

# BLOOD ON THE ICE

## Snowblind: Survival

By Ood Bnar

Dajorra System

Selen, Tunca

Zainab

Dawn

Cold...

Wet...

Dark...

The first two were easily overcome by the old Neti. His outer bark had snow sticking to it. His twigs were slowly freezing, he'd have to trim those once this was over. No, the biggest problem was the near perpetual darkness. He'd set his comm to give an alarm every time the sun would attempt to peek over the horizon, in order to optimize his light intake.

He was slowing down...

His energy reserves were slowly being drained away by the situation he found himself in. Overlooking the settlement of Zainab from the roof of the highest structure, Ood was struck by how impermanent it looked. Despite it being a decades old, established mining town, the blizzard rolling in seemed keen to wipe it from the map. Without the geothermal heat transformers and the energy that leaked from them in the form of heated air, the town would be badly hit.

Oh, there was his daily dose of light.

Hmm, so little energy for this coming day...

Slowly, creaking, the Warlord began to shuffle his way to the access door behind him in order to begin his slow descent to street level. There were things to do, and as the only one in the area immune to the cold, he'd be expected to do the majority of the tasks too lethal for the others.

Maybe they'd transport him to one of the geothermal heat transformers again, with the expectation that he'd fix it by listening to the mechanics describing the steps he'd have to take again. Then again, last time that didn't go very well.

Dajorra System  
Selen, Tunca  
Zainab  
16 hours later

Slowly, a large shadow moved through the darkened streets. The narrow streets meant less snow could pile up in them. Every few feet, a small covered lantern hung to illuminate the way. Below them, a rope had been tethered to allow people to travel between locations without getting lost in the worsening blizzard.

Ood had done all he could, he needed to find a place to rest.

Earlier today, an old empty residence had collapsed, creating a hole in the wall of homes which now allowed the wind and snow to rage through the normally semi-protected alleys. He had to get there in time, it was crucial he'd get there...

"So tired..." a voice rang out.

"Maybe just rest for a bit..." the voice continued as the Neti looked around, trying to find the source of the sound, "Just a bit further..."

Realizing he was still stumbling onwards, the Warlord wondered if he should stop and see where the voice was coming from. It sounded both familiar and alien to him. The strength of the wind in the narrow street was increasing, snow was once more pelting his front with increased speed. Nearly there, he could hear the screaming wind as it entered the enclosed pathways that connected the majority of the city together.

There, he could see the white void where once a structure stood. But where had the voice been coming from?

Slowly, Ood made his way into the collapsed structure.

With the last of his strength, he shifted into his arboreal form, maneuvering his branches to most efficiently cover the hole in the city's outer wall. If he made the holes narrow enough, the snow would pack them shut in no time at all.

He'd be more durable like this. He'd survive this misadventure and he'd have completed his duty by ensuring the people inside had had a fighting chance too.

"Success!" With his last word, the Neti realised why the voice he'd been hearing was familiar.

It had been his own...