

Link to this Fic:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JtMUuBdwLt5g3cJNkPLD0gc0bl0KOwnmq70XlkJRhRs/edit?usp=sharing>

Tali (14782): <https://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/members/14782/snapshots/4414/7515>

Aayla (15365):

https://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/non_player_characters/957/snapshots/4246/7285

Skaaaar (13468):

<https://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/members/13468/snapshots/4434/7540>

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Giletta Spaceport

Selen

40 ABY

Warden Silis wiped his brow and took another sip of caf. It tasted bitter, like the ion contrails of a YT-1300, just the way he liked it. The night at Giletta was humid, as the nights often were this time of year, but at least they were spared the scorching Dajorran sun that blasted the spaceport by daylight. Now working under glowcasters that bathed the landing pads in an irritating off-white, he couldn't quite make up his mind whether the night or day shifts had it worse. Maybe he'd find the answer at the bottom of his caf.

The hot mouthful of beverage sprayed in a fine caffeinated mist from betwixt the handlebars of his bushy mustache as a crackling lightning storm erupted across the street, confined solely within the premises of a shipping office. Blue arcs of ionized energy lept out through the open window, lashing out at a glowcaster before finally dissipating into nothingness. The empty caf mug hit the ground with a hollow clack.

It took Warden Silis long seconds to realize he was, in fact, still alive and despite the lightshow nothing had actually exploded. The office was not on fire and even the windows were still intact. However, the glowcaster overhead had ceased to operate.

"I should probably call this in," he muttered, fumbling for his communicator. It, much like everything else electronic nearby, was dead.

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"I pride myself on handling these sorts of matters personally, but in this case assistance is required for a prompt resolution," Yumni Ha stated in a monotone voice that belied any urgency. "The incident at Giletta parcel hub caused severe disturbances to the entire spaceport and we have unfortunately had to resort to outmoded means of shipment tracking."

The blank stares of the two Arconan agents before the Kaminoan spoke volumes.

"We're using flimsi," Yumni explained, holding out a shipping manifest.

"An ion grenade at such a crucial point has reduced port throughput but a considerable margin, this speaks of the calculated nature of the attack. There is reason to suspect a saboteur has infiltrated the spaceport to prevent us from delivering supplies. I trust I won't have to explain why keeping the AAF fed and supplied is of utmost importance. And please hurry, I am not one for vengeful thoughts, but in this case I'd make an exception. May the culprit suffer a flimsicut for each manifest I'm forced to print out."

The Sith stood there suffering the indignity of being assigned to this search rather than fighting on the front lines as the Kaminoan droned on about the struggles of printing an actual paper shipping list rather than using the far more convenient digital interfaces. It didn't take much for the Kaleesh to feel the frustration the woman felt but in the end he didn't care if she was forced to do this for weeks so long as in the end he found who was reasonable for the bombing.

"I will make sure that the bomber suffers those cuts and more once they are apprehended," stated the Sith as he taunted to his Twi'lek companion Alayaa.

"Come if there are any leads to follow then they will be in the office where the detonation took place." Without waiting for her to reply the hulking humanoid sat off, not wanting whatever trail was left to get cold before they could find it.

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Thirty minutes later

Ground zero of ion explosion

A crash sounded though the office space as Skar smashed yet another terminal that had proven to be just as useless as the rest of the equipment he had checked thus far. He cursed the gods at the bomber who had seemingly done their job extremely well. The ion detonation had wiped any records of personal entry for the past week, maybe more. It was impossible to know who or what had been the cause of the explosion and the more time they spent here looking for dead ends the more time for the culprit to do more damage.

A long sigh escaped his lips as he thought of a way to work around this issue, when he heard Alayaa call out to him from the other side of the office.

"I think I might have found something!"

While looking around, the Twi'lek managed to find some sort of small metallic casing. It had some sort of symbol on it, but none that Aayala was familiar with. Skar came over, looking at the Twi'lek as she closely examined the small metallic casing.

"Found something?" he asked, clearly still irritated.

"Well my precious companion," the young Twi'lek said as she rose up, lifting the metallic piece in her hand.

"Seems to me that our culprit did manage to slip up. Which is good! That means we can go look for whatever this is, find the little krif *and* continue our *training*. Heheheh."

She started to skip happily away before suddenly stopping and turning around.

"Yeah soooo....Do you know anything about this? Maybe we should go around the streets and ask someone for information."

The Sith crossed his arms and lowered his head. Maybe it was a good idea to ask the people, but what if the culprit catches on and runs away. Not many options were open, and yet this symbol was the only lead they had.

"Fine. But at least take a picture or a drawing of it. No one needs to know we have...*that*." Skar pointed at the metallic casing that the Twi'lek was holding openly in her hands.

"Ahhh...sure. I guess...Ohhhh! Let's go to the cantina!" She jumped in excitement.

The Sith raised an eyebrow, clearly not in the mood for one of her jokes.

"Aayala, now is not the time. This is serious."

"I *am* serious!" She crossed her arms, pouting like a child before speaking again.

"Listen, in the cantina there are many people right? And sometimes people do business there. We can go there, ask around and bam! Clues!"

For all the childish behavior she was displaying, the Sith had to agree that it was a good idea. Without saying a word, Skar came closer and extended his arm to Aayala.

"Then, she'll proceed?"

"Oooo, love it when you get so formal. You make me feel like a princess." She wrapped her hands around his as they made their way to the nearest cantina.

Finding a cantina within Giletta spaceport was as easy as de-limbing a Force user and Skarbles had lots of experience in both. He led the young Twi'lek to one of the usual watering holes off at the old part of the spaceport. The landing pads were too cramped to allow for the more efficient mega haulers to land and so this part of the sprawling logistics nightmare had become freighter heaven, frequented by dubious ne'er-do-wells, suspicious characters, and disreputable delinquents of all kinds. Finding someone who dealt in ion charges shouldn't pose much of a problem—or so they hoped.

"This is hopeless," Skar grumbled as Aayala returned from the counter with a pair of mugs of something colorful and inebriating.

The cantina was utterly packed with longshoremen, freighter captains, scoundrels, and general scum. Finding an arms dealer inside this place would take some doing, assuming one was to be found at all. They'd wasted enough time trying to eke something out of this place and every nerve in the Kaleesh's body was itching for progress.

"You don't seem to be taking this investigation very seriously," the venerable Battlelord muttered, a cluster of similar glasses lying beside him on the table.

"Oh, I was just building my rapport with the barkeep," Aayla enthusiastically explained. "I actually got a name this time."

"A name? You couldn't have just asked him to point you to the guy while you were at it?"

Aayla looked like she was about to make a clever comeback, but then fell silent and the faintest of red blushes flashed under her orange cheeks.

"Unbelievable," Skar muttered. "What's the name?"

"Slem," the Twi'lek replied, slurping from her beverage with gusto.

"Right, now watch and learn, young padawan," the Kaleesh stated as he rose from his seat and stalked towards the closest knowledgeable-looking man. Before he could realize what was happening, the hapless scoundrel found his shoulder gripped in an unyielding durasteel claw that pressed into his flesh with enough force to almost draw blood.

"Tell me where I can find Slem," the Sith *demand*ed, his voice thrumming through the scoundrel's mind with an irresistible tone.

"O-over there, t-the Rodian with the copper eyes," the man stuttered, gasping in relief as the Sith relinquished his shoulder and pressed on through the crowd. Aayla followed, slurping up the dregs of her drink and handing the empty glass to the bewildered scoundrel in passing.

The Rodian was just finishing a cigarra when the pair of Arconans invaded his personal space. The man stared at the odd pair in shock, unsure which was more unsettling, the more-machine-than-man Kaleesh or the unassuming Twi'lek who seemed all smiles while her companion exhaled brimstone.

"C-can I help you?" the Rodian said.

"Have you seen this symbol?" the Kaleesh growled, gesturing at the Twi'lek who helpfully held up a holopict of the casing. "Who did you sell it to?"

The Rodian, suddenly pale and squeamish, shifted uncomfortably in his seat. "Look, I don't deal in *that kind* of stuff. I'm harmless, really, like my merchandise."

"So you *do* recognize the marking," Aayla pressed, grinning ear to ear.

The Rodian swallowed, hard.

"Listen, all I can tell you is this. They were tall, kinda like him, and they used a voice modulator when we made the exchange."

"How do you know?"

"Nobody sounds like that, not even a Hutt." He shivered.

"What did you sell him?" Skar pressed.

"Nothing! Just some party drugs, for having a good time."

Skar glanced at Aayla, who shrugged. It seemed that was all they were getting out of him.

"If we need to come back here because you didn't tell us something Slem." The Sith paused just long enough for the dread to set in for the Rodian who was shaking visibly under the scrutiny of the two Arconans, but before he could continue his grilling a message beeped into existence on his data pad. This drew the ire of the hulking Kaleesh as he stepped away to read what had been sent to him.

Seconds later his harsh voice rang out stilling many conversations around him as they reacted to the plain anger and venom in the Kaleesh's tone. "Aayla, we need to go now." He didn't pause to see if she followed him or not, simply content to leave her where she was if she chose not to follow him.

Standing outside of the gutter cantina the Sith was seething his anger, shoving it back down into a place where he could use it later once the time came to punish the one who had caused all these issues. Aayla walked up beside him sensing his inner struggle decided to say nothing for the time being until her teacher could calm himself.

"There has been a collision in the docks with some cargo sleds, it's unknown that this is related to the ion explosion but we need to check it out regardless," he said passing over his data pad for her to look over the details herself while they flagged down a shuttle to take them to the affected site quicker.

Gilletta Spaceport
Cargo holding area
Ten minutes later

It was not a welcoming sight to say the least, three cargo sleds had impacted one another, and while the drivers had all survived the crash the damage to the area and goods they were transporting was total, not to mention the added delays this would make for sending material out to the front lines was becoming a major issue.

A low growl radiated from the Kaleesh as he stalked over to where the medics were treating the three sled drivers, some tried to bar his way but the sheer aura of anger and authority that the Sith exuded made them quickly move out of his way, two of the Selenians were completely knocked out or far too drugged to be of any use but the third, a middle-aged man

well into his tenure of working at the spaceport, was will lively enough to be spoken to or so the Kaleesh hoped.

"What happened here, did you see anyone causing this?" asked the Sith as he approached the man while the medic was dutifully wrapping a bandage around his head and checking his vitals.

All the Kaleesh got in response was a grunt from the man as his glazed eyes and far-off expression struggled to focus on the voice that was speaking to him. The Sith snapped his fingers in front of the man's face trying to get his attention so that he could say something in his defense before the juggernaut completely lost his temper. But it was the medic who came to the rescue of the poor Selenian, stepping in front of the Kaleesh without a care for her own safety.

"You need to step back sir. These men have been drugged and need to get to the capital hospital as quickly as possible so that we can treat their injuries." That stopped the Sith as he processed her words. If she was right and these men had been drugged, falling prey to the effects at the same time it would mean they had to have been dosed at the same time.

"Aayla, let's pull the records of these men and find out which lounge they all go to. We might find something of use there," said the Kaleesh.

"Got it, big guy!" The Twi'lek saluted Skar, giving him a soft smile. As they approached the two that were passed out, the medic who was attending them stepped in front of the two Arcona agent's, lifting his hand up.

"I'm sorry, but I can't allow you to disturb the patient." The poor medical officer fixed his eyes on Aayala, not realizing that the Sith's looked at him with utmost fury and annoyance.

"Heyyy," Aayala stepped quickly towards the medical officer. "Listen now. We don't really *need* them, but we do need the drivers' data pads. It's for investigation purposes, you understand, *right?*"

The young Twi'lek smiled, biting her lower lip as she leaned over, gently putting her hand on the medical officer's chest. As she observed him, Aayala noticed a little blush forming on the Human's cheeks. The medical officer lowered his head, trying to avoid her gaze. The Twi'lek only grinned as she put her finger on the man's lower jaw slowly lifting it up to look at his eyes.

"*Pretty please?*" she said in a lower voice.

The medical officer only slightly nodded his head, before coming to his senses once more. He pushed a bit away from her, clearing his throat to prepare himself to give a proper answer this time.

"Y-yes, ma'am. Right away."

As he moved away Aayla turned to the Sith, giving him a satisfying grin, while the Kaleesh only gave a small groan of annoyance underneath his mask. After a few moments the medical officer returned with a data pad that was mostly busted in several places. The Twi'lek carefully took it off his hands hoping that it was at least still usable.

To her surprise, as she was examining the data pad, the screen was in a relatively good condition. Yes it was broken in several places, and the display was somewhat glitching, but the letters were readable. With enough patience, that is. She quickly started looking at the logs, scrolling up and down as Skar observed her.

"Problem, my student?" the Sith asked, as he tapped his fingers.

"N..not really. It's just all over-Aha! Got it!" The Twi'lek jumped happily. The Kaleesh only nodded his head waiting for his student to share her new discovery.

Looking over the logs was somewhat challenging, there were some dates but most of them were jumbled. She came to a stop looking over some questionable logs. She recognized Zuji's name. They met on one occasion but she quickly dismissed her, not really caring who she was at the moment.

"Well, there is...that Zuji person. It just says *cace's*. There are some more, but I don't really know much." She leaned over and pointed a few names to Skar.

The Sith noticed Satsi's name on the log. Something about arm-wrestling debt? It was interesting but then he noticed Tali's name and a simple dash that only said "job offer". Did one of them cause all this trouble? The log's were strange and it looked like any of them might be to blame, but who exactly?

Suddenly, they heard a large crash in the distance and people running from the doc's. There were no words spoken between the two Arcona agents. They only looked at each other before running straight to the scene.

Maybe the culprit is still there! they thought to themselves as they made a quick dash. Hoping to catch whoever it was at the scene of the crime.

Finding the culprit red-handed was a bridge too far, but they did arrive wet-footed. A few centimeters of pale green coolant covered the area for a hundred meters in all directions, the remains of a coolant tower buckled and broken blocking traffic at a critical throughpass.

"One step behind, again!" Skar growled, his bottled fury so filled he could explode at any moment.

Sensing this, the Twi'lek pointed at the mangled wreck of the coolant tower and gave him a coy smile. "I'm sure they need to clear a path through all that metal. Maybe you can show them how it's done?" she suggested.

Needing no further incentive to vent some aggression, the Kaleesh drew his cobalt-blue saber and lept at the defenseless debris. Aayla watched, first with satisfaction, then

apprehension and finally mild revulsion as the Kaleesh tore into the durasteel with hatred and fury, his blade humming and hissing as it sliced and cut through the debris to create a path for the hover skiffs to move.

Backing away to let the Kaleesh vent his frustrations on the defenseless durasteel, the Twi'lek headed over to the remains of the coolant tower's supports to inspect the damage. A quick round of questioning the witnesses gathered little in the shape of solid evidence. Some said they'd seen a cloaked individual, others said one of the speeders had crashed into the support beams, another spewed some wild conspiracy about Old Gods returning to reclaim Selen, it was a mess.

When she returned to Skar, Aayla was little the wiser, though the Kaleesh was at least in better spirits, panting heavily as he observed the path he'd cleared.

"Did you really have to hack it to that fine a debris?" Aayla inquired, inspecting the palm-sized chunks left in Skar's violent wake.

"I thought you said a path needed to be cleared and a Sith deals in absolutes."

"Duly noted," Aayla muttered, looking over at the cut stumps still left at the sidelines. Her brow furrowed. "Wait, you did that?" she pointed at the remaining wreckage.

"Yes, I thought that much was clear."

"No, because that looks *exactly* like the damage on the support beams!"

"So you're saying it was a lightsaber that cut down the coolant tower?"

"Yes! And Zuji doesn't use lightsabers, she *really* dislikes them."

The Kaleesh chuckled under his breath. He knew *intimately* why Zujenia had such a phobia.

"What was that?" Aayla inquired.

"Nothing," Skar murmured. "Just agreeing, that's all." Aayla's confusion was palpable, but the Kaleesh had no desire to elaborate. Maybe once she was older and less likely to stab him for it.

"Well I know for a fact that Satsi doesn't do sabers either. She's no Force user and prefers grenades and slugthrowers."

"Well if Zuji and Satsi couldn't have done this, then that leaves..."

"Tali!" the Kaleesh exclaimed victoriously. Finally, he had a target to hunt.

"We need to find her quickly, before she can do any more damage. Any more delay to supply movement and troops is unacceptable," he growled, his mind struggling to think of a reason

Tali would commit such acts against the clan itself. It went against everything he knew about her, at least so he thought for the moment.

Pulling out his data pad one more time the Sith began to cross reference when Tali had been seen at the cargo lounge, and the other locations. It took him a little time to piece together a rough timeline which allowed him to predict where she might go next.

"If I'm right about this, the next biggest target will be the munitions bunker near here. We can cut her off before any more damage is done," he growled before setting off in a dead sprint knowing that his apprentice would be close behind.

It didn't take them long to find the aforementioned ammunition depot. At first glance nothing seemed to be amiss, but the lack of armed guards made the Sith inspect further. Looking closer the Kaleesh saw that one of the side entrances can be cut open but left in a way that a passerby wouldn't suspect anything was amiss.

Coming closer to the door the Juggernaut listened closely for any disturbance that might be happening inside a facility. Seconds passed and no sound was heard from within which during this time of conflict was a dead giveaway that something was wrong.

Turning back to look at Aayla, Skar gave her a look indicating she should be ready for anything before unslinging the beskar spear from his back. He reared back and kicked the door in with no small amount of strength.

The durasteel door came flying off its hinges as the two Arconans charged in, before them was a cloaked figure crouched over some unknown device. The figure spun around at the sudden disturbance, their hands going within the cloak and out of sight.

"It's over Tali, you're going to answer for your crimes tonight for the sabotage of the clan during wartime." He hissed maneuvering himself to cover the exit and put him in a position to give chase if the Twi'lek decided to flee.

Aayla moved to the Kaleesh's side, taking the lightsaber hilt off of her belt. The cloaked figure moved somewhat strangely. Its movements were somewhat stiff but it quickly straightened up as it pulled back the cloak revealing the Twi'lek woman with purple-hued skin. As it looked over to them she gave a small but twisted smile. Something wasn't...*right*, and Skar was sure of it.

"Hey..." Tali finally said as she waved towards the two. "Nice to see you guys. I know how this looks, but you'll need to trust me."

Skar's gaze was still fixed on her. As he raised the hilt towards the Twi'lek he ignited the lightsaber which roared as much as his anger. Aayla quickly followed her master. She ignited her saber, lowering herself down closer to the ground. She almost looked like an animal, ready to pounce onto the unexpected prey.

"*Eyima su thiku? [We are really doing this]*" Aayla spoke as she moved her lekku back.

Tali's head twitched slightly. She looked over to the orange-skinned Twi'lek with almost a questioning expression. Skar cared less about her movements, the only thing on his mind being to stop this traitor once and for all. As Aayla moved the lightsaber to her left arm, she tapped the Kaleesh on his thigh, almost saying '*Not yet.*'

"*Nu passi? [You good?]*" Aayala spoke once more, looking at what would be her reaction. Tali didn't move, she twitched a bit more before her lips started to move.

"*Passi. Pass-s-s-s-s-s-s*-" As Tali spoke her lips started to move out of sync. Now even Skar noticed that something was very wrong with the purple-hued Twi'lek. As she repeated the letter 's' over and over again it sounded like her voice was almost...*melting*. It slowly went down an octave, before erupting in the high pitched static noise that forced them to cover their ears for a brief moment.

"Error! I repeat, **error!** Language modulator malfunction!" As the thing spoke it drew up its own lightsaber and charged forward.

For a moment it looked like the thing was going directly for the Kaleesh, but with a quick side step it twisted the lightsaber in its hand going instead for Aayla's chest.

But before it could even hit her, Twi'lek jumped to the side. Dodging what seemed a very dangerous and deadly blow. But now that she thought about it, every hit from a saber was a deadly one.

"This ends now!" Skar roared, his pent-up anger unleashed in a blind rage as he threw himself at the purple Twi'lek. His foe snapped its head around to meet him, the rest of her body staying perfectly still before following in a fluid if unnatural motion to bring her saber to bear.

The beskar spear glanced off the lightsaber's edge, hissing and heating quickly as the two weapons ground against each other. The combatants now face to face, Skar did not hesitate as he slammed his forehead into hers—only to regret the decision instantly as a hollow *clang* rattled him.

"Ugh, I knew you were hard headed, lek-head, but this is too much..." he grumbled, staggered and vulnerable.

The Twi'lek raised her lightsaber to finish him off when Aayla dashed in at the last instant, imposing herself between her fellow Twi'lek and her master. "Snap out of it! Don't you see she's not really—*Uuumph!*"

The rest of her warning was punched out of her lungs as Tali drove a hard set of knuckles into the orange Twi'lek's chest, batting her aside. As she crumpled to the ground, wheezing for breath, Tali stalked past her with murderous intent. Raising her saber high, she prepared to strike the Sith down.

The recovering Kaleesh saw the iridescent yellow of her lightsaber looming overhead and felt the pain throbbing through his forehead. He could taste copper and smell violence and in

his mind he twisted all into a single ball of anger and hate that lanced out of his fingertips at the momentarily exposed Twi'leki midriff.

Tali was blasted off her feet by forks of lightning, crashing into some storage crates with a loud clatter. Limbs spasming, she tried to recover, but the Sith was quicker and would not relent. Charging in, he stabbed the beskar spear through Tali's chest, pinning her against the storage crate. Her hands clutched at the jutting shaft that perforated her body, futilely clawing at its unyielding beskar, before finally giving up as her head sagged against her chest.

Finally vindicated, Skar let out a satisfied huff and turned to his apprentice.

"So, what was it you were trying to say?"

"T-that... she *gasp* is a machine," Aayla panted, rising to unsteady feet.

"Oh?" Skar turned around to watch the back of Tali's head explode with an electrical fizzle, the rest of the faux flesh beginning to melt off the durasteel skeleton as the droid self-destructed.

"Y-you knew that, right?" Aayla pressed.

"Of course! Nothing gets past me, young apprentice," Skar reassured her.

Aayla chose to take his word for it, but even so, something still troubled her mind. "So, if this was an imposter. What happened to the real Tali?"

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The sun had already set on Coruscant and the restaurant was beginning to close for the night. A dapper waiter informed the lonely Twi'lek politely, but firmly, that she needed to wait for her date elsewhere.

Tali Sroka, dressed to the nines and with an equal number of drinks under her belt, staggered outside and hailed a cloud cab. As she got in and headed for the shuttle pads, she dug up the invitation she'd received, crumpled it up, and tossed it out the window.

"When I get my hands on this secret admirer, the only thing they'll be admiring is my boot up their—"