

Flashing Before Your Eyes

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They say your whole life flashes before your eyes right before you die. They are wrong, it's not your whole life, only the chain of events that led you to this moment. Or at least, that's how it is for me lying on a cold durasteel with my guts hanging out. Dying feels...cold. Breathing hurts, from broken ribs I suppose, and my stomach feels like it's on fire. But mostly, I just feel cold.

It wasn't supposed to be this way, throttled by some Sith created Rancor abomination before I even set foot on Arx. This was our moment, when we finally struck the sparkfingers, I mean Force users, right in the heart of their false empire. Justice for all those who suffered under their heel or died in their pointless wars fighting one another. Even the supposed good ones, the Jedi, the Lotus, whatever they called themselves were no better. People like me, we were still a means to an end for them. A resource to be expended in their bids for power.

I hear the rancor roar in the background as the world around me fades to black. "GET THE RAYSHIELD BACK UP" someone shouts. I don't recognize the voice. It's not one of my team, they are all dead. It's all happening in slow motion as I try to focus. The emergency containment fields come online with a dull thump and the modified rancor rages in vain at its new cage.

"This one's alive," I hear someone exclaim above me. I fight to stay in the moment. It's a young man, about my age. Pantoran from the looks of him, blue skin, pink hair, gold eyes. Judging from his robes he's a sparkfinger. Great, my last sight in this world will be the enemy gloating over me.

But the Pantoran doesn't gloat, he kneels down and places his hands on what used to be my stomach, fingers running through blood-soaked fur. He takes a deep breath and closes his eyes. I want to spit blood in his face, if I'm going to die at least let it be in an act of defiance. But the pain begins to dull, I feel a little warmer inside. I wanted to lash out but now I didn't want him to stop whatever he was doing.

"He's a partisan," I heard one of the Pantoran's companions say. "Besides, he's too far gone. We have to move on."

"No," the Pantoran said defiantly. "I can save him. Call a medic." The companion hesitated then walked off to comply with the order.

"Leave me," I manage to spit out, meekly pushing on his wrist.

"I can't do that," he replies gently, clearly trying to maintain concentration on the task at hand. "Stay with me now."

The world fades further away. I think back to how I ended up here. Being recruited on Selen from the ashes of my former town. Training, coming to believe in Oligard's vision of meeting out justice to the Brotherhood. Disappointment at having to retreat again and again. Nancora, Meridian, Lyra Colony, time and time again we had to fall back. Joy at finally striking at Arx.

"What's your name?"

My name? Why would this Force user care? Was I being interrogated?

"Roth Sin'qol" I weakly spit out. A fine Bothan name.

"Stay with me Roth, where are you from?"

"Selen"

The revelation seems to shock. A twinge of pain shoots across his blue face. He's been there, he knows how my people have suffered.

"Selen is a beautiful planet, tell me about your home."

I don't speak. Thoughts rush about home, when things were simpler. My family, my town, my hopes and dreams. Gone in fire. I yearn for home. The cold seeps back in, my eyes are getting heavy. I just want to sleep.

"Stay with me!"

I can tell this Pantoran Jedi is trying his best, but it's not enough. Luke Skywalker himself couldn't save someone who had their guts slashed open by a Sith-enhanced rancor on some Shadow Academy lab. Why did we have to free it? We thought we could turn it lose on our enemies. What fools we were.

But this Jedi is desperate to save me? Why? I would have killed him if I had the chance. Had I become what I hated? Bringing war in the name of justice is still bringing war.

With all my strength I fight to stay in this world just a little bit longer.

"Let me go," I spit out. "It's okay." I put my hand on his wrist. "You were....one of the good ones."

The Pantoran's protests fade into the distance as the cold dark takes me. For briefest of moments I feel warmth and light but not in that room or even in my body. Something beyond is pulling me. I hear my sister laughing and my mother calling me.

Is this the Force? The light pulls me and I want to be part of it. We were so wrong. Everything, everyone is connected. If only we...could see.

I feel the Pantoran now, as I surrender to the light. "Don't cry" I try to say to him across the currents of the Force.

We are all one.