**Hide and Seek Amongst the Stars**

*Submission for the fiction competition: "In The Feels"*

*Written and Submitted by Adapt Kamjin "Maverick" Lap Lamiz*

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 The morning light broke slowly into the darkened room. Like clockwork, the 2-1B medical droid whirled to life with a soft hum. As it brought itself out of suspend mode it’s optical sensors adjusted to the pale blue glow of the bacta tank. As it caught itself in the reflection it wondered when he’d be able to discharge this particular patient. The vitals all seemed stable and significant cellular growth has occurred over the first and second degree burns. Checking the latest labs scaring should be minimal and completely healed after five point oh-seven-nine treatments with grade 4 bacta patches.

 The 2-1B started to move through the other activities of pulling blood for labs, adjusting monitor ranges, and ensuring the orders for the day had been processed by the other medical droids. It became introspective complaining about the poor quality of the lab droid which had required him to draw three vials of blood from that hapless twi-lek who had gotten drunk and fallen into the slot machines at one of the lower end casinos of The Credit Overload. While focusing on how to ensure the latest blood draws were handled appropriately it missed the bubbles starting to form in the bacta tank.

 One of the monitors began to intone movement. The 2-1B, unfazed, reached out and jacked into the monitor to silence the alarm. It noted in the log that movement had been recorded at oh-eight-fifty-three hours and went back to it’s fuming about the lab droid. Had it bothered to observe the patient, the movement was becoming erratic. The patient began to thrash violently, pain shooting across their face. After the ninety second pause on the alarms ended alarm klaxons began to blare out.

The doctor came rushing into the room, “What are his vitals?” He looked hurriedly over the monitors, “Why wasn’t I notified the moment he started to awaken?” The 2-1B medical droid spun and started to stammer, “Patient zero-nine-thirty-five was stable as of oh-eight-fifty…” the doctor cut him off. “He’s not stable now you blasted droid! Quick, administer 33cc of benzodi and push it!” As the droid clicked through the available medications and extended his syringe the patient’s eyes sprang open. Raging yellow/red pupils of bloodshot eyes peered out. Despite the breathing tubes his face contorted into a scowl, healing scar tissue ripped open and blood seeped into the bacta tank. The doctor turned to scream at the droid to move faster as the patient threw out his hands and the bacta tank exploded outward. The droid went tumbling backwards as the doctor was thrown into the wall.

Alarms began to sound throughout the hospital, “Code green on floor fifty-seven, adult patient. Code green on floor fifty-seven, adult patient.” As the doctor regained his focus, he saw the patient rip the breathing tube from his throat and cough up fluids. The rage within him burned away the bacta upon his exposed skin.

Kamjin looked the doctor in the eyes and through a harsh raspy voice intoned, “Where is my family!”

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Kamjin sat in one of the chairs in the medical room, while a repair droid busied itself cleaning up the remains of the bacta tank. The freshly applied bacta patches itched his face and body as he smacked his tongue in his mouth. He hated the taste of bacta. He pulled the robe they had given him tighter against the chill in the room while a young, clearly uncomfortable, Intelligence Division officer debriefed him. He was half listening to what was going on, the sight of Kya was burned in front of him. The look on her face as she activated those bombs and sent him hurling into the night air. The cries from Komilia as that spec-ops officer forced her onto the ship and where were the other boys? He hadn’t seen Kai or Rohan be taken. He searched his memories and had lost track of them after they were stealing treats.

“Wait...what was that again?” Kamjin inquired of the officer.

“Uhh...we lost track of their ship after it left orbit two weeks ago.”

“Two weeks!!” Kamjin jumped to his feet. He had been in the bacta tank that long? There wasn’t time to waste anymore. The trail would be impossibly cold at this point but he had to find his family. The officer stepped in front of him and spread his arms out to block the way.

“Sir, you must sit down. Your wife is now suspected as being an agent of the New Republic. There are certain implications that go along with this.” Kamjin felt the anger rise up in him. How dare this unseasoned pencil pushing child get in his way. His rage began to cascade over him and as he was about to strike out a familiar voice spoke out. “Lieutenant, you are relieved.” The junior office spun around and went white in the face, snapped a quick salute and rushed out of the room.

“Sit down, Maverick,” the calm voice of the new arrival said as he gestured back to the chair Kamjin had risen from. As the anger subsided Kamjin recognized the face of Grand Admiral Rapier.

“Okay, Rapier,” Kamjin said as he sat back down.

“I heard the dispatch when it happened and I apologize for the time it took for me to get here. I am sorry about Kya. I know how much you loved her.”

Kamjin immediately interrupted, “love her, Rapier. I still love her. What have you been able to find out since the incident?”

“Not much, you didn’t leave any of the spec-ops alive, though we confirmed they’re all part of New Republic special forces. Given the traffic to and from Hiran it’s been impossible to track when they entered the system.” Kamjin sighed and sunk deeper into his chair as Rapier continued, “At this point they could be anywhere. But that’s not why I’m here and you know it.” Rapier steeled his sights on Kamjin. “How long did you know Kya was a New Republic agent?”

Kamjin was dreading this question and the day when it would eventually be asked of him. He templed his fingers in front of him and focused on the tips of his fingers, avoiding eye-contact with Rapier. “I knew almost immediately.”

Rapier pulled over a doctor’s stool and sat down. The weight between the two men was immense. For a long pause they sat, not looking at each other, as a conversation was held silently between them. Kamjin looked up. Rapier shook his head. Kamjin tilted his head and raised his chin while Rapier looked down. The repair droid finished scooping up the last of the glass of the bacta tank and floated out of the room. It was the last sound in the room for what felt like an eternity.

“I need to find them, Rapier. I know I can find them. If you give me back the Challenge and the third battle group I can have them within the week,” the words rushed out of Kamjin’s mouth. Rapier sat in silence and slowly raised his head. “Kam...Mav, we’ve been through a lot together but you know I cannot give you back the Challenge. It’s out on patrol securing our hyperspace route into the Unknown Regions,” Rapier sighed heavily, he didn’t like what he had to say next, “Until we know for certain what information Kya obtained from you and took with her you’re a security risk. I revoked your security clearance before coming in here. Until further notice you’re grounded.”

“You can’t do that!” Kamjin leapt back to his feet.

Rapier did not move, but held his eyes on Kamjin’s. “You were the Executive Officer once, act like it. How would you handle the situation when one of the highest ranked officers in the fleet has been married for fifteen years to a New Republic agent, sired four children, and brought her into all aspects of the Emperor's Hammer social and political life?”

Kamjin had no good response to this. His heart screamed out that he would throw the weight of the fleet behind the officer’s crusade to find his love and family. But his mind, coldly, countered that Rapier was right. He had become a liability. Despite all his self fulfilling arguments he had held over the years that Kya had changed, had renounced the New Republic, that she truly loved him and the family they had made together, he knew he should have been honest at the onset.

Rapier stood and walked over to Kamjin placed his hand upon his shoulder, “I am sorry old friend. But until we know the extent of the damage here and you’re healed I need you to stay put. I’m assigning a detachment of Hammer’s Fist troopers to secure your spire and I want you to return there. You’re being discharged today.” Rapier looked down as his comlink chirped. “I’ve got to go Mav, rest. Recover. We’ll find them.” With that, Rapier gave what was meant as a reassuring squeeze to Kamjin’s shoulder before he turned and left the room.

Kamjin stared out the door for a while, going through the motions of listening to the doctor, now sporting a bandage and keeping a greater distance than was needed, explained his discharge orders. The medications that he should be taking, the pre-scheduled follow-up appointment he’d need to come back for additional bacta treatments, all washed over Kamjin like the waves on the beach leaving behind no lasting impression. Finally, Kamjin signed the datapad and was given a set of Imperial duty wear. His own clothing had been destroyed in the explosion and no one was available to bring his own. It felt weird to wear a plain uniform with no ornamentation on it but it echoed how he felt. He was laid bare and all that was important to him had been stripped away.

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Rapier walked briskly out of Kamjin’s medical room. He hated to see the state he’d been left in by Kya. Rapier had liked Kya, met her on more than one occasion and enjoyed her charming personality. She loved those kids and had seemed to have been deeply in love with Kamjin. As he approached the squad of Hammer’s Fist stormtroopers and entered the turbolift he reflected back on their last meeting. It had been back on Lien when Kamjin had brought Kai to be assessed for his Force potential and he had taken him on his training excursion. Kamjin had been so proud of Kai, he must have been six or seven then. Komilia had shown some unexpected promise as well, though she was far too easily distracted by anyone in a suit of armor.

As they exited the turbolift on the upper platform and began walking to the waiting shuttle, Rapier began to see some of the doubts in Kya’s acceptance of the ways of the Force; especially the Dark Side. Rapier stopped at the boarding ramp and turned to the squad commander, “Notify the fleet, quietly, that Kamjin may…” Rapier paused and searched his feelings, “...will be doing something reckless. Let’s be on guard but do not hinder him unnecessarily. Have Fleet Admiral Plif notify Dempsey that he may be reaching out to Challenge crew members for assistance. Notify me personally Commander the moment he makes his move.”

“It will be done, Sir!”

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Kamjin stood at the threshold of his home, or former home he now figured. He didn’t know what he was expecting but it wasn’t this. The Credit Overload, being the city sized casino that it was, prided itself on it’s gleaming elegance and being one of the highest class establishments. As such, it was adept at sweeping under the rug any unfortunate business. In the two weeks he had been recovering they had completely rebuilt the spire. While all the decoration and furniture could not be replaced, to his eyes it looked exactly as the day Kya and he had first moved in.

As he stepped over the threshold his head exploded in pain and he dropped to his knees. He grasped at his temples as they throbbed. The memories of his last night here assaulted him. The party, the laughing conversations, the children stealing treats were wiped away with the explosion, the fire-fight that followed, the confrontation with Kya. Komilia’s screaming. His little girl was screaming!

A service droid floated over to him, “Sir, I registered a noise several decibels above normal levels. May I be of assistance?” It’s pleasant voice contrasted with the gutteral sounds Kamjin had been making As he slowly came back to the present as the pulsing pain began to ease in his head he looked at the droid. This wasn’t one of his droids.

“Identify yourself?” Kamjin asked.

“Service Droid Jay-Tee Eleven, you may call me Jay-Tee,” it replied, “I am currently maintaining this suite on behalf of the Baron Administer for The Credit Overload. I am at your service Sector Admiral.”

Kamjin stood up from the floor, “Alright...but, it’s just Kam for now.” *What am I going to do?* He thought to himself. *They’re gone, this is no longer home, and Rapier is refusing to help me.* He began to walk aimlessly through the suite. The droid floating a short distance behind him awaiting further acknowledgment. *Where did she take them? Why did she take them? Had I done something wrong?* He puzzled over every detail of their last few months together. The Fleet was preparing to embark on a journey into the Unknown Regions and he would be leaving with them. His duties as Imperial Sovereign Protector required him to accompany the Grand Admiral. He had told Kya it would be several months at least before he could make contact. Was she mad that he would be disappearing? He had taken Kai and Komilia to be tested for entering the Shadow Academy. He knew Kya was not happy about it but they had discussed it; hadn’t they? He thought they were in agreement that it was necessary for them to attend to master their powers before they became a danger to themselves or others. *Argh, none of this matters. They’re out there and I’m stuck here. I don’t even have a ship.*

Kamjin stopped and realized, without knowing it, that he had walked into his old office which was several levels above where the firefight had happened. While there were signs of fresh paint and some minor reconstruction on the windows most of his furniture was still here. Then it dawned on him, *No...I...if I cross that line.* He stared at an antique Alderaan cabinet. *What choice do I have? There’s Hammer’s Fist troopers keeping watch on my movements and if I contact anyone within the fleet they’ll have to report it.* He knew from his years in the Intelligence Division that any possible move he was to make would be watched. The tactical droids would have anticipated everything he shared with Rapier. It was a foolish decision to be so blatant with his intentions. Now any attempts to outreach to Talon or Stryker would be immediately flagged and Rapier wasn’t going to give him command of a Star Destroyer that was already on assignment. *If I do this...If I reopen this door, there’s no going back.* Walking over to the cabinet he reached inside and found the small button that released a hidden side panel. Gingerly he removed a small box and placed it on his nearby desk.

He collapsed into his chair and stared at it. *There’s got to be another way. Did he still have any of his old Smuggler’s Guild contacts?* A quick tally and most were either dead, incarcerated, or paid well enough not to be trusted with his secrets. *Maybe someone from Praetorian Squadron, long since required. What planet did Gibbs settle on again, some of those -ooine planets*, he never could keep them all straight. After half an hour of going through all his options, he came back to staring at the box. *This is the only choice,* he thought. Picking up a small ornamental letter opener he pricked his thumb. As the blood began to flow, he depressed his thumb firmly on the top of the box. Slowly, the otherwise smooth box began to glow and the blood red outline of an all to familiar crest began to materialize. Once the biometric scan was complete the box’s latches popped. Kamjin raised the lid slowly and rummaged quickly for a small device.

Now that the decision had been made there was no hesitation. He thumbed on the comlink while it stung from the small wound it further straightened his resolve. After a few moments the comlink intoned the line was open, “This is Kamjin “Maverick” Lap’lamiz, founding member of Clan Scholae Palatinae. Karva, I need a favor.”

“Then a favor shall be given,” Karva answered from across the galaxy.

As they went about the arrangements, the photoreceptor on the service droid whirled and clicked zooming in on the conversation. As the droid command module inventoried the items a security flag was triggered. *Seal of Clan Scholae Palatinae detected. Emperor’s Hammer security threat level 1. Clan in Exodus from Dark Brotherhood of the Emperor’s Hammer.* As the droid began to prepare the data transmission a new string of code appeared, *Command Level override, subject Imperial Sovereign Protect Sector Admiral Kamjin “Maverick” Lap’lamiz, transmitting directly to Super-Star Destroyer Avenger, Grand Admiral Rapier eyes only. Top secret, restricted access.* As soon as the transmission completed the droid’s memory began to be erased and rebooted to system standards.

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Kamjin struggled as he pulled on his thermal running suit. It was skin tight and his body ached with every movement to pull the body suit up. He stopped halfway to massage his aching leg muscles and the knot and carefully insert his still recovering burned arms and chest. Zipping up the front he looked in the mirror. For a body suit that was supposed to be skin tight it seemed to be fitting better than before. Probably a side effect of only getting nutritional paste for the past two weeks. Slipping into his running shoes he bounced lightly from leg to leg, continuing to stretch out his muscles.

“Jay-Tee, do you have my protein shake ready?” He called out. Over the last couple days he’d come to appreciate having the droid around. It helped him get into a routine. All the doctors and therapists who continued to check in on him daily all were happy to hear that he was getting a routine established. They were a bit less pleased when he told them he had picked back up his daily jog. In the middle of Hiran’s winter season where the temperatures were frigid at best and snow storms were frequent caused several to recommend indoor workout facilities. Kamjin just brushed them off saying the fresh air was invigorating and that being indoors reminded him of the incident. No one would flat out call it what it was when speaking to him and it annoyed him. It was always the incident, the unfortunate happening, the accident; but never what it was: a betrayal. *No, it’s not a betrayal. It’s a misunderstanding,* he thought to himself, *we just have to work it out.*

Jay-tee hovered into the room, holding the pale green concoction, “Sir, your beverage is ready.” Kamjin took the glass from the droid’s extension claw and began to slowly chug it. The taste was bitter and chalky. Almost as if you were drinking down the sealing gel they’d put around the oxygen hoses of their TIE suits. Despite its taste it was packed full of all the vitamins and supplements his doctor’s assured him he needed to heal fully. As he turned to grab his gloves, he motioned with his hand and Jay-Tee began to share the latest news.

“Current stocks coming out of the Corporate Division indicate a fifteen point oh-seven-nine-three percentage increase in your holdings. Your financial advisor agreed with your assessment of the current market for high quality starship parts based upon the Grand Admiral’s recent announcement and has purchased a minor stake in a small start-up that’s going public in three weeks.” Kamjin nodded along as he finished this drink. Placing it down on a stool, Jay-Tee quickly swooped in to pick it up.

“I’ll be back after my run. Please have lunch ready at the usual time.”

“Of course, I’ll aim to prepare something that’ll warm you as the temperature is quite cold today and another blizzard is projected to hit in twenty-two minutes, Sir.”

Kamjin just waved him off as he was already in the turbolift descending to the ground floor. As the lift traveled the dozens of floors to the ground he continued to stretch himself out. *Sithspit, this hurts*, as he rocked back to stretch his chalves. As the lift opened he was greeted immediately by Sergeant Thran and three additional Stormtroopers. “Good Morning, Sir!” he snapped off, “Going on your morning jog again?” Kamjin began to do lunges as he exited the turbolift. The troopers fell in around him in a loose formation. Thran kept abreast with Kamjin as he continued his lunges. “You know what the doctors say, gotta cause pain to heal pain.” Thran didn’t laugh, “Sir, no one says that.” Kamjin looked at the blank expression of the trooper’s helmet and shrugged. “Well, I said it then.”

As they reached the door, Kamjin looked at Thran with a smug smile, “You boys know you can stay here. I’m not going anywhere.”

“No can do, Sir! Orders came directly from the Grand Admiral.” Kamjin beamed at this.

“Think you boys can keep up today?” he jokingly said as he sprinted out the door. The troopers put their shoulders forward and ran after him. To their credit they were in great shape and his recent injuries did give them an advantage. Even with that balancing after twenty minutes when the snow started to fall Kamjin noted he could see their breath being exhaled through their helmet filters. He was breathing harder as well as he turned the corner into a sprawling park that covered several kilometers.

As they started to run up and down the hills, he took in the sights around him. Several families were beginning to scramble towards the public transit options. A group of children delighted in the fresh snowfall and were building snow porgs and throwing snowballs. Several sleigh-droids were pulling young couples while ray shields kept them warm as they navigated the frozen paradise. “Sir...looks like...you’re...slowing down,” Thran had caught up to Kamjin as he had been looking around. *I wonder if my family is enjoying similar weather or if Kya has them spirited away in hiding in some bunker somewhere.* He shook his head as he noticed a group of joggers approaching them. “Hardly, Sergeant. Just giving you boys an opportunity not to fully lose face,” he laughed as he jogged over to the side to allow the other group to pass. As they got closer, Kamjin noticed something off about the group. Their stride favored one side, as if something was keeping their right hips constrained.

“Thran, get down,” he screamed as he pushed the trooper out of the way just as the other group of joggers pulled out blasters and started firing. The troopers, a testament to their training, reacted immediately and sought cover. The attackers equally found cover. It was unfortunate timing that they had attacked at a position in the park where there were massive topiaries and forested areas. Thran, despite Kamjin’s shove, had stuck with him and they found themselves hiding behind the same massive plant shaped like some local sea creature. Thran had one hand covering his ear as he tried to call in their position while he poked his carbine around the hedge to fire off a couple shots.

“We need immediate evac, coordinates one-one-three-eight.” A grunt could be hurt off to the side as one of the troopers took a shot in the shoulder. His armor smoked as he went down.

“Give me a blaster, Thran,” Kamjin shouted over the chaos around them as more blaster bolts zipped past them and the once merrymaking public panicked trying to avoid the fire-fight.

“No can do, Sir! You’re relieved of duty,” Thran pushed Kamjin back against the hedge and leaning over took aim and fired several shots in rapid succession. Kamjin could hear the thud of a body falling into a snowbank in the distance only to be mirrored a moment later on their side. “Orders or not, we’re going to get killed if we don’t do something!” Kamjin pushed Thran off of him and reaching deep within himself accelerated to unnatural speeds. He felt several of the healed burns split open as he vaulted over the path and landed in a crotch next to the attackers.

The young man spun and looked at him and quickly asked, “What does one find at the bottom?”

“The resting dragon ready to rise.” Kamjin responded immediately.

They grabbed each other’s forearms and shook. “Sir, Karva sends his compliments. We have an extraction shuttle over the ridge behind us. We’ll lay down covering fire for you to make your way there.” The young man gave crisp military signals to two of the other attackers who moved from their position to converge on Kamjin. “These men will ensure you make it to the shuttle.”

“Thank you,” was all Kamjin could muster before turning and running off with the two men. They flanked him and one placed an arm on his bicep with the blaster pointed at him to sell the illusion.

“Admiral!!” Thran yelled seeing him being raced off by the two men. He started to slowly advance taking careful aim at the attackers. He fell two before being cut down by a focused barrage of blaster fire. Kamjin did not slow down nor look back. Rapier had forced his hand and he had cast his die now. As they boarded the shuttle, he looked back for the briefest of moments and wondered what this would cost him. He then immediately did not care. His family was out there and until they were back with him there was no cost he wouldn’t pay.

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Kamjin finally relaxed as the starfield blurred together into the familiar tunnel of hyperspace. He always felt comfortable in space ever since he first entered into the Imperial Academy. One of the men came back and joined him in the rear compartment. “You recognize this will have repercussions for both our governments,” he said to Kamjin. When Kamjin didn’t answer he continued on. “Karva authorized this extraction for you because of the loyalty you showed during the Exodus advocating on the Brotherhood’s behalf. However, there are limits to how far he is willing to go. We will rendezvous with a Baleen-class freighter shortly. We have a scrubbed Ghtroc 720 Light Freighter that has fresh transponders waiting for you. Once you’re on that ship you’re on your own.”

Kamjin nodded, his mind already on his next step. “We also have a change of clothes for you,” the man said pointing to a pile of non-descript civilian clothes. As Kamjin changed, the man went on, “We know about you and the importance you have within the Clan. From all of us, we’re sorry to have heard what happened.” Kamjin slipped the tan nerf-skin jacket over the open flap white shirt that was popular some ten to twenty years ago. He looked at the man and didn’t recognize him. Already the Brotherhood had expanded and this young man knew nothing of him personally nor was he old enough to know the type of loss he had experienced. He nodded in thanks.

After they landed, two men set a flight plan into the shuttle’s auto-pilot to fly into the nearby sun. Kamjin appreciated that efficiency had not become laxed since the Exodus. As he began to climb up the ramp to the Ghtroc, the man called out to him again. “One more thing,” he said, extending the handle of a lightsaber. Kamjin took it in his hand, the hilt was smooth with grooves near the emitter for a better grip. It looked to be a slightly modified version of the training sabers they had years ago. He thumbed it on a pale cyan blade sprang out. He moved it through several forms briefly before extinguishing it and slipped it into the inner pocket of the jacket.

“You’re an honor to the Clan, I wish I had known you before all of this,” Kamjin said, choking back the regret that the majority of the Brotherhood had left the fleet. The man snapped a salute and then went about his business preparing to ditch the shuttle. Kamjin turned and walked up the boarding ramp and activated the control to retract the ramp. Settling into the pilot’s seat he went about the preflight warm-up before slowly lifting it off the deck and departing through the open mouth of the Baleen-class freighter. Swinging it quickly around, he skimmed the bottom of the hull before punching the ship into hyperspace on a new vector.

Checking to ensure the course was laid in, he pulled the lightsaber out of jacket pocket and placed it on the console. Searching the cockpit he found a small mechanics kit and took out several of the tools and began to separate the access panels on the saber. After a few turns he was able to slip the covering down and expose the kyber crystal. It sparkled in the cockpit as if it had captured the frozen color of the swirling snow from the planet growing further and further behind him. It was pure and Kamjin could not stand it.

He plucked the crystal out of the saber and grasped it firmly in his fist. Reaching inside of himself he sought out the crystal in the Force. It taunted him, that pure blinding light. He held on to it and poured out his grief and heartbreak. *She took them. She took my children! My legacy! How could she have betrayed me,* he let loose the feelings that had been bottled up in him since that evening on the rooftop. Those feelings that he had not yet let himself experience. *Who does she think she is to defy me? I, who had protected her how many times? I, who had put aside my career to be with her; to start our family! She, who persuaded me to rejoin the fleet...that was just a lie to gain secrets. She wasn’t concerned about my feelings. She didn’t care that I was bored and hated being what my parents had been at the end, mindlessly numb bureaucrats. She hadn’t changed. She hadn’t loved me. She used me!*

In the Force the crystal began to bleed and cry. It shared his pain and anguish. He mourned him..but worse, it pitied him and then it showed him a vision. A gentle meadow at sunset. His eldest boy, Kai, wearing the sandy white robes of a padawan, swinging a deep sea blue blade blocking stun blasts from a remote. His daughter was picking flowers under a nearby tree while his middle boy raced around chasing some small animal. Then there was Kya, smiling holding Hikaru in her arms. She beckoned to him to join them. The setting was perfectly serene. He saw himself there, but yet, not there as himself. He was wearing the beige and earthen robes of a Jedi Knight. Kya's smile widened and her pearly teeth shone through like pearls from Mon Cal. Hikaru smiled toothless in contrast.

*This isn’t right. This isn’t me!* He ripped the robes, tearing them to shreds to reveal his midnight black Sith robe, the red accents on the sleeves of the Sith order. “This is not my family!” he screamed out into the universe, “You cannot lie to me! You cannot keep them from me! I will have them back!” Tears were streaming from his eyes down his smooth face. His face contorted in torment as he sobbed. As the vision faded, Kya’s smile faded into a frown. The light of the sunset went from a pinkish-orange to a crimson red. As the sun set behind the meadow, Kamjin opened his eyes and his fist. His nails had dug into his skin causing small welts of blood to form. In his palm rested a newly crimson kyber crystal.

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Screams could be heard echoing down the alleyway as the door exploded outward. Several aliens scrambled on the ground to clear the entryway before one was picked up off the ground and went flying backwards back into the room. His arms and legs flailing in the air before connecting with a crimson blade extending from his sternum. He dropped lifeless to the floor as the blade arced through the dimly lit room. As it spun it connected with several blaster bolts sending them back at their owners.

 As silence came over the room, Kamjin lowered his blade and using his other hand brushed the hair out of his eyes. He walked over to a cowering Rodian hiding behind an upturned table and reaching out lifted her into the air till she was suspended several feet off the ground. Walking closer to her his beard parted and a horrendous odor escaped his mouth as he spoke. “Tell me your name,” he growled, “And remember, I’ll know if you’re lying.” She struggled while her antennae twitched. Kamjin spun his blade into a reverse grip and pierced it directly back into the attacker who was attempting to sneak up on him.

“It’s Geoana,” she quivered.

“Then you were stationed with Kya during her early infiltration days.”

“K...ya? Who’s Kya?”

Kamjin flipped the blade in his grip and poked it into her thigh, “I told you I’d know if you were lying.” Geoana cried out in pain as her flesh burned under the pressure from the lightsaber blade. Kamjin rotated the blade slowly in her as it started to burn outward over their whole quad. “Let’s start again, you were stated with Kya, correct?”

“Yes! Dank Farrik, I was stationed with her.”

“Where are her safe houses? Who were her contacts?” Kamjin’s eyes blazed yellow/red in her large dark black eyes. He had her, he could feel the fear in her and did not sense any deception. It had taken months, dozens of planets, to finally get to this person. Someone who had actually been with her before. Who knew how she operated!

“She never told me, I swear! We ran two missions together before she got pulled for deep cover training.” She was lying...she had to be. His feelings were clouded and she must have known that to push a lie pass him.

“That’s not true, you know how to get in contact with her. I know it!” spit flew from his mouth coating his course, unkempt beard. “You will tell me how to get to her now!”

A hole suddenly appeared in her chest as she fell limp in the air. Kamjin whirled around to see local security droids had appeared and were firing at him. He raged and flew at the droids. The air was criss-crossed with his slashes and within moments the droids had fallen to the ground in glowing orange chunks.

He collapsed to his knees sobbing. This had been it. The final lead. The last piece of the puzzle. Without her there were no other places to look. He had lost them. They were gone…

Epilogue

Kya stretched out on the blanket in the meadow. The breeze was gentle and warm with the sweet scent of budding flowers. In her lap Hikaru snoozed happily, milk leaking slowly from the corner of his mouth. He had just finished chugging down another bottle. She smiled and looked up to see Kai on the horizon a few meters off. He smiled, that same sly look Kamjin always had, but none of the mischievousness behind it, as he spun and cartwheeled dodging the stun blasts from the hovering remote. The sea blue blade kept loosely in his hand caught one of the blasts and deflected it but the force of the blast knocked the blade from his hand. “You need to hold the blade firmer,” she yelled over the distance.

Rohan came running up to Kai screaming in his sweet innocent toddler voice, “no hurt my broth-er!” he screamed at the remote who seemed to hover defensively from him.

Kya laughed to herself at the sight. That boy was always sticking up for his siblings. The twilight setting was perfect. Well, nearly perfect. Off under a tree her daughter sulked. She hadn’t talked to her in months. It was a phase, she missed her father. Kya sighed and looked off into the setting sun. Despite herself, she missed him too.