

Tekpantli

40 BBY

Marick panted. Not from physical exertion, but from the mental strain of having to perpetually fend off the assault on his mind as he made his way to the island. The shuttle he had been assigned to was lost. There was no way for him to save any of them. Sometimes, no matter how powerful an individual was, soldiers were lost. You had to be realistic about these kinds of things.

That did not mean that the thought of failure was not prodding at the edges of his iron-willed mind. Which made sense, since his mind had been under an assault the likes of which he'd never encountered before, even with dedicated training and resistance to such things. In the end, he had navigated through it with sheer willpower and his connection to the living Force.

And a singular desire that no illusion could conquer—

I will not make an orphan of my son and daughter.

So he had endured, but when he came to, it was too late. The shuttle was crashing. He tried to grab the pilot and pull them free, but their safety harness prevented it. He twisted, flexed with a surge of strength through the Force and tried to grab another soldier and tried to leap out with him. But the soldier's boot string caught and he was ripped from Marick's grip to plunge into the fiery tomb that would soon envelop the shuttle.

He had no choice. Marick leapt away with preternatural prowess, landing barely a safe distance away with the help of the Force to cushion his fall. He had no supplies, but what he had on his person. If only he'd been stronger...

Well, there was nothing to be done about it now. He had to survive. And, perhaps, he had to help Selen.

The island was not what Marick expected, but it also was not anything that was super surprising. The thing that took him by surprise was the fact that the caxquette's were...not attacking anyone. He blinked and rubbed his eyes to make sure it wasn't another kind of trick. He reached out with the Force...and no, it was not a trick of some kind. This was, as far as he could tell, true.

His cloak had become a bit worn and tattered, so he shed it and discarded it. He wore his lightsabers at his belt, not concerned with concealing them, and wore a simple tunic and pants tucked into his boots. So he did not seem to off-put any of the locals when he approached.

"Hello, stranger," a man greeted him.

"Hello," Marick replied with a bit of a rasp in his voice. "Is this...Tekpantli?"

“That is one name for the island we live with, yes,” the man nodded.

“Live...with?”

“Yes, *with*, since we share the island.” He patted the caxquette at his side, that had seemed to take the shape of some strange exotic hunting cat with small wings.

It was only then that Marick realized they were speaking in basic, accented though it may have been. He should have been on guard, but decided to just keep investigating.

“So, you live alongside the caxquette?” Marick asked. He had a sinking feeling that maybe Atyriu had been right all along, that perhaps there was a less insidious nature to the creatures.

“Oh, these? You mean the caxats? They live with us,” the man answered.

Marick nodded, and followed the man into the village filled with strange things, and hoped that maybe here he could better understand his wife's connection with these creatures...and perhaps find who had caused the terrible illusions that had so assaulted the Arconan forces.