

Change. A powerful word. A powerful thing.

In Zabradi, the word “change” was synonymous with the word “present”. The current moment. The individual seconds, ticking by, where each and every person in the galaxy lived, and loved, and died. There was, after all, no way to change the past, and no way to change the course of the future. One could only learn from what had come before, and prepare for what would come next. Or so Sera had thought.

The cultists on Dandoran had been connected to something. Each and every one of them; there was a silver within their hearts, a chain that linked back to something unseen, and infinitely unknowable. At first, Sera had thought that it might be a method to track the Children of Mortis’ inscrutable leaders. Her superiors within the summit seemed to consider it a likely proposal, as did the echelons of the Dark Council that she brief it to. They had approved of her mission; sending a single operative was, after all, far less costly than wasting another Legion, or a horde of scouts.

But Sera could sense something more, within the pull. Something deeper, and stronger. It was no longer within the cultists, themselves. Now, it resided in her; a connection that she could sense, and couldn’t begin to shake.

Change.

The pull brought her far. Across the galaxy from Selen, from Arcona. To a place that she had never been, and that few had ever seen. Though Sera had heard of the watery world of Ach-To, resting place of the greatest Jedi in galactic history, she had never seen it herself; and the pull did not bring her to Skywalker’s grave. Rather, it brought her to a single, tiny isle, standing alone amongst massive waves. Her vessel would not even fit; promising the pilot aboard that she would be safe, the Zabrad leapt from the open hatch, landing lithely amidst a bed of tall, swaying grass.

Sera felt the wind. She felt the spray of salt against her skin. The grass, whispering. The gentle song of life, calling to her...and...and...

The Zabrad knelt in the grass. Breathed deep of the air. And turned her mind to the Force. To the chain within her mind.

She pulled on it.

And something pulled her back. \*Hard\*.

Grass and sea and wind were replaced with darkness, and a bone-deep cold.

And she was falling. There was no panic in the realization, no fear. It seemed...natural. Normal.

Something was changing.

A doorway opened in the darkness, like a sheet of light, hovering impossibly in place. Then another. Dozens. Hundreds. Thousands. Millions. They stretched to the horizon of her perception, the outer boundaries of her vision.

She reached out...and the moment that her hand passed through one of the glowing gates, her perception shattered like glass, and darkness returned to her. But only for a moment.

Sera had never dreamed of rain before.

Dreams, to her people, were snatches of memory. Shades of the future, caught in the mind's eye, grains of sand trapped, for just a moment, in a crevice of stone. But, the mind had no way to comprehend the future...so, it relied on the past, carrying people, places, ideas on to the conclusions of their path. So, it made sense that she had never dreamed of rain before.

On Iridonia, rain was an impossibility. Even in the northernmost reaches of the planet, the air rarely cooled to the point that moisture could condense, gathering deep within the crust instead. Yet, even in the oldest stories, Sera's people had dreamed of rain. To them, water was a powerful, incredibly valuable resource, used to seal the most sacred pacts, and forgive the most grievous trespasses. Water cleansed, shaped, flowed.

And in the oldest myths, stories passed to children by the eldest of elders, water came in the rain. Rain came in storms. And storms...

Marked.

**Change.**

Change on the wind. Change in the water. Change in the lightning that beamed through the sky, crackled from his fingers, coursed along her dagger's blade into the heart of a dying beast. Change in the blood that filled her mouth, streamed down his face, ran shallowly from his wounds. Change. Rain. Change. Rain.

**Change.**

Change in the drops, hissing against the red-hot steel of the blast doors, bent inwards like a gaping wound. Change in the black, oily smoke that plumed into the rainy sky, and in the screams of the men fighting and dying below, within the earth. Change in their breaths, hearts pounding, blood pouring. Change in the bodies that she had been too slow to save...decaying to nothing in a black, rotting pit. Change in the men she led. Change in the men she killed. Change. Rain. Change. Rain.

**Change.**

Change as rain poured down on Atolli, over nightmare creatures that ripped her friends to pieces before her eyes. Change on Eldar, as priests and princes played games of power, gambling with the lives of men and women who had seen *too much change* in their lives. Change on Selen, as old gods awoke, and new ones were borne, and blood ran on the beaches, and in the seas.

Change on Tattooine, as blood and tears fell like rain.

Change.

Rain.

Change.

Rain.

**Change.**

**Rain.**

**Change**, the voice within her mind called, its tone titanic, shattering, echoing in the vaults of her mind.

Sera's eyes opened.

She was standing in a desert.

The desert was her home.

Her dagger was in her hands.

Before her lay a desert. A vast, endless plane of white sand flats, glowing under the sun. Golden towers jutted from the sands, piercing the very sky.

Around them, armies fought. Familiar forms ran among them. Some bore horns, and black ink, and ruby sabers shining in the day. Some were tall, and shared her eyes. Some wore their braids, lekku, and scars proudly, fighting to *end* the violence around them. Blood ran like rivers. Red, crimson, violet, green. Bodies fell, were trampled, and returned to the sand.

And clouds gathered above.

**Change.**

They darkened the sky. Turned the desert day to the deepest night.

And Sera dreamed of rain.

It washed away the blood. It washed away the army. It washed away the dunes. The rain cleansed...and changed.

A doorway opened before her, and the Zabrak fled through it.

*Change*, the voice whispered, an echo in the dark.

A terribly narrow cleft of rock stretched before her and behind her, each curving just slightly. The desert was gone. The rain was gone. Replacing it was heat, and a horrible, oppressive darkness. And something else. Something behind her.

She turned to find a masked figure approaching. Lithe, draped in dark grey robes, it seemed to blur as it stepped towards her. The mask...was flat, featureless, a bone-white plane without even a slit for the eyes. There was a blade in their hands. Fear was almost a foreign emotion to Sera. Her instincts were wired to fight, rather than flee..but, even still. Something about that thing was *wrong*.

Panic rising within her, Sera clenched her jaw, and wiped her saber across the stone. Sparks and embers flew at her pursuer. It hardly even stalled...and somehow, low flames lit across the stone, burning over grit and dust. Blue eyes widening, Sera turned on her heel, and ran down the corridor, as fast as she could. The fire's heat tailed behind her, like a hound hunting prey. Beads of sweat trickled down her brow as she felt it grow larger, more intense. Acrid smoke filled the air, but somehow, she never choked.

Fire. Burning. *Change*. Of another form, to her people. Where rain brought life, reformation, purity, fire destroyed, unmade, undid. It was the final rite of life, to have one's ashes scattered to the wind...and the worst form of destruction, to see the world burn.

*Change*, the Voice behind Sera murmured, and she fled from it as best she could.

Ahead, the corridor ran up on something, indistinct in the darkness. Steps? No, higher. A dais of some kind, with tiers that climbed upward, into the darkness. There was nowhere else to go, and with an inferno and a spectre at her back, Sera leapt into the climb. The material was rough, like splintered timber under her grip, piled with mounds of...something. It was hard to see in the dark.

It didn't stay dark for long. As Sera climbed, so did the fire. She could feel it scorching behind her as she finally made it to the top of whatever strange structure had been left for her. But, there was no escape up there. As she rose to her feet, she found herself on an island of wood and stone, surrounded on all sides by fire, rippling, roaring.

And before her was the same figure from before, their cloak rippling in the heat. They brought their blade before them in a one-handed grip, saluting. Then, they stepped into a swing.

Sera's hearts pounded a war-beat in her chest, and she moved to counter the swing with her saber. The blades clashed, silvery metal sparking solidly against plasma.

She leapt back as they countered, ducking fluidly under their next stab. She pivoted on her right foot, driving a kick into their knee, before trying a jab of her own. They met the strike, parrying it away before responding with another slash. They dueled back and forth...and Sera felt her fear melt away. This was familiar. This was something she knew.

The fight.

*Change*

The thrill.

**Change**

The push of blade and rush of blood.

Passion and strength. The desire to win, to strike her opponent down.

***Change!***

Anger powered her blows now, and she pressed into a full assault. Step after step, strike after strike, she blurred into an unending flurry of blows. Sera bared her teeth, bringing her saber down against her enemy's blade, swiping it from their hand, before spinning into a riposte and driving the plasma through their heart. Smoke curled from the wound, joining the plumes spilling from the fires around them, and the Zabrak extinguished her saber, breathing heavily.

The body fell, dead and gone. Sera stepped toward it, panting, the heat of the fire that surrounded her growing...incredible, crushing. She felt the thrill of the fight leave her, flowing like blood from a wound. Without it, she felt...empty.

What had she fought? *Who* had she fought?

Sera dropped to her knees beside the still corpse, and reached for the white, expressionless mask. Slowly, she pulled it away.

Horns, jutting out from a shaved scalp at sharp, parallel angles. Chiseled flesh, marked by jagged, slate-grey tattoos scrawled with ink. Bright blue eyes, just the same as Sera's. Koren looked just as he had when Sera had last seen him.

Her brother met her eyes. And with his last breath, he whispered.

“*Change.*”

She'd killed him.

Her herts hitched in her chest, a wave of shock and confusion slamming into her. How...how was he *here*? Why? Her mind felt numbed, addled by the heat and smoke. Gasping, Sera clawed her way to her feet...and looked around her.

The mounds that she had seen in the darkness were bodies. Familiar ones, stretched over the platform. She saw Karran, Eilen, Sully, Ziggy, Ruka. Her Nitha, and her parents. Tali. Friends and family, her crew, her life. Dead. Burning. It wasn't a dais at all...it was a funeral pyre.

And she had lit the fire. The fire that burned over their bodies, melting flesh and gristle from the bone. The fire that devoured all of it, rippling into the air. The fire that crawled over her brother, roared toward her in a glowing flood...

A door opened behind her. And, sobbing, Sera fell through it.

Fire and bodies, sand and water, blood and tears and sweat, all disappeared.

Sera knelt on a bed of grass, amidst an endless sea, under a boundless sky, the spray of salt cool along her scalp. Before her, there was a door. And in it, she could see all.

She could see scientists discovering the tomb of the bound gods on Selen, already beginning excavations that would unleash untold disasters.

She could see the Blind Man, the elderly gangster that had ambushed the original Voidbreaker, gazing at a diagram of the ship, a dark glimmer in his eyes.

She could see the Councillors of the Principiate, bent in fiery debate, a vial of sinister crimson crystal held between them.

She could see a fleet, waiting in the darkness of space, what could only be Arx laying before them. Awaiting the signal that would start the attack, and kill so many. *So many.*

Her perception widened. Time stretched.

Two Twi'leks argued, violet skin shining under cold lights. In the end, they came to an agreement, as their daughter sobbed behind them.

A Krayt dragon rose from the sand on Tatooine, bearing down on a defenseless village, already burning.

A Mirialan drank, and drank, and drank, his family starving while his sorrows drowned.

A woman with white hair died in the void. A man slaughtered his wife and unborn child in an unconscious fit of rage. A dark haired assassin did unspeakable things to save his family. Men and women and people of all ages and species died, or killed, or wept in pain and suffering as all that they knew was taken, or broken, or bent beyond repair.

Sera wept with them.

And then, she saw Iridonia. The golden sands. The banner of Tribe Lod. She saw a young, tall man gazing towards the setting sun, while a girl sobbed into the plane of his shoulder. Sera knew that girl. And she knew her brother's face, watching as he turned to leave her.

**Past and Future**, the Voice called, echoing across the sea, rippling titanically in the waves. **In Your Hands. In the Present. Choose. Change.**

Sera blinked.

She thought of the good that she could do. The people that she could save. The lives that she could *change*. She thought of her brother.

And she thought of the present.

The past had brought her to the present. And the present was where those that she loved *lived*. If she changed the past...stopped her brother...altered the course of their lives...

Sera looked up, into the endless sky. She fixed it in her gaze, challenging the Voice with a blazing smile.

"No. I won't. Not the past. Only...only the present. So the future is brighter."

**You forsake the choice. You can accomplish only so much.**

"Then I will change what I can, while I can. And that will be enough for me."

There was silence. Then, the doorways closed, sliding shut before her eyes.

The Voice gave no final response. Only a last roll of thunder...something that might have been a laugh. Sera laughed along with it. And, in her hearts...she knew what she had to do. There was much to prepare for.

Change was ahead. And she would be ready for it.