

The cacophony of gunfire was once startling to Avery Watson. It made his bloodied ears ring. Now, it was a welcome sound as he did not want to be here alone in silence. The rubble beneath his hands and knees were starting to hurt but he didn't care. His hands were meant to help fix, mend wounds not *this*. Slowly he sat back onto his feet, looking down at his bloodied hands; some of it was his but most of it belonged to someone else whose name was beyond him but their face would forever remain. A young female Twi'lek. The blue eyes Watson was sure once had life, looked at him *lifelessly*. He wished there was a better word for it.

The Private never knew he could kill. And everything happened so fast. "*Frak... I'm so sorry. I'm sorry,*" he mumbled his mantra to no one because who was listening?

A figure blockaded the sun of Arx, Avery dwarfed by the shadow. How dare the sun shine while people were losing their lives? He was too occupied with his thoughts to acknowledge their presence.

"On your feet, Private." The voice was stern but not unkind. Avery finally obeyed the gentle command. His feet felt like there were ten-ton weights on them but he was standing. The war-torn hybrid Zygerrian still towered over the Human man. After their last firefight, the men were nothing short of tired. Irian'Jaxerias Erinós placed his hand on the younger man's shoulder, then knelt on his right cybernetic leg. "I know it's not easy, but we have to keep moving for their sakes."

Behind Jax was a small group of civilians, which Emere Galo had gathered underneath what was left of a building; concrete slabs and durasteel chunks flung about. Some were injured, but most were okay and out of the three of them, he knew he had the most medical experience. The burden of taking another life was one he wasn't prepared to carry. Of course, he knew the militaristic style of training he submersed himself in was not non-lethal he just didn't realize how soon he would inflict those learned measures onto another soul. A young woman. She probably had a family who loved her. She probably thought she was fighting for something good and Avery snuffed that away from her.

His adam's apple bounced in his throat as he took another glance at the body. He sullenly steeled himself and straightened his shoulders. "Aye-aye, Lieutenant," Avery said and

mustered what was probably his best salute ever. Sure it still needed work but it was damn-near perfect. Now on auto-pilot, the engineer made his way to the civilians. He took note of one Torgruta man who was hunched over and holding his side, putting pressure on an obvious wound.

“Hey champ, mind if I take a look?” In the shade of the building, it was hard to see so he grabbed a glowrod from his backpack, tucking it between his teeth as he took a look at the wound.

“I was running out of a building that was coming down, helping them out,” the Torgruta explained as he weakly gestured to the other civilians. “And one of the Collective shot me as I cut a corner thankfully, I ran into you guys.”

“Looks like the shot just grazed you. And you’re a hero, man,” Avery said through the glowrod in his mouth. Something Watson did not feel like. He deftly worked to clean the alien’s wound.

“No you guys are the heroes. We would have never made it alive if you all didn’t show up...” The Torgruta winced as the engineer began to apply synthflesh to his wound.

“Just doin’ out jobs, pal.” And killing was part of that description too. Once the bacta was applied Avery offered his typical smile but it didn’t quite reach his eyes. “I didn’t get your name. I’m Avery.”

“It’s Sasin. Most just call me Var because of the family name—”

“If everyone is fine we need to keep moving south and get these civilians to safety,” Emere interrupted any conversation they were having as Jax was vigilant of their position.

“This area is secure, Major. There’s a Brotherhood convoy not too far from here that’s assisting civilians. We can escort there to ensure safety but our objective is to assist on the line of fire,” Jax reminded the woman.