**Freedom**

Nicfer stood in line with her crew, pressed too close together and linked by the cuffs around their feet. This hadn’t been the first time she’d been busted on a job, but this was the first time they were heading to a private prison in Outer Rim territory. Her captain was trying to put on a brave face for the crew, laughing and talking about how’d they escape, but they all saw it. The sweat on his brow, the jumps of fear as a new guard escorting jostled us. They were done for. Nicfer was done for. The Children of Mortis were not as careful as they thought they were, or maybe this Brotherhood was better than the captain expected. Regardless, Nicfer and her crew got caught selling arms to both sides in a war. She knew you didn’t get life in prison for that. You got lined up and shot.

Their forced march ended in the cargo bay of a shuttle, a Nu-Class with just enough laser burns on the hull to give it character instead of making Nicfer feel like she was being marched onto a death trap. As she was forced down into her seat and the chairs restraints locked around her just a bit too tightly, she leaned her head back to try and get her emotions under control. **CLANG!** No headrests, so Nicfer just got pain and noise for her attempt to calm down. She was at wits end. Cuffs so tight her fingers were numb, chest restraint feeling like it was squeezing the air out of her. Head ringing from its collision from the bulkhead. She just wanted to scream….

Then she felt it. The sudden force of sinking into your seat as the shuttle begans its initial take off. The sudden force was unexpected but exhilarating. The initial bank shifted her about in her seat. Her limbs were pulled at random forces as the artificial gravity fought the planet's gravity for control. The increase in speed as the ship raced to cruising speed meant for fighting atmospheric conditions. With a deep breath, well as deep as she could get with the restraints, Nicfer closed her eyes.

“1…2…3…Lift off.” She muttered.

When she opened them again, she was not on some prison shuttle headed for her doom. She was in the pilot’s seat of her father’s YT-2100. A ship he was constantly rebuilding to the point Nicfer didn’t think she ever saw the whole cockpit fully assembled. But there she was, sitting in a seat too big for her, reaching to flip switches not hooked to anything other than Nicfer’s imagination. Three clicks of switches, a hard right pull on the control stick, two button pressed, then WOOOSH! She pulled the levers for the hyperdrive. Whatever it was in Nicfer’s head, she had gotten away from it.

“You know, if any of this had been powered on, you would have leveled my shop missy.”

Nicfer knew that voice. Father was home early and she was not allowed on this ship. Phrases like “death trap” had been thrown around by her mother.

In this dream, Nicfer opened her mouth to explain, but her father just silenced her with a gesture. He walked over the wall of the cockpit and threw the main breaker. Panels lit up and a few sparks flew, and Nicfer sat confused. Father never powered on his ship. Not unless he was taking it out for a… for a… TEST FLIGHT! It was hard to tell what was lit up more, the console or Nicfer’s eyes. She bounced in her chair as her father took a seat in the co-pilots chair.

“If mom asks, you’ve been at Lika’s all afternoon. I did this flight alone.”

Nicfer bobs her head up and down in acknowledgement and her father lets out a laugh as he runs through start up procedures. Nicfer watched, transfixed as her fathers fingers deftly click and flick though buttons and switches bringing the ship to life with each press. As the last of the system came on-line, Nicfer could feel the hum of the deck and felt it though her chair. A small vibration that seemed to carry with it the power of the ship, as she felt just as energized.

“One trip, to the edge of the system and back home.”

With a quick nod, Nicfer strapped herself in. The harness was loose, but tight enough to do the trick, should anything happen. Nicfer sat there bouncing in her chair. Waiting for the engines to roar to life and take them to space. But nothing happened. After a minute, she looked to her father, eyes clearly displaying her confusion.

“You’re in the pilot’s chair Missy. You tell me when to take off.”

Nicfer’s face almost split in two with the grin she had on her face. She pointed hard to the sky,

“GO-GO-GO-GOGOGOGOGO!”

With a deep belly laugh, her father flicked the last few switches.

“Yes sir, Missy sir.”

Then Nicfer felt it, the sinking into the chair with the initial levitation. Her sense of balance being thrown off by the ships gravity and planets gravity fighting each other.

“1…2…3…Lift off.”

With that last countdown, they were off. Soaring through the city, then clouds, then breaking the atmosphere. They were in the black. Free to go where they like.

**KA-CHUNK!**Two new bruises were added to Nicfer’s head as it bounced between her metal shoulder restraints. Her dream had been lovely until the docking so rudely awakened her. Nicfer sighed. Space stations were not impossible to escape from, but it did add to the challenge rating. As the door opened, two guards and a robed woman stepped into the back of the hold. Nicfer was getting ready to try to drift back off to her memory with what little time she had left when the robed woman came to a stop in front of her. She pointed, and the guards removed Nicfer’s seat restraint and the cables that bound her to her fellow crewmates. Nicfer could hear her captain protest, but he was silenced with what sounded like a rifle butt to the face.

She was marched off, and the shuttle closed back up and departed, leaving Nicfer alone on a station with the robed figure and the two guards.

“The frack is this. Why the frack am I here.” Nicfer spat. It was all a bluff, she was terrified why she had been split from the group.

A guard moved to silence her with his own rifle, but the robed woman stopped him. With a wave of her hand, her cuffs unlocked and fell away from Nicfer. The cold lump of fear grew in Nicfer as the woman spoke.

“My dear, the Dark Brotherhood is not done with you yet. Not by a long shot.”