

## **Choices and Chance**

High above the smoldering city of Tipool, Eminent Rasha Hawee, Elder of the Tenixir Revenant, studied the battle below. "Interesting," she thought as the Ascendents descended on both armies. Never had anyone seen those creatures before, and as she observed, she was lucky she wasn't down there with them. Oddly enough, she wasn't much of a fighter, but when she needed to, she could absolutely hold her own.

As smoke billowed up from the streets and flashes of light bounced off of every surface, she felt it was akin to observing lightning from high above the clouds. For now, she was safe in the clock tower. As she peered across the war-torn landscape, she heard a faint sound enter the room from behind. She slowly dropped her hand to her blaster and unclipped it, making sure she wasted no time in case she needed to draw quickly. Finally, with the faint sound of gravel grinding into the durasteel floor, she rested her hand on the blaster.

"There is no sense sneaking anymore."

A deep, gravelly voice responded, "I used to be much quieter. Guess I'm out of practice."

She laughed, then turned around. A male Zabrak materialized as his Force Cloak diminished. He stood in his white robes, blading his target, lightsabers held tightly in each hand.

"No need for those Jedi. Our battle won't be here. We're on the same side."

The Zabrak squinted. He studied her briefly then clipped his lightsabers to his belt. "See? That's much better," she said calmly.

"I'm Revak Kur..."

"I know who you are."

"Then you know we are hardly on the same side. Your gang of pirates have been causing quite a stir for the Principate. They've tasked me to hunt you down and bring an end to your operation and aid us against the Ascendants."

"So, you plan to kill me? Very un-Jedi of you. I thought you were about harmony and forgiveness."

Revak laughed. "More about giving second chances than forgiveness. I only kill if I have to. Had you drawn your blaster, you'd not have made it to your full draw. I wish more to have a word with you."

"Well, you're between me and the exit. Your reflexes are quicker than my draw, for sure. Your weapons and abilities outmatch my own. So yes, I will gladly entertain you. Please, have a seat."

Revak remained standing but rested his back against the frame of the doorway. He crossed his arms and crossed his legs. He was relaxed and presented himself as such.

"This conflict has been going on for too long, Rasha. Not having a stake in the outcome does put me in the position of not being tied to one side or the other. I would like to negotiate a truce."

"But you were sent here to kill me, though Jedi. Were you not?"

"I said I was tasked with finding you and bringing an end to this conflict. Whether you survive this encounter rests solely on you."

"Fair enough." Rasha rested her back against the wall, mimicking the relaxed stance Revak took. "Do you know why this war wages against the Revenant and the

Principate? We grew tired of living under the thumb of a has-been military, those who've held onto the past as a way to feel in control of their way of life. We seek the same freedoms you Jedi sought. Sometimes there needs to be death for life to flourish."

Rasha's words resonated with him. His views of life and death aren't that far from the Revenant leader. He let her continue.

"If you were to let me live, I would be grateful. However, I would still be hunted, and if I was to go with you to negotiate a truce with the Principate, there is little doubt that they will seek to end my life. So you understand the position I'm in."

"I do." Revak stood up, uncrossed his arms, and put a hand out as a show of peace. "We can guarantee your protection while talks ensue. As I said, we have little stake in this conflict. It has brought suffering to many innocent lives. When I entered this room, I watched you gaze upon the chaos. I could feel your fear. I'm asking for a peaceful resolution."

Rasha smiled, "put down your hand, Jedi. You're hardly convincing. As good as your intentions are, your handlers will not stop until my brothers and sisters have met their fate." She dropped her hand to her side and rested it on her blaster once more.

"Don't," Revak asserted. "This is not how I want this to end."

"For me, there is no other choice."

Rasha took her chance cube out of her pocket and tossed it to the ground. It bounced around before finally settling, with one of its red sides facing upward. She looked at Revak and grinned before drawing her blaster and firing. Revak drew his lightsaber, ignited the purple blade, and swept it in front of his chest, catching the bolt and sending it into the floor. Rasha managed a second shot that he deflected back to her hand. She screamed in pain and dropped the blaster as the bolt seared her tendons.

"STOP THIS, RASHA!"

Rasha fell to her knees. She took a long breath then went for her blaster once more. She fired two more shots in rapid succession. Revak deflected one to the floor, but the other caught the Togruta in the chest. Her last breath escaped her lungs as her body hit the floor.

Revak extinguished his lightsaber and clipped it back onto his belt. He walked over to the lifeless blue body and knelt beside it. He took out his comlink.

"Principate Command. Rasha Hawee is dead."

He turned it off before a response could be received. Revak stood up, looked out the window at the chaos below. "Is any of this worth the lives lost." While walking out of the room, he stepped on the chance cube. He stopped, moved his foot, and looked at the small plastisteel cube. Picking it up, he reflected on the absurdity of leaving your life in the hands of a child's toy. He put it in his pocket and left the room.

Rasha's sacrifice would have little effect on the war that raged on between the Revenants and the Principate. She had others under her that would use news of her sacrifice to instill a further hatred for her enemies in those that chose to follow her cause. Even worse yet, there was a new enemy.

Revak Kur

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