all the scarring, his mouth was still upturned in the passive grin of someone who lived in high spirit. How could he, though? His home was destroyed, his body was a wreck, and he didn’t even seem phased.

Her brow creased, guilty and uncertain. “...I don’t know,” she confessed.

Sully’s head tilted, and he stepped back to her. “Well, I know it looks like a mess, but it’s okay. We’re all safe, now.” He beamed, gently patting her shoulder with a hand as large as her head. “Besides, we should probably do the thing before too long. I think Karran was saying he wanted to make us all a big dinner in the new headquarters soon. They don’t need to wait for us, but I get the feeling they might, anyway.”

Eilen’s ears flickered. She didn’t exactly feel better, but if there was anything in all the stars as welcoming as a ragtag crew like hers waiting for every last member to come home for dinner... well, there was something about it. When Satsi had lost her home, she hadn’t skipped a beat. The memories of a place long gone even hurt Eilen, and she was only their guest, but they were quick to build new ones as they carried on. As part of its crew for two years, the Voidbreaker had grown near and dear to Eilen’s heart, but she couldn’t deny that the ship on its own wasn’t the reason she called it home.

It seemed silly, but maybe Sully’s optimism was just that infectious. Beaten and bruised, he had endured - they all had. At the bottom of a fresh hole in her heart, Eilen felt a tinge of hope.

Nodding to herself, Eilen breathed deep, building on her will. Through all her memories, the past was done, and things had to move on. She could, too; she would. There was still a future ahead of her. “...Okay. Yeah. Let’s, uh… not keep them waiting too long, huh?”

Eilen’s sheepish, somewhat forced grin was met with a beaming look from Sully, and with his unbreaking happiness spreading like a disease, her own smile grew more genuine. Sure enough, walking through what was left of the Voidbreaker hurt, but as Eilen took it in, she let herself accept it with a sense of finality, and gave the ship a somber, yet thankful farewell when she was ready to leave.