Between Two Points: TLJ Star Wars FanFic

by NikkiNotions

Summary

The story of our disparate duo and the path I imagine for them in TLJ. Kylo and Rey have history in my version that predates TFA and revelations abound as the story unfolds!

Fluffy and thoughtful. Featuring some favorite canon moments + original content. But don't trust me...give a few chapters a read!

"With nothing left to reach across the expanse for Kylo lowered himself upon his back. Blinking up into the darkness a light burst forth and away. The Falcon streaked across the sky overhead like a shooting star. He laughed at his own foolishness as he instinctively closed his eyes to make a wish. "It is you" he breathed weakly" -Chapter 1

So come along on a galactic journey across the stars...What else is there to do until December 2019?

I READ AND REPLY TO ALL COMMENTS SO FEEL FREE TO GET
I READ AND REPLY TO ALL COMMENTS SO FEEL FREE TO GET INTERACTIVE! I LOVE TO HEAR FROM EVERYONE!

Also follow my spotify playlist "Reylo writing soundtrack" by Nikki Rao
Prologue: Drifting

Chapter Summary

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Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kylo Ren was aware that only a few moments had passed, and yet each moment he felt he was drifting. He felt an unbearably slow sinking feeling as large cold flakes of snow lazily fell to the ground where he lay. The frost reached into the gash of his ruined face, heat still radiating from its freshly burned edges, and into the wounded Earth where a rift formed in front of him. Each icy scrap was a painfully brief moment of cool relief from the burning inside him; A fitting metaphor for the very literal inferno which was gaining strength in the planet’s core. The forest floor groaned and shuddered as the chasm between the scavenger Rey and himself grew wider. Another moment passed, this time too quickly, as their eyes met. Was it Anger? Concern? Regret? Shame? He had always had a gift for seeing the truth on peoples faces and the secrets in their minds, but before he could translate her reaction the moment had passed and she was gone.

With nothing left to reach across the expanse for Kylo lowered himself upon his back. Blinking up into the darkness a light burst forth and away. The Falcon streaked across the sky overhead like a shooting star. He laughed at his own foolishness as he instinctively closed his eyes to make a wish. "It is you" he breathed weakly. He welcomed the resonation of the rock and soil beneath him as it oddly soothed his broken body. As he drew a disarmingly contented deep breath a sharp pain disturbed his reverie. Annoyed by the intrusion upon his focus Kylo beat his fist faintly at the source. This time agony did not beget strength. He was not compelled to fight, but instead chose to flee. Closing his eyes again he drifted. Snow white slivers turned to sun scorched sands then transformed again to wind whipped rains. A frigid void, a forsaken desert, and an island with so much promise. A thunderous clamor enveloped his senses. As the planet and reality fractured he felt his very soul gently swayed into the tranquil absolute of darkness.

Chapter End Notes

What do ya think? Want more?!

Leave me a comment!

The title of this fanfic comes from the song "Between Two Points" by The Glitch Mob (Feat. Swan)

LYRICS "Between Two Points" By The Glitch Mob (Featuring Swan):
We've got forever
Slipping through our hands
We've got more time
To never understand

Falling footsteps
Weighing heavy on me

Behind darkness
Beneath candles
Whispers waltz
Around our dreams

The shortest distance
Between two points
is a line
From me to you (x2)

Feet turning black
Is this the path we must walk?
No turning back
Wish I could just hear you talk

Can something like this be pulled
From under our feet?
Leaving our skin
And burning coals to meet

Tell me now

The shortest distance
Between two points
Is a line
From me to you (x2)
Uppers and Downers

Chapter Summary

Kylo is in sick bay after his skirmish with Rey. Who will he see there?

New character! Introducing BB-9E (This is how I would write and include the droid, no idea what tlj will be doing)

Kudos and comments are welcome. This is my first fanfic and I don't have a beta etc. I'm trying to get this story going as quickly as possible so expect more chapters over the next few days!

When possible I will be listing musical inspirations for each chapter as well. That way you can listen along and know what helped spark what.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The light blinding him was brilliant but cold. With a start he bolted upright looking and reaching forward expectantly. A low grunt escaped him as he registered several painful sensations least of which was a new pang in his neck where a small bolt had no doubt administered a stimulant to rouse him. As Kylo Ren’s vision adjusted he noticed the methodical scrutiny of General Armitage Hux beside him in the sick bay. Hux’s eyes were a pallid shade of blue, the sort that reminded him of eyes touched by death. Clouded and bitter as they were the General’s gaze was powerful and probing. Kylo removed the dart from his neck and realized as his knuckles brushed his jaw he was without his helm. Trying to conceal his panic and gain the high ground he laid back turning his head away from Hux feigning indifference and exhaustion.

“Make this brief General” Kylo spoke evenly. “I’m in no mood to console you over the failure of Star-killer or strategize a next move. You’ll have to work out your next planetary cataclysm on your own”. He knew banter and spite were familiar languages to them both, but kicking the zealous acolyte while he was down was a risk. “You can find me in my ready room once these tin golums are finished with me” he added cautiously. The last thing he needed was Hux reporting to Snoke more defiant behavior.

“Very well, I grow weary of your foul mood” Hux sneered. “Feeling is flowing from you, see to it the droids staunch it along with your bleeding. Supreme leader Snoke won’t take kindly to you polluting his focus. Not when there is so much for him to... contemplate”. He concludes with venom.

Once the doors snap together as the magnetic seal engages Kylo attempts to assess his mind. The reflection is short lived as whirring and a metallic clank gently sound from the left. BB-9E is a black plated astromech droid that was standard issue at the inception of the First Order. Once the models were deemed obsolete they were all scrapped, all but Niney (Nine-EE).

Kylo had preferred the familiarity of a droid that knew his commands and needs and didn't require the recoding and instruction of the new models issued and reissued every other year. Niney had served aboard Snoke’s personal ship Supremacy. Kylo had encountered the kriffing nuisance as a boy when the order had first taken him in. She was sardonic in a way that reminded him of another
boys home. Another life where wry japes and smirks spoke of affections. Snoke had gifted him the equipment as a fledgling apprentice and permitted him to keep it after considering the logic of an indoctrinated droid for such a precarious master. The poor ball of bolts had been the victim of his ire countless times when memories were too fond and he resented sparing her from decommission. The grated panels Kylo modified around her spheric base made repairs easier.

Another metallic clank stirred him from thoughts. Niney’s red sensor blinked softly up at him like a tiny crimson beacon. Her angular sensor array shifted curiously to one side. “I’m fine” Kylo grumbled. “Don’t panic you won’t be spare material for some new abomination of Hux’s anytime soon”. The red sensor dilated and narrowed. “Really, you won’t be rid of me that easily!”. Satisfied with this answer the inky machine chirped and rolled away now that her anxieties were assuaged. Without a moment’s thought of offering assistance and her purpose concluded she barreled through the doors.

A snap and the doors closed again. Standard med-droids inched forward around him continuing their ministrations as he hurled a length of bandages at the exit. “You could have called for fresh clothes you useless bucket!” he bellowed after Niney. His blood was still coursing from the stimulant. A machine cleaning his wounds ineffectively administered a numbing agent. He couldn’t rightly move from the hip down on his left side, but the hole rent from the blaster acutely stung with sharp sensations.

At the edge of reason and control Kylo raised his hand and force-gripped the droid’s appendage, crushing and removing it. The damaged creature retreated as he tossed the detached heap of metal against a wall and the other droids closed in. Before his rage was more than rolling thunder in his chest another dart pierced his neck and he was greeted by darkness again.

Chapter End Notes

This time I listened to "Goodnight Moon" a musical composition from Marco Beltrami for the film Logan
It is an atmospheric piece that is haunting and mellow until a moment of tension at its end!
It inspired the drifting listlessness of Kylo returning to consciousness and his time in his memories and is marked by his emotional outburst at the end.
We'll Meet Again

Chapter Summary

Time for Rey!

I imagine Rey like myself (of course) is a bright, shining, happy source of light and goodness on the outside but struggles with complications, insecurities, and dueling thoughts inside. It's a bit of a front, a defense mechanism, and a method of survival. My Rey will have the optimism, pragmatism, and enduring resilience of TFA but we will have the benefit of her internal monologue in my story.

Musical inspiration at the end!

*At some point I will be adding art to these chapters as well!

As always bring on the kudos and comments, I'm a first timer! It's been less than 24 hours since I started this and I'm over 60 hits...That's probably not a lot but THANK YOU FOR READING!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

They are safe; safer. For now she thinks. Rey stares into the dark vacuum of space, so much of the system’s brightness gone as the nearest star was drained powering, and ultimately destroying, Star-Killer base. She swallows hard knowing how much more was laid to waste on that planet. Of how she felt drained of hope and replenished with fear, confusion, and pain in that forest.

Kylo Ren she thought fiercely, and for a moment she wondered if the ship had lost it's simulated gravity. From deep within her core something pulled and siphoned off what she felt. Like a new sinkhole emptying sand into an underground cavern. In place of her feelings was a foreign sensation. She felt herself drifting. It was akin to the feeling she had surfing down dunes after scavenging; A weightless, gliding, wandering feeling. But the detached sense of aimlessness was rooted within her mind. Rey kept her breathing even. The experience was not unpleasant. In fact the impressions of surrender and contentedness were welcome distractions from her pain and confusion.

"It is you"

As though a switch had flipped she felt her stomach bottom out as she was brought back firmly into her seat and sense of self. Distressed and disturbed Rey looked behind her. Kylo Ren. It was his voice. He had whispered right behind her ear, no, closer! She had felt him there speaking to her mind; her soul.

Rey wanted to forget the alarming episode. Perhaps it was the stress or the shock. Yet her thoughts returned to Kylo Ren. Ben she concluded. Ben Solo... Han. The only glimmer of promise she had ever seen for the future had been extinguished; stolen.

On Jakku she had nothing and no one. In little more than a day so much had been thrust into her life. Meaning, purpose, friendship. She cursed her naivety. How foolish she was to imagine things
were different out here, that those things were hers, and more-so for thinking they couldn’t be
snatched away. A scavenger should know better. Rey focused on the instruments in front of her.
Chewbacca sat staring intensely at his massive furry fists resting on the console after laying Finn
down and securing him to a bunk. She knew the Wookie was a gentle giant. Sensitive in many ways
and suffering deeply for the loss of his long time companion. Every now and again she remembered
she wasn’t alone in *The Falcon* when Chewie keened softly. The past had always been painful, the
present was hardly an improvement, and so looking over her shoulder at Finn she decided that
forward was the only path towards relief, and with any luck, survival.

Her time with the resistance was brief and in truth very nearly unbearable. So many people, so
much feeling. Her entire life had been spent in utter isolation and her new abilities only made her feel
more exposed and sensitive. There was an onslaught of sentiments and impressions to wade through
when they arrived. Stepping off the ramp of *The Falcon* felt like sinking into quicksand. Friendship,
concern, fear, pain, anger all around her and she had no right to any of it. If Leia hadn’t gripped her
so tightly in her grief for Han, Rey surely would have been buried in the devastating enormity of it
all. Overwhelmed and adrift again the older woman held her together, body and soul, for a long
while.

The only friend Rey felt she could lay claim to remained unconscious. So after rest, provisions,
and direction from the resistance on where to find Luke Skywalker, Rey bid farewell to Finn. She
reminded herself that she needed to move on, move forward, and fight on; If not for herself then for
the friend she now left behind broken and between the forces of life and death.

‘This is not the end’ she thought with determination. With all the feeling, and what she
could only assume was love, that she could muster Rey gently kissed the top of Finn’s head. “We’ll
see each other again. I believe that. Thank you, my friend” she offered quietly before leaving his side
and heading for *The Falcon*.

Chapter End Notes

This part of our story I spent listening to two songs, but the one which married best with
the themes of both grief and parting was "We'll Meet Again" specifically performed by
She & Him

"We'll Meet Again" lyrics

We'll meet again
Don't know where
Don't know when
But I know
We'll meet again
Some sunny day

Keep smilin' thru
Just like you
Always do
'Til the blue skies drive
The dark clouds
Far away
And will you please say hello
to the folks that i know
Tell'em that I won't be long
And they'll be happy to know
That when you saw me go
I was singing this song

We'll meet again
Don't know where
Don't know when
But I know
We'll meet again
Some sunny day

Yeah we'll meet again
I don't know where
And I don't know when
But I do know
That we'll meet again
Some sunny day

So Honey
Keep on smilin' thru
Just like you always do
'Til the blue skies
Drive the dark clouds
Far away

And would you please say hello
To all the folks that I know
And tell'em I won't be long
They'll be happy to know
That when you saw me go
I was singing this song

We'll meet again
Don't know where
Don't know when
But I know
We'll meet again
Some sunny day
Wookie Spit and Ahch-To

Chapter Summary

What do Wookie Spit and Ahch-To have to do with this chapter?

Find out as Rey arrives upon the isolated world!

"A brief lyrical laugh escaped her in a moment of manic amusement. Chewbacca wanted nothing more than to capture the moment and keep his jailbird friend of Jakku this whimsically content the rest of her days. But moments don’t last forever and the force has plans of its own.” -Chapter 4

*See end notes for the musical inspiration/soundtrack for this chapter*

Comments and kudos appreciated! First fanfic!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The route to Ahch-To wouldn’t be easy, or so Rey was told. The navigation would have to be handled manually. Even with both pieces of the map there were large swathes of uncharted space between the safest hyperdrive drop point and the lonely planet.

“Kriffing hell!” she shouted as dark matter turbulence nearly shook The Falcon to pieces.

“Woah there” she cooed running her hands over the console amid the chaos as if soothing the freighter like a spooked animal.

A red light flashed as a siren began to blare. The dark matter would be the least of their concerns if the radiation shielding remained inoperative. At this point Rey abandoned human languages and opted for the crude slang of the sand scavengers she once saved BB-8 from.

Chewbacca bellowed at the overwhelming racket and took the helm as Rey hoisted herself above their seats to divert their acceleration dampener field and use a spare protein bar wrapper to bridge a gap between the conductors in order to share power amongst buffer and shield arrays.

“Lick this!” she ordered holding the wrapper out to Chewie as another tremor wracked the vessel. With her other hand she made quick work of the dampeners and halted the dark matter’s assault upon The Falcon.

“Grarrrrgggh” her co-pilot countered.

“Is this really the time? You ate the last bar now put this in your giant Wookie mouth or we crisp up like fried Taun Taun!” Rey yelled waving the foiled trash.

Chewbacca gave a contented bark as he returned the makeshift part positively sopping in spittle.

“Ah, thank you for your enthusiasm” Rey grimaced as she installed the improvised patch.
The red light stopped and the siren faded. Rey sunk down into her chair and wiped her slobber ridden hands in Chewie’s hair as she patted his shoulder.

“There we are! Nothing to it” she said half convincing herself.

“Ragggh kraghhh rarrrr” Chewbacca jeered.

“Yes, there was a moment of panic” she conceded. “And that kind of language is perfectly acceptable where i come from...and particularly under the circumstances” Rey insisted with a smirk.

Sometime later the duo was roused by the navigation system. As they began breaking through the atmosphere Rey guarded her eyes from the morning light glaring off the planet’s glassy surface.

‘Could there be so many different worlds in the galaxy?’ she wondered. The entirety of Ahch-To was covered in sapphire waters. Rey was curious about how so much water got here, how it stayed here, and if it was anything like the stale troughs of water for beasts to drink in Jakku’s market. As they made their descent she noticed the world was distinguished only by a cluster of small mossy green islands. The softness of their emerald greenery was contrasted by the jagged slate formations fracturing the scenery.

After managing a difficult landing on the uneven isle Rey raced down the ramp onto the clearing’s pebbled ground. She listened closely to the crunch of the gravel beneath her boots and the rhythm of the tide against the stoney shores. Rey drew a deep breath in time with the ebb and flow of the force she felt all around her. She recognized the earthy scent of moss thriving on almost every available surface from her time with Maz. She slowly realized her breathing had synched with another force, this time unfamiliar.

“That sound” she nearly whispered. “...Is that?” Her eyes fluttered open. “The water...it’s moving. Does water always sound like this?” she asked Chewbacca without breaking her gaze upon the sea.

Her eyes were wide with awe. However the Wookie’s eyes were sad. It was as if she feared the big blue world would vanish like a mirage if she dared look away. This disbelief and dismay was the result of a lifetime abandoned on Jakku. For Chewie this heartrending realization was like seeing her react to the green forests of Takodana all over again. After nearly two decades in the wastelands he imagined she’d find beauty even in the outer rim.

“Grrarghh errrrkarrргг” he replied.

“I should like to hear them all, it’s beautiful” she said beaming at her massive companion.

“Rrawwgg urrrk” Chewie exclaimed. “Well perhaps not the leaky faucet” Rey conceded “I don’t think that particular melody inspires much awe!”.

A brief lyrical laugh escaped her in a moment of manic amusement. Chewbacca wanted nothing more than to capture the moment and keep his jailbird friend of Jakku this whimsically content the rest of her days. But moments don’t last forever and the force has plans of its own.

Chapter End Notes

"Shooting Star” composed by Ilan Eshkeri for the film Stardust
"Shooting Star" is the soundtrack/inspiration for this chapter. It begins in a contemplative and ominously epic fashion. And falls quickly into a high paced action sequence that pairs with the treacherous journey to Ahch-To. After the action the melody morphs into a reflective refrain which suggests the passage of time. All before segueing slowly into a beautiful moment of discovery and awe, much like Rey's reaction to Ahch-To! Enjoy!
Waves in Time

Chapter Summary

"He had felt like a live wire. On such a precarious edge between the forces of light and darkness. Both sources of power were beckoning him, he had only to reach out and wield them. Yet he was powerless to choose. All at once he was a child again overcome by his own ability; his decision. But there was no choice, not really. One of them had to perish on that bridge, and the other had to cross over alone". -Chapter 5/ Waves of Time

That scene from TFA. How does Kylo really feel about the loss of his father? And how does he remember events?

Over 200 HITS!! I feel like JK Rowling y'all! Thank you for your time, I hope you are enjoying! We are moving deeper into new territory with each chapter :)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Kylo entered his quarters Niney was buffing a fresh coat of carbonized lacquer on her base. ‘What a vain creature’ he thought stopping to wonder if a droid could truly be aware of its own appearance.

He needed some time alone before he met with Hux in his ready room. He changed into fresh clothes and prepared his helmet on the table beside the door. His thoughts drifted to another helmet, his grandfather’s; Darth Vader.

“I know now it is her” he quietly proclaimed. “Have you always been leading me to this? Or is this the will of the force?” Kylo remained silent for a long moment. He knew better than to expect an earnest reply, but he had half hoped for a sign.

“Perhaps the two things are one and the same for you now grandfather. Either way, I need direction. Is my training complete? Have I demonstrated strength or weakness?” Kylo thought of the weakness Snoke had ordered him to cull. Han Solo, his father.

He could feel himself tremble as he sat down and looked up at the helmet, his mask, that thing which was the epitome of Kylo the master of the Knights of Ren. Han Solo, despite his shortcomings as a father, had been so strong on Star-killer. Stronger perhaps than anyone he had ever seen, and Kylo had asked for his help.

“Take off that mask. You don’t need it” Han chided him.

True there was no mask he could hide behind with his father or mother, but what came tumbling forth when he removed his armor scared him much more. It had felt surreal, removing his helmet and letting it fall to his side on that bridge. He tried to remain guarded but it was useless. Han gave voice to his innermost fears.

“Snoke is using you for your power. When he gets what he wants, he’ll crush you...You know it’s true” his father said.
This very moment Kylo had wondered if Han had any latent telepathic abilities he never developed or understood. It was entirely possible, he imagined his father would have balked at the onset and buried the connection deep. Acting out of fear or confusion in the same manner he rejected his own son so many years ago. He remembered growing melancholy thinking about a father who could have shared his experience and understood him. ‘Such a waste’ he mused bitterly. Not even he had the power to know what could have been, and neither of them ever would.

“Its too late” he had conceded mournfully knowing full well what almost was and what never could be.

But Han had told him he was mistaken, and he had never lied to him. Sometimes as a child he wished his father could have lied like the smuggler he was. For his sake. To shield him from his apprehension and unease around a child so gifted...so powerful.

“I’m being torn apart. I want to be free of this pain” Kylo had admitted tearfully.

He had felt like a live wire. On such a precarious edge between the forces of light and darkness. Both sources of power were beckoning him, he had only to reach out and wield them. Yet he was powerless to choose. All at once he was a child again overcome by his own ability; his decision. But there was no choice, not really. One of them had to perish on that bridge, and the other had to cross over alone.

“I know what I have to do, but I don’t know if I have the strength to do it. Will you help me?” he had implored. When his father answered Kylo was shaken by how unlike Han Solo the ferocity of his commitment was.

“Yes. Anything” he vowed.

The last of the light from the distant sun Star-killer was consuming to power its weapon vanished. Darkness consumed the oscillator room. Kylo was unaware he had extended his saber toward his father. Han held fast in return. The hand joined between them shuddering. The darkness was pressing so close around them both, he needed to move, to decide, to reach forth and claim strength or kill his weakness. Before he could find the heart of his feelings between the hope, pain, fear, rage, and regret; before he could disentangle himself from the silent pleas of the scavenger watching above, it was done.

His saber crackled wildly as it tore through his father’s chest. Han’s eyes wide for a moment before they softened and he felt Han’s hand upon his face.

“Thank you” he heard himself say.

Then his father was gone. Falling from the bridge into the bright mist of the oscillator’s power field below. Until Chewbacca’s blaster bolt struck him in the side he had been falling too, lost in reflection and unsure of how this moment had arrived.

Hindsight was no clearer he thought as he rose to his feet. Some quandaries had no resolutions and Kylo may never know if his father had sacrificed himself to save his son, or if he himself had fulfilled his duty and emerged that crucible as a man complete; whole with the darkness.

Securing his helmet he paused before the door. The only thing certain now was a debriefing with Hux in his ready room. Niney chirped a reminder about asset inventory in the aftermath of Star-killer and he struggled not to zap the droid with dark side lightening. Reaching through the force he sensed calming waves wash over him. Balance restored within himself Kylo Ren left his quarters intent upon being whole, perhaps one day without his mask.
Chapter End Notes

The soundtrack/inspiration for this chapter is...
"Waves Crashing on Distant Shores of Time" composed by Clint Mansell for the brilliant show "Black Mirror: episode: San Junipero"

I can only beg that my readers listen to these songs. They can really enhance the writing and some will surely become favorite songs of yours.

This is another atmospheric piece futuristic and nostalgic at the same time in the vein of the soundtrack from "Stranger Things". That description is fitting in itself because this chapter we delve back into the mind of Kylo and his feeling about his father's death. The past, present, and future all fight for attention in his mind and so the musical contrast of bittersweet melodies is a great match. The very end of the song has a unique refrain which ties into the piece but refocuses and brings us back to a path leading forward...much like the final break from his reverie and Kylo's thoughts about the future.

Hope you enjoyed!
Everybody Wants to Rule the World

Chapter Summary

Kylo Ren and Hux get snarky!
As always see the end notes for the soundtrack/inspiration!
The songs really enhance the story!
Almost at 300 HITS!! YAY!!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Armitage Hux was a diligent man. Disciplined to a fault and fastidious in every detail of his person and profession, which at this point in his career, became the same thing. Kylo Ren was pleased that Hux would not keep him waiting. He was already in his ready room examining the procession of smaller ships departing and arriving in the hangars the window overlooked.

When the door to the room shut Hux pulled himself away from his post. Kylo noticed he had been making notations on a data-pad in his hands.

“It would seem your ready room has the benefit of a singularly strategic vantage point” Hux mused with clipped precision.

“So it does” Kylo stated seating himself at the head of the table.

“Don’t let my little assessment deceive you, there is no point in getting comfortable” Hux instructed while trailing his finger over the surface of the black conference table. “I’m merely here to escort you to The Supreme Leader” he finished as he inspected his black leather glove for filth.

Kylo was confused. The feeling was foreign and strategically he was in a poor position.

“Were my injuries so dire? I require such an esteemed chaperone? Surely there are better things for you to be doing...watching? Whatever it is you spend all day doing” Kylo asserted with enough derision that even his helmet couldn’t conceal it with modulation.

“Very droll” Hux remarked as his exacting gaze darted up from his data-pad. “We’ll see what mirth is left after The Supreme Leader has appraised you”.

As they briskly walked to the holographic throne room of The Supreme Leader, Kylo sought the balance in the force he had felt before. If what he experienced earlier was any indication he and the girl Rey did indeed have a force bond. He needed to capitalize on the resilience and serenity she possessed now more than ever. Gently reaching into the stream of energy he immediately felt the absence of calm or contentedness. The waves of tranquility had been replaced by an undertow of despair. He tried to detach himself from the feeling but the riptide of desperation and rejection weighed him down.

Nothing escaping his scrutiny Hux quickly reprimanded Kylo’s sudden unease. “No histrionics Ren, I’ve already had the report from sick-bay. You’re well enough, though I can’t speak
to your condition following your audience with The Supreme Leader”.

At that threat Kylo Ren was anchored back within his own persona and reality. Burying the unsettling emotions he experienced through the force he composed himself before the throne room’s entrance. Ben Solo was dead and now Han Solo had joined him. Snoke could not refute the results. Surely he would approve that the ends justified the means. Though he had not yet convinced Rey to accept his tutelage, he was certain the truth would persuade her. Whether or not it would satisfy The Supreme Leader was another matter.

Chapter End Notes

This Chapter soundtrack/inspiration is "Everybody wants to Rule the World" covered by Lorde

I think the lyrics say it all in regard to Kylo Ren and this Chapter that he spends amongst The First Order!

"Everybody Wants to Rule the World" by Lorde for The Hunger Games: Catching Fire

Welcome to your life
There's no turning back
Even while we sleep
We will find you
Acting on your best behavior
Turn your back on Mother Nature
Everybody wants to rule the world

It's my own design
It's my own remorse
Help me to decide
Help me make the most of freedom
And of pleasure
Nothing ever lasts forever
Everybody wants to rule the world

There's a room where the light won't find you
Holding hands while the walls come tumbling down
When they do, I'll be right behind you
So glad we've almost made it
So sad we had to fade it
Everybody wants to rule
everybody wants to rule
everybody wants to rule
The world
This is What it Feels Like

Chapter Summary

Rey finds Luke on Ahch-To

"Rey didn’t know if she was on the brink of tears or a tantrum. While part of her wanted to cry. To beg him to take the kriffing saber; to accept her. The other part wanted to howl in pain, in fury; and discard the weapon in defiance". -Chapter 7/This is What it Feels Like

Soundtrack/inspiration in end notes! I feel like this Chapter's song could be written right out of Rey's thoughts!

Please share this work with any Reylos you know! Don't worry we will hit the juicy stuff soon! I'd love to hit 10+ subscriptions and 500 hits soon!
THANK YOU ALL

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Rey and Chewie had climbed, trekked, and traveled along the steep stony slopes of the island for close to an hour. There was sweat on her brow but the breeze was cool. Rey knew from the frigid nights of a desert planet that the best way to keep warm was to keep moving. But daylight was already fading and if they didn’t find Luke soon it would have to wait until tomorrow. Despite being a massive furry brute Chewbacca was sensitive to the balmy weather. She sent him back to The Falcon to prepare for the night.

No sooner than the moment Chewie disappeared from her line of sight over a mossy ridge Rey felt a pull towards a difficult peak on the coast of Ahch-To. Something inside told her this was the way. She climbed the sheer cliffside with ease. Decades on Jakku scavenging over Empire ships scaling hundreds of feet into and out of destroyers and AT-AT’s made the holds simple to find. Near the summit Rey paused feeling an energy awash from the edge above her. As though the moment she pulled herself onto the landing she would be immersed in it. In one swift motion she pulled herself up and over the side of the ridge; into the force and into the presence of Luke Skywalker.

Rey reached into her bag and removed the lightsaber that frightened her so much. Devastated by the roiling sense of displeasure and regret she felt coursing from the Jedi she extended it to him. It took everything within her not to sprint to the ship and head back to Jakku. Rey didn’t know if she was on the brink of tears or a tantrum. While part of her wanted to cry. To beg him to take the kriffing saber; to accept her. The other part wanted to howl in pain, in fury; and discard the weapon in defiance.

Her arms were strong, but the one she left outstretched began to ache. Uncertainty and rejection bloomed and bled through her like the gore of a freshly bandaged wound. At the point of surrender Rey could hardly believe her eyes and ears when the bearded man began to speak.

“How doesn’t matter; You should have never found me” he curtly said.
Luke then swiftly passed her by, like a phantom, and made for the edge opposite from where Rey ascended.

“And a word of advice” he offered coolly. “Look before you leap, and survey an island before you scale a fifty foot cliff face”.

And with that the man disappeared descending a set of steps formed from the island’s earth and stone. Rey took her time returning to The Falcon. She had taken a long time to recover after Luke had left. Her arm felt heavy and numb all at once after she dropped it to her side. After the steps she became aware of the saber still in her hand. Initially she had felt injured, but now her wrath was piqued.

With a ‘whoosh’ the blade was alight. Enthralled in the power she held and the experience she remembered from Star-killer Rey began to cut and parry through the air. Spinning, swiping, and driving the light through her pain she practiced her movement and control. Once she had thoroughly exhausted herself she made her way back to the freighter hoping Chewbacca had a meal prepared and a warm shoulder ready to cry on.

Darkness had fallen by the time Rey reached the camp set up around The Falcon. She took a seat on a crate Chewie had placed at the base of the ship's ramp. In front of the makeshift seating was a small but efficient fire and a bowl of something that had been rehydrated.

He knew she wasn't going to begin this conversation herself, but something had happened after they had parted ways.

"Hrrraghh grrkraah raggk?" he asked curiously while pushing green mush around in his bowl.

"Farmboy?" Rey snickered. "Seems he's fared well enough. He is old now. Old and..." her voice trailed off. "And...Chewie, he didn't take the light saber".

Something scurried in the underbrush and the Wookie growled before turning back to his friend with big brown attentive eyes.

"This is all wrong" Rey continued. "I don't know what I should do. I wanted so badly to do something, to help, to be a part of this; to belong. But...maybe this just isn't it". Tears rimmed her eyes "I just wish I knew what they all want"

Chewbacca didn't have to be a Jedi to sense hints of the young woman's past in her distress. She felt she had failed, she felt rejected, and she couldn't understand what people wanted her to become; what she could do to make them happy; to make them stay. She was trying to reason with ghosts in her head.

"Gargghh kraaagg?" he asked gently. In Wookie it was a question akin to 'What do you want?'

Rey took a moment to consider this before deciding "I need someone to show me my place in all this".
Soundtrack/inspiration for this Chapter is "It's OK" by Frida Sundemo

*As always i recommend listening to these song after reading...I have a habit like James Gunn (director of Guardians of the Galaxy etc.) of listening to songs and being inspired to take my stories places...and boy have I discovered some destinations recently...There are some AMAZING songs and chapters coming up soon folks!

This song is perfection for Rey in this chapter. The song is energetic yet melancholy. It is a contrast in itself. And so much of what Rey is feeling is the push and pull of emotions and experiences around her. Her entire life so far has been spent waiting for something...for someone...and waiting to begin living. Now that she is thrust into the universe she is dealing with so many of these things all at once and on such a profound scale!

LYRICS
"It's OK" by Frida Sundemo

Oh, it's OK
This is what it feels like
And it's OK to tear down what's been a wall
It's been a wait
Now this is how life strikes
And this is what it feels like

To be alive
To be alive
To be alive
Yeah this is what it feels like
This is how life strikes
This is what it feels like

You'll be just fine
No matter if it takes time
And it's alright if dreams shift along the way
It took a while but this is when life strikes
And this is what it feels like

To be alive
To be alive
To be alive
yeah this is what it feels like
This is how life strikes
To be alive
To be alive
To be alive
yeah this is what it feels like
This is how life strikes
This is what it feels like

This is what it feels like
Yeah this is what it feels like
This is what it feels like
This is what it feels like
Yeah this is what it feels like
This is what it feels like

This is what it feels like
So You Want to Start a War

Chapter Summary

Kylo and the Supreme Leader have a little chat. Things don't go well...Things are picking up folks!

Soundtrack/inspiration at the end as always!

*We are about to be at 500 hits! So I will be adding the first piece of chapter art soon!*

Thank you as always, please continue to read and share amongst fans :)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The color of fresh blood is always brighter than people expect, and the inside of Supreme Leader Snoke’s throne room was dimly lit but awash in a brilliant shade of violence.

The Praetorian guard flanked either side of Snoke at the back of the room. Crossing the glassy black floor Kylo felt a sense of dread build. It had been years since he met the man in the flesh, or whatever it was that still held his decrepit body together. He wondered if he would be subjected to re-indoctrination by Snoke. He did not fear the pain, but some part of him; the one that had only just re-discovered Rey feared losing any more of himself than he already had.

He noticed the addition of an apparatus; a pair at the sides of the throne. He was no fool. He had been a member of the First Order for nearly two decades. Enough missions and a tally of First Order assets and sectors of interest gave him a rough idea of their purpose. He tried to mentally prepare himself for the sum of his fears before he was interrupted.

“Kylo Ren!” Snoke’s damaged voice echoed. “Master of the Knights of Ren. Remove your helmet and confess your failure”.

His thick raven waves shifted as he removed his helmet. He was remiss to part with its protection so soon, but what choice did he have. Surely the scrutiny of Snoke’s gaze would have sensed past the mask either way.

“Failure?” Kylo tested evenly trying to feign surprise. “Forgive me Supreme Leader you gave the impression that the death of Solo would please you and strengthen my abilities. My very connection with the dark...”.

“THE GIRL!” Snoke interrupted without ceremony. “The scavenger you foolish boy!”.

“Not to mention nearly a decade of effort on Star-Killer itself and the...” Hux inserted heatedly.

“SILENCE!” Snoke cut the general off. “Star-killer was but a tool. A powerful toy to manipulate, convince, and if necessary destroy our opposition. But it means nothing...” he paused to take a deep breath which wheezed and rattled in his chest. “It is nothing, without the power of our true objective".
Snoke stood. Kylo’s eyes widened in shock. Snoke was incensed and his passion worried him.

“Your actions, or perhaps lack thereof, have jeopardized the vitality of our power Kylo Ren. Your weakness, your compassion” he nearly spat. “Has impaired your sight; your connection to your own power”.

It was at this point Kylo felt through the force that Snoke had taken hold of his neck and was slowly squeezing tighter. He was determined not to panic, not to flounder, or gasp, or plead. If Snoke wanted to choke the life from him he would hardly be able to resist against a power like his; But then, Snoke was determined to find Rey. To take her, to use her. Kylo felt a light blossom inside of himself. Small, weak, and distant...but he focused to it and to life.

“Even now, you are. SO.WEAK!” Snoke snapped emphasizing each word with his grip. “Extinguish this frailty once and for all. Kill the past! Bring me the girl and be who you were meant to be!” he bellowed as Kylo felt his consciousness fading.

“Prove me wrong” Kylo heard Snoke nearly whisper suddenly as he was released and the leader returned to his seat.

Kylo Ren had been brought down to his bended knee. He took one long deep breath and lifted his helmet. Pausing before he returned to its sanctuary he vowed “I will”.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter soundtrack/inspiration is "Start a War" by Klergy, Valerie Broussard

This song is a dark and energized look into Kylo's mind. He has been pushed by the First Order to a breaking point. He has seen the results of splintering into their grasp (the death of his father) and is now interested in the potential of deviating from the path they have planned for him. Snoke is the one who wants a war with the galaxy, and is always keen on stirring one up inside of Kylo. This time, by the end of the chapter, Kylo Ren is ready to fling the result of Snoke's meddling right back at him.

"Start a War" by Klergy (ft. Valerie Broussard)

So you wanna start a war in the age of icons  
So you wanna be immortal with a loaded gun  
So you wanna start a war, war  
So you wanna start a war

[Verse]
Bang, shots fired  
Pain is what you desire  
The pen is mightier than the sword  
Then how did we get here, my God, my God  
Sail among liars  
Blame the deniers  
If history is dead and gone  
Then how did we get here, my God (my God)

[Chorus]
So you wanna start a war in the age of icons
So you wanna be immortal with a loaded gun
So you wanna start a war, war
So you wanna start a war, war
So you wanna start a war
War, war
So you wanna start a war
So you wanna start a war
So you wanna start a war in the age of icons
So you wanna be immortal with a loaded gun
So you wanna start a war
So you wanna start a war

[Outro]
My God, my God (my God)
If history is dead and gone
Then how did we get here, my God (my God)
Paralyzed

Chapter Summary

Kylo gets his orders and has some time to reflect on the way to D’Qar

Again many thanks to all those reading!

Keep commenting and sharing :)

Soundtrack/inspiration at the end!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Back in his ready room Kylo Ren listened with detached frustration as Hux briefed him on the location of The Resistance. Niney would occasionally bump into his boot in an attempt to jostle his focus.

“You will be flying point in the rear guard of the second wave of attack. Once the vanguard has cleared your path and drawn fire away from your unit your soul duty will be to target the Raddus as it orbits D’Qar and deploy the weapon we have installed upon your tie-silencer” Hux droned as he moved stainless markers across the desk in mock formation.

“You will only have one shot Ren” he continued pointedly. “The blast is a high intensity beam of energy that we will not have time to recharge. It is able to penetrate a large craft’s shields and destroy it, but there will be no second chance. This is perhaps the most important asset to The Resistance”. Hux drew closer now as he spoke lost in the glory of his own machinations.

“The one who destroys the Raddus, despite their past shortcomings, will surely be granted The Supreme Leader’s favor. Their leaders, their best fighters, their wounded, their very heart...your mother! Will be aboard that ship!” The young general spat with fire in his eyes “Don’t fuck it up!”.

Niney was secured into Kylo’s tie-silencer and he was just finishing his preflight check when he felt across the force. Tentatively checking for some sign from the other side, somewhere in another life where he knew Rey would be. It felt like reaching for something in a dream; someone that receded with the tide each time he outstretched his hand. Nothing. Unable to find or feel anything Kylo primed the ship’s ignition and reveled in the thrumming of the engines once he activated them. The sense of control put him at ease. He had no clue where Rey was, and knowing he could unwittingly be blasting a ship she was aboard to kriffing pieces made him sick. Reason told him based on the sensations they had shared through the force that she had gone looking for Luke Skywalker, but still his lack of certainty was disturbing.

Minutes after launching The First Order ships managed to align themselves in formation. They would manually fly as far as possible before using hyper-space to drop into location beyond D’Qar. This would give The Resistance as little warning as possible of their approach.

As the stars streaked by Kylo Ren’s thoughts drifted to another light within the force which called to him, one which he was now ordered to extinguish. A Princess, a senator, a general, his
Bitterly he thought of the fights she had with his father, especially before he was sent away. She tried to convince Solo, in her own way to convince herself, in vain that Ben belonged with his family. That her little boy was anything other than a threat. He had seen pain in her eyes when they were ultimately parted, but it wasn’t the pain of regret or failure. It wasn’t that losing this argument or losing her nerve had lost her son. It was the agonizing pain of clarity. That she had reconciled herself to the truth that his place was not at her side. The sight of it in her eyes had filled him with an agony and rage he was glad to never feel again since. But the sound of his own small broken voice crying out in anger and sorrow as they were divided still haunted him.

Close to the jump point Kylo cleared his mind again and extended his focus across the galaxy. Drifting across the expanse he sensed millions of minds between them. Some crying out in pain, others in fear, anger, or frustration. He felt like a bird surveying their energy from a great height until he found her. Descending into her consciousness he could only discern brief impressions from this distance, even with his gifts.

He saw light filtering through a sheer curtain. She was content. Her thoughts already going over an agenda of meetings. She was sitting at her vanity. Leia powdered her face. She was putting on earrings, then a ring. That ring. She kept the pieces. Kylo halted his search.

As a child he had played with her jewelry as she prepared each morning. He was only just discovering his abilities within the force. At that time the ring she wore now was a brooch. A perfect royal blue Corellian pearl set on a gently curling piece of gold. He had been playing with it at her feet. Making it spin in the air faster and faster. His father had come barreling into the room looking for his boots. He had startled him. He lost control. Ben remembered how the ornament had split perfectly along its center. How the pin that fastened it had been torn away by the same force. His mother had taken a sharp breath and his father was howling his name before the pieces reached the ground. Ben had bolted upright and reached up to be pulled into his mother’s lap. He remembered covering his ears despite the silence in the room. His father’s thoughts; his anger was so loud and he knew no other way to mute the onslaught. His mother’s hand had pressed against his curls drawing him closer to her chest. As he closed his eyes in an attempt to deprive another sense and escape the havoc he noticed a bright red star bloom against the white satin of her blouse. When he had lost control the pin had been ripped from the brooch and become lodged in her shoulder.

Suddenly the blood stain in Kylo’s memory became a blinking red light. He was drawn back from the past by a sensor indicating it was time to use hyper-space to jump to D’Qar.

Chapter End Notes

If you're curious about Leia's ring in this chapter she can be seen wearing it in almost all of her promotional shots for TLJ

Soundtrack/inspiration for this chapter "Paralyzed" by NF

This song is a great one. I mean it could literally be a Kylo Ren anthem. It is a great reflection upon feeling helpless and uncertain. I hope people are enjoying some of the music behind these chapters!

"Paralyzed" by NF lyrics
When did I become so numb?
When did I lose myself?
All the words that leave my tongue
Feel like they came from someone else

I'm paralyzed
Where are my feelings?
I no longer feel things
I know I should
I'm paralyzed
Where is the real me?
I'm lost and it kills me - inside
I'm paralyzed

When did I become so cold?
When did I become ashamed? (Ooh)
Where's the person that I know?
They must have left
They must have left
With all my faith

I'm paralyzed
I'm scared to live but I'm scared to die
And if life is pain then I buried mine a long time ago
But it's still alive
And it's taking over me - where am I?
I wanna feel something, I'm numb inside
But I feel nothing, I wonder why
And on the race of life time passes by
Look
I sit back and I watch it, hands in my pockets
Waves come crashing over me but I just watch 'em
I just watch 'em
I'm under water but I feel like I'm on top of it
I'm at the bottom and I don't know what the problem is
I'm in a box
But I'm the one who locked me in
Suffocating and I'm running out of oxygen

I'm paralyzed (Yeah, I'm just so paralyzed)
Where are my feelings? (Yeah, I'm just so paralyzed)
I no longer feel things (I have no feelings)
I know I should (Oh. How come I'm not moving? Why aren't I moving? Ay yeah)
I'm paralyzed
Where is the real me? (Where is the real me?)
I'm lost and it kills me - inside (I'm paralyzed, I'm paralyzed)
I'm paralyzed (I'm paralyzed)
Chapter Summary

Time to catch up with The Resistance! This chapter may not be Rey or Kylo centric but I promise it does not disappoint. Every part of the story I tell is important.

Not to mention, if this is what I accomplish writing about these characters imagine what I will have in store when Rey and Kylo meet up ;) lots of fluffy goodness!!

Please let me know what you think!!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Leia’s grasp lingers on her own hand after she slides on the ring. Any other woman would think the sudden pang she feels is the touch of age in her joints, but this woman is not any other. She idly traces a figure 8 over and between the hemispheres of the blue Corellian pearl; something broken and fractured, once whole, but made beautiful again.

She is stirred from her reverie as the double doors of her quarters upon unto a corridor buzzing with activity. Poe Dameron is leaning against the wall opposite her doors, he’s having yet another animated conversation with Paige Tico, a promising pilot in The Resistance. Leia takes a moment to appreciate the affection in their eyes, the smiles on their faces, and the warmth it stirs in her heart. Poe always has such an easy way about him, it’s part of what makes him such an inspiring leader, but there is something special in the part of himself he shares with Paige.

Poe steals a piece of Paige’s protein bar and pops it high into the air. As he goes to catch the rogue morsel in his mouth Paige’s eyes meet Leia’s. The young woman smirks to herself at the soft look in Leia’s eyes and swiftly gives Poe an elbow without preamble. The prodigal pilot only just manages to catch his snack before spitting it at Leia’s feet as Paige’s arm strikes him. Fortunately BB-8 is in tow and gingerly sweeps up the errant crumb.

“Good morning” Leia says laughingly.

“Yes, ahem...” Poe clears his throat as he recovers “good morning General”.

“Oh, didn’t see you there” Leia sarcastically remarks giving him the once over “I was talking to BB”.

Paige audibly snorts at this.

“But since I have you here, we should cover a few things. Will you walk with me to the meeting this morning?” Leia asks.

At this point Poe shifts his weight uncharacteristically while he appears to be searching for words. Suddenly Leia understands this early morning rendezvous outside her quarters.

Paige chimes in with her usual brand of bold optimism “What the head boy here is trying to ask is if we could play hooky a few hours this morning General. Maybe skip the briefing and
strategy meetings today and scoot back in time for training and scouting duty? Fearless leader here managed to switch our rounds to this afternoon but wanted the OK from mommy”, she points a thumb at Poe intent upon giving him one last ribbing.

Poe releases the breath no one realized he was holding in relief. “Exactly!”. He beams at Paige.

Leia can’t help but smile and roll her eyes while she nods her head in assent. Tilting it to the side for good measure signaling them to ‘get outta here’ and enjoy the morning, their youth, and their happiness.

Poe, ever the pilot, knows exactly where they are heading. He has thought about today so many times since returning from Jakku and he wants everything to be perfect. Even he isn’t sure how he managed to survive that crash with Finn and the best damn pilot in The Resistance can only be so lucky so many times. He made it out alive and made it back into Paige’s arms, he’d be damned if he was gonna leave them again without making their anniversary a day to remember.

In the past the day they met passed much like any other with the exception of some private fly time after drills and an absent room mate affording some privacy that night. One year they spent the afternoon clearing the hydraulic lines in their x-wings. That was an anniversary to remember. Despite the manual labor it felt selfish to enjoy each others company for so long.

D’Qar was a pleasant outpost, a diamond in the ruff of kriffing miserable outer rim sanctuaries The Resistance could scrounge together. About a 10 minute walk from the hanger they arrived at a clearing in the greenery of the balmy forest. There were tiny white flowers blooming in clusters in the shaggy grass. The soft breeze blew tiny petals about and the snowy blooms fixed in their hair and uniforms. At the edge of the glade a small waterfall gently rushed over stones smoothed and rounded by its persistence.

Poe audibly stretched and nestled himself into a choice spot in the center of it all. Paige plucked a few blossoms before settling beside him.

“Tired already? What are we up to this year? A hike? reconnaissance? mastering the art of floral arrangement?” She asked merrily.

“Better” Poe mused lazily without moving his gaze from the passing clouds. Slowly and tenderly he urged Paige to lay back at his side.

“This” he said triumphantly lacing his fingers in hers. Comfortable, contented, and safe they spent some time secluded in an amicable and intimate peace. Laying in the grass, staring at the sky, experiencing the world without the world.

Finally Poe raised himself up on his elbows “Well...not just this” he said as he brushed a stray lock of Paige’s dark hair from her face. Her eyes had drifted shut at some point but they opened slowly as she felt him kiss her.

“Now that I have your attention” he mocked as he offered a hand to help her sit up.

He held a long narrow box. When she looked closer she could see it was for an x-wing strut.

“Oh you shouldn’t have” she said in a dramatically breathy tone.
Looking down Poe got the joke. “Fair enough. Had to improvise” he shrugged.

Taking a deep breath and correcting his posture Poe took another pass at romance.

“Paige Tico” he began and her name alone brought out a special smile. “You are one of the best pilots I have ever met. I say one of because I have in fact met myself and I am pretty spectacular!”

At this she laughed in that way that always made the bridge of her nose crinkle. Poe loved that crinkle and the adoration he felt returned him to his thoughts.

“You are beautiful, kind, courageous, understanding, fun, funny...crazy!...and...and it’s my kind of crazy too. We fly tandem see? We fit together like N-42 stabilizers and ionized calipers. We cover each other and return fire. And after everything...I can’t...I won’t initiate another flight sequence without you as...my co-pilot” he finishes rather proud of his metaphor.

Paige thoughtfully considers this before noting “You know there’s no room for a co-pilot in your ship right?”

Poe’s jaw slacks and he nearly gapes at her before she giggles and plants a lingering kiss on him. Before he can get too lost in the moment she expertly retrieves the box from his grasp. When she opens the strut box she is struck speechless. Inside is a silver crescent necklace. Poe’s mother, and her mother, and her mother’s mother and so on inherited the necklace, and when they found their partner they bestowed it upon them. Poe Dameron had no siblings and without a daughter it had been given to him after his father died. Paige traced her fingers over the details etched inside the moon.

“I want you to have it.” He smiles warmly as he studies her reaction. “I know we’ve never been able to give gifts...but this isn’t really a gift”.

Misunderstanding Paige quickly motions to give the box back.

“No, no, no. I mean that, you know what it means to my family; to me. And I can hardly give you something that was already yours”.

She understands. This oil smeared box, this necklace, this tradition; she is holding his heart in her hands. Paige smiles and her eyes shine with jubilant tears. Poe leans in to clasp the necklace on and is pleased when he sits back to finally see it around her neck, upon her chest; above her heart.

“Well they don’t call it Yavin 4 for nothing” he remarks about his home world suddenly “Fourth moon of Yavin, folks there are moon loony...and now you really have a bit of my crazy”.

Paige looks down at the necklace again and notices with glee the hand that holds it.

“I’m not getting out maneuvered that easily fly boy!” she laughs happily as she yanks a small ring from her pinky finger. Looking at the small band she thinks twice and takes the chain from her ID badge to fashion a necklace out of it.

“This, Poe Dameron, is the gasket from the x-wing you broke when we first met” she declares with a satisfied grin as she latches it around his neck.

“I did NOT break anything, the technician got lazy and...” he started

“The technician was my little sister Rose and you clipped a tie fighter coming out of near warp speed!”
“It was a strategic bump...precisely planned, and executed” Poe reasoned.

“The only thing you executed was that ships nacelle thruster!” Paige chuckled.

The exchange had them giddy and approaching their final destination when an alarm cut through the tranquility of the glade with shrieking urgency. It was still so early. They had been so sheltered in the clearing, so sure of each other and the future. The morning fog had not yet been burned off by the sun and yet the sirens announced imminent danger. Slowly a thunderous clamor rose from the west, from that bit of sky it was still too early for the sun to reach. In a flash a string of shadows, tie fighters, streaked towards The Resistance base. The First Order had arrived.

Chapter End Notes

Soundtrack/Inspiration for this chapter is "Moon and Back" By Alice Kristiansen

Okay so there is an obvious tie to this chapter with the moon, but even beyond that this is a lovely ballad that reflects the tenderness and devotion of the characters in this scene. Definitely worth a listen. It will be a new favorite love song ;)

"Moon and Back" Lyrics

I'm talking in circles
Can't get out of my head
I cry at commercials
And I never make the bed
And I'm pulling your last thread
When I'm coming unraveled

Baby to the moon and back
You still love me more than that
When my skies are gray and
My whole world is shaking
To the moon and back
You love me more than that

When you go quiet
And won't let your guard down
I hear through the silence
That you're trying to figure it out
You're trying to make me proud
Believe me now

Baby to the moon and back
I still love you more than that
When your skies are gray and
Your whole world is shaking
To the moon and back
I love you more than that

We may fall but we'll keep on going
We may break but we won't stay broken
Through the cracks in the road the flowers grow
For you see our storm clouds forming
And the sun won't rise in the morning
You should know

Baby to the moon and back
I will love you more than that
When your skies are gray and
Your whole world is shaking
To the moon and back
I love you more than that
To the moon and back
I love you more than that
Chapter Summary

Insanely proud of this chapter...not sure why?

Rey, Ben, and a special bond in the past on Ahch-To...AND THE APPEARANCE OF PORGS!

Please comment, kudos, and share!

I would love some more feedback...I see lots of hits! So i'm thinking y'all must like it!

THANK YOU ALL FOR READING! We are getting into juicer territory folks!

See end notes for soundtrack/inspiration as usual!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Rey didn’t sleep well. She couldn’t shake the feeling that they were being watched. Chewie was sleeping soundly and by that she meant you could hear him snore from Coruscant.

Every time she felt herself slipping into unconsciousness she felt a strange sensation wash over her. Rey was exhausted but she was also stubborn and resisted the strange veil that seemed to slide over her. There was no moon shining here and the stars shone impossibly clear and bright. Staring in wonder up at the speckled canopy she felt a floating feeling as the darkness embraced each star, her eyes shut, and the island spoke to her.

For a blissful moment she was adrift in a tranquil pool reflecting the light and dark of the universe. Each ripple and swirl mirroring the wandering stars and planets of the cosmos. Suddenly she sank through its depths and found herself lying on a mossy cliffside. She was still on the island, but it was daylight.

Rey reached her hand up to contain a small gasp when she saw herself. Small, happy, and bright. Her smaller self was meditating alone. A little smirk betrayed the mischief she was really focused upon. Rey felt the ground tremble before several rocks the size of her six year old self’s head rose into the air. The little one sneaked a peek and smiled triumphantly revealing a notably missing front tooth. Abruptly she closed her eyes again, screwed up her face in concentration and began spinning the baby boulders. The rocks arched and looped around little Rey as she tore additional stones from the ground and brought them into the fold of her display.

Unexpectedly a tiny creature tottered forward flapping little wings and chittering as its wide eyes stared in wonder. The child opened her eyes abandoning her focus almost completely. As a woman grown who had struggled to summon a light saber from a dozen yards away, Rey sensed the immanent danger. Springing to her feet she lunged forward to shield her smaller self from the rain of slate.

Rey noticed how the hands she held around the girl’s head moved through her. This was a moment in time, a memory, a vision and she could no more touch or change it than she could
dismantle and scavenge pieces of the force.

But the avalanche never arrived. Unwrapping herself from her past self she turned to see a young boy. Lightness and darkness contrasted his features. Fair and somber with shining eyes and soft dark waves of hair.

Rey didn’t know when her tears began to fall, but they traced soft wet paths down her face as she watched the boy lower the boulders to the ground careful to avoid the critter and the girl.

“BEN” little Rey nearly burst. “Did you see that! Did you see what I did?!”

He was tall even in his youth. Little more than a step forward and he was bending to examine the girls face.

“I didn’t miss a moment, and lucky thing too!” he chided as he released her chin satisfied with her condition. “What did I tell you about training alone?”

Little Rey’s light seemed dashed by his lack of enthusiasm. Ben seemed to sense her distress turning suddenly and kneeling as he tried to remedy the misstep.

“Well, I guess you weren’t entirely alone were you?” he smirked as he scooped the creature into his hands and settled it in Rey’s arms.

This made her giggle.

He seemed relieved and offered her his hand. “Just promise you won’t start taking advice on the force from any Porgs okay sweetheart”.

‘Sweetheart’. It made Rey think of Han as she watched the children walk into the distance. She moved to follow but the ground fell away beneath her.

Falling forward images flashed by of fire, water, the light of sabers, blaster fire, and battle. Rey felt winded as she landed upon the dusty floor of a small hut. The one room dwelling was dark and the steel fire pit hearth in the center had gone out. Rey heard the beat of something against the thatched roof and the stones outside. She remembered all the different sounds of water Chewie had mentioned. Rey thought perhaps this new musical quality was the most beautiful, but before she could remember the sound of the waves on the shore a blinding light flashed dangerously through the room. Rey had seen sandstorms occasionally generate heat flash along the horizon on Jakku, but the electricity of this storm was much closer. Moments later a terrible crack sounded. It was as though the island were being rent in two and Rey shuddered.

From the corner of her eye she noticed she had not been the only one to tremble. Little Rey cowered upon her palette. Curling in upon herself she let out a small wail as if to challenge the raging sky.

The next flash of lightening revealed a silhouette at the doorway. Before the thunder could answer and shake the ground he was at the side of her bed.

When the crashing arrived little Rey didn’t call out again against the storm. Instead, without ever opening her eyes, she reached out for the boy beside her. Ben kneeled beside the girl and laid his head across from hers. Awkwardly resting half of himself along the edge of the cot Ben smiled at the her when she finally opened her weary eyes. Rey looked on mesmerized as she watched her once tiny hand rest against his cheek. The child languidly traced shapes between the constellations of freckles on Ben’s face as she fell asleep.
Another brilliant streak tore through the sky illuminating the moment. When the peal of thunder boomed in reply she was wrenched from the trance and cast back into the starry expanse which first ushered her to these memories.

Before Rey could open her eyes she felt herself rising back to the surface of something. This time she didn’t resist the veil she felt slide over her as she awoke. Blinking up into the pale light of an early dawn her thoughts orbited the massive discovery she had made and her eyes focused on a mournful Luke Skywalker. The power of this place, the island, Ahch-To was not trying to conceal anything at all, instead it had been trying to reveal everything all along.

Chapter End Notes

Soundtrack/Inspiration: "Muscle Memory" By Lights **Begging you all to listen**

As always the soundtrack is massively important to the tone and storytelling. This is a ballad that recounts the power of memory if when we are unaware. Much like Rey's interaction with the force energy of Ahch-To. Memories leave a sort of lingering ghost in the places that matter most...much like the ghosts in our hearts the most important people leave. There is also the mention of call and response, which is embodied by the Reylo dynamic and the storm at the end of the chapter. Hope you enjoyed!

"Muscle Memory" By Lights Lyrics

After having spent the fast year
Waiting for the next time I can get you close
I grew used to being back here
Like a chorus and rhyme, soldier at his post

You call and I respond, the sparrow and the song
I miss you when you’re gone

When I am alone, I see you in the dark
I talk into the empty like you were with me
Started on a cold night, felt you in the low light
Noticing a reflex taking over me
I see you when I reach
Muscle memory

Again, off into the next fall
I am on the back steps trying to let you in
See you standing in the front hall
Maybe this is madness underneath my skin

Guess love is the response of the body it haunts
And we do what it wants

When I am alone, I see you in the dark
I talk into the empty like you were with me
Started on a cold night, felt you in the low light
Noticing a reflex taking over me
I see you when I reach
Muscle memory
I feel you endlessly
Muscle memory

When you feel the chains of a thousand words
And I speak your name like I know you heard
I can feel you there, I can hear you move
And it moves me, too

And I’m playing games and I’m drinking wine
And I see your glass sitting next to mine
I can feel you there when you’re not at home
Like I’m not alone

When I am alone, I see you in the dark
I talk into the empty like you were with me
Started on a cold night, felt you in the low light
Noticing a reflex taking over me
I see you when I reach
Muscle memory
I feel you endlessly
Muscle memory
PLEASE comment if you have time! I would love feedback from more of the people reading! I have heard from a few people but there are a lot of hits and I'm not sure if I'm retaining those readers!

**Also let me know if any of you are listening to the music! Are enjoying any of it!**

Kylo and that scene with the trigger! Will he pull it?!

Soundtrack/Inspiration at the end!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Niney hadn’t accompanied Kylo Ren into conflict in sometime. As the tie-silencer exited hyper-drive the astromech whirred anxiously. Upon the immediate horizon they could see the vanguard had already broken through D’Qar’s atmosphere. Explosions blossomed on the surface of the planet with devastation so great it was visible from orbit.

During his approach Kylo immediately recognized the Raddus from Hux’s briefing. Swallowing hard he felt unease course through him. First Order pilots flanked him firing upon stationary vessels, supply ships, and outposts. They never saw them coming. Snoke had accused him of compassion. Well, there wasn’t a shred to be found in this airspace.

Another Order ship took heavy fire from a Resistance freighter that reacted quickly to the onslaught. As the flaming wreckage streaked by Kylo shifted and held the guidance trigger of his ship’s modified weapon with a troubled grip.

Lowering his gaze he focused on his breathing. Ragged, labored, staggered breaths came as feeling tore through Kylo’s chest. He was back on that bridge. He had triumphed hadn’t he? Han Solo had perished and yet The Order, Snoke, demanded more. Failure was not an option.

Escape pods, life support vessels, air crafts of every make, model, and condition drifted into the heavens like dandelion fuzz on a Summer breeze, fleeing the massacre, and delivering themselves into another fresh Hell.

Niney warbled abruptly. Kylo, the weapon, and the Raddus were in range of each other.

At this moment Hux commandeered the communication system of the tie-silencer.

“Seeing as you have made a habit of fucking things up for the First Order as of late, I’ll make this easy and hold your hand” Hux hissed. “Stay on course, check that you have a clear shot, check again, FIRE. Think you can handle that?”

“Copy” Kylo offered. He refused to acknowledge the man’s antagonism or return it. Not now. His agitation was reaching it’s apex and commentary from Hux only drove a wedge into the
fissure already tearing him apart inside. In a moment of frenetic tension he slammed his fist upon the comm system rendering it inoperable. All the while his left hand manically clutched at the guidance trigger.

He felt as though he was moving very fast; Too fast, and yet suddenly the havoc circling him advanced with a sort of choreographed beauty. Detonations, blasts, bolts, explosions, and crashes simultaneously produced fireworks that licked the shields of Kylo’s ship. Unexpectedly released from his own discord and all at once content with the simplicity of the task before him Kylo joined hands with the path ahead. The Raddus was in his sights, the way was clear; he shook hands with fate, he pulled the trigger, he fired.

Chapter End Notes

Soundtrack/Inspiration for this chapter is "Into Eternity" By Brian Tyler for Thor: The Dark World

This beautiful composition was a great fit for the chapter. It is melancholic (if you have seen the movie you may recognize it from Frigga's funeral). It has a very grand and sweepingly powerful tone and fits with the devastation, beauty, and scale featured in the chapter. I hope someone who has been reading has tried out a few of these songs! Let me know in the comments if you have!
But Now I'll Leave You

Chapter Summary

Have a tissue handy...this is a sad one!

Comments, kudos, and subscriptions keep me going! Let me know if you are enjoying the music too!
Soundtrack/inspiration at the end as always!

**I've changed one detail I know of from what we have seen in the trailers, but more on that next chapter!**

So close to 1000 hits! That means I will be releasing another piece of chapter artwork on tumblr! I would like to post on here as well, but I'm having trouble getting image to post!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Leia felt it before the first ship broke the atmosphere. Without preamble or time to explain she ordered D’Qar be abandoned. Thier only hope was to scatter and regroup. Live long enough to fight tomorrow. The Raddus could hold nearly everyone and sadly Leia knew nowhere near that number of people would escape.

Poe and Paige hadn’t even reached base before a barrage had scorched the main airfield. Dozens of X-wings, pilots, trainees now kindling for the First Order.

In the medical wing patients were evacuated. Finn had been stable in a bacta-tank for sometime during his recovery, but now aids had no choice but to resuscitate him earlier than planned. Unfortunately what was normally a gentle systematic process was condensed into a rather jarring experience. With a sudden gasp and a rush of adrenaline the young man regained consciousness.

The last thing Finn remembered was Rey and Kylo Ren. The forest, the fight.

A doctor noticed his panicked and pained expression and rushed to his side.

“Rey!” Finn rasped with effort “Where is Rey?!”. 

“She’s far away from here, and perfectly safe I’m sure...Unlike us” the doctor remarked while taking Finn’s arm and leading him out the door.

Hand in hand Paige and Poe reunited with Leia in the underground hanger of the base. The walls of the old structure groaned as several mortars made impact overhead. Several ships had already taken off from hidden air terminals under the planet surface and more were positioning as they spoke.

“How many left on world?” Poe asked gravely.

“Too hard to say” Leia quickly replied. “There’s no time to take stock Poe. Survive.That’s as
far as my plan goes. Get to the Raddus. Board a ship, get in the air, get away. That’s an order!”

Finn was being ushered across the tarmac as the group moved toward Leia’s vessel.

“Boys, this is really not the time” the General warned as the men grinned and clasped hands.

A sickening metallic screech halted their brief celebration.

A young woman in coveralls and sharp black bangs cussed loudly and sprinted to the source of the racket.

“Rose!” Paige called as the pack entered their aircraft.

Poe slapped Finn on the back and gave Leia his arm as he assisted his friends aboard.

Rose, an engineer and maintenance worker, delivered bad news and exacting instructions to her peers on the far side of the hanger. Moments later heads were shaking, the group disbanding, and her sister left struggling with a massive hydraulic lever. Paige thought she heard her heart drop into her stomach but realized it was the deep thump of what she estimated was a mid-sized craft crashing above them.

She didn’t need to be a mechanical prodigy like her sister to understand that lever was manually releasing the ports from the hangar. Without it, no one else would be getting to the Raddus.

Sediment and dust rained down from the vaulted ceiling as she took a look back at the route to escape. The snowy grime reminded her of the tiny petals in the glade. Her hand ghosted over the chain that lead right above her heart.

“Poppy! Grab that sister of yours ay? The best pilots in The Resistance can share their good news once I have us in the air”. Poe winked as he began rushing through flight check and engine priming.

Cradling the moon, the very heart of this man, Paige chanced a foreboding look at Leia; just one before blustering “Ever call me that in public again, and you won’t have to worry about the First Order!”

“Yes ma’am!” Poe replied over his shoulder.

“ Doesn’t make sense” she casually offered aloud as she slowly backed away. “The two best pilots in The Resistance on one ship...I’ll pilot a second...Give the bastards something else to aim at. No way they’ll catch us all; certainly not with our moves”. Inching back towards Rose she knew Poe could only hear every other word as the engine rumbled to life. “I pity the group out there with Jarbink” Paige tried to laugh.

Other counselors and workers were crowding the ramp into Leia’s ship separating her from her partner. As the painful distance grew so did the likelihood that her plan would work.

A dozen lots down the ceiling gave way and an x-wing along with the ruins of D’Qar base’s temple crumbled in an avalanche of misery.

“I’ll never need to fly again to always be your co-pilot Poe” Paige whispered as Leia enabled the air lock.

“I love you Poe Dameron, and that just makes sense” she said as her voice finally broke.
“Executive over ride Parsec, Alpha, Delta, Mandalore, Echo” Leia commanded swiftly. Her voice was pained yet steely.

With that the dashing pilot’s polish faded. Smile gone he turned to face the sealed barrier. The implication weighing heavy on his already burdened mind, Leia regarded how when he finally spoke he sounded like a wounded child.

“Where’s my co-pilot?”.

“Rose, you’re with McGregor” she shouted “Take this and get to that red mining craft now!”.

“Who’s gonna...?” Rose said as she emptied her hand into her pocket and motioned to the effort she was making with the equipment.

“I’m covering til the last ship is out, so hurry up Rosie!”.

“Wait a minute, what about you?” Rose hollered.

“See that silver ship, it’s Leia’s. It’s the only commuter vessel equipped with a blaster. So it has to be the last out of here now that your kriffing team trashed the hangar bay exits”. Paige hoped and prayed Rose wouldn’t spot the lie, that Poe would delay long enough for her sister to get on the mining freighter, and that Leia had the strength to get them out of there before they got blasted away with her.

“Poe is piloting” She added for good measure. “You think that nerf herder is really leaving without me?! Besides your tiny arms can’t hold out much longer. Now go! That’s an order!” Paige commanded as ranking officer and older sister.

“Ughh, be my guest!” the petite rebel replied as she shifted to allow her sister to take over. “Just make sure you leave as soon as we’re through, no way I’m helping another pilot become a martyr around here” she wryly noted as she backed across the tarmac.

“Wouldn’t dream of it Rosie!” Paige shouted.

“You know I hate it when you call me that!” Rose called out as the mining vessel lifted its ramp. Paige could just make out a smirk across her little sister’s face as the barrier rose and the seal locked.

“That’s why I do it” she said as one of the tears that had threatened to fall broke away and rolled down her cheek.

The young pilot watched as the mining craft with Rose aboard exited the hangar and Leia’s ship followed moments behind.

Once they escaped Paige let a sob rack her chest as she released the lever. The ports for each docking station closed in unison with a might that rattled the hangar. Several points of impact collapsed further, and the young woman urged her equally devastated soul to keep her body moving.

Outside of the ruined underground hangar the First Order continued to carpet bomb the central portion of the base with superfluous prejudice. Their assault spread out from the heart of their attack
and was on Paige’s heels as she staggered back into the clearing.

By the time she laid down in the grass again her tears had dried, her sobs had stopped, and the tiny white petals of the blossoms seemed to be everywhere again. She closed her eyes as she felt one brush across her cheek, imagining it was a kiss from Poe. Black smoke clouded her vision when she opened her eyes again.

Looking up into the sky, tracing a crescent upon her chest, falling further in love; Alone; and with the expanse of the cosmos and mortality extending between here and home; Paige Tico died.

Chapter End Notes

I'm not crying! You're crying!...Here is the soundtrack/inspiration for Chapter 13

This is all about Paige. All about her sacrifice, her love, and her loss...Little more to say than that :( 

"So Nice To Meet Ya" Hayden Calnin (lyrics)

Somehow, I fall
You here, brick wall
Lately, I'm bored
Lately, I'm sore

So nice to meet ya
But now I'll leave you here
So nice to meet ya
But now I'll leave you here

Think tough, head down
Eyes shut, luck's out
Wait now, keep up
Slow down, I'm far

So nice to meet ya
But now I'll leave you here
So nice to meet ya
But now I'll leave you here

So nice to meet ya
But now I'll leave you here
So nice to meet ya
But now I'll leave you here
Chapter Summary

Title taken from the leaked track list for TLJ
The final moments of the battle of D’Qar
Please keep reading and commenting and sharing! More chapters coming soon!
Soundtrack/inspiration at the end!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Aboard the Raddus Leia struggled to maintain decorum. Shields were at 72% and falling. In 15 minutes they would risk loosing too much function to power the jump into hyper-space and escape.

The vessel was buzzing with activity. Those who weren’t wounded were treating the injured, and those without training monitored the attack and tallied the number of survivors.

Poe eagerly moved between groups of rebels desperate to be useful and keep his mind occupied. Finn followed along a few paces behind offering the pilot distance in lieu of privacy. The former stormtrooper could see pain, fear, and despair etched into the features of his handsome friend’s face, and no amount of shoulder patting and smiling could convince him that Poe was experiencing anything other than sheer agony.

Leia crossed the bridge to an empty console. Looking down at D’Qar through the port in front of her she swallowed hard thinking of Paige somewhere down on the surface; broken, dying, and alone.

A series of explosions across the base bloomed into violent lanterns that illuminated the darkness of space. As the blaze faded she was aware of another tearing feeling she had felt before. Ben was nearby.

Leia had been sensitive to the force since her reunion with her twin brother Luke all those years ago, but her connection to her powerful son was far more acute. Before Han’s death it had been nearly twenty years since she last explored the force; Twenty years since her little boy was taken by the First Order.

It felt like Star-Killer again; She could sense his confusion, pain, and fear spreading along the bond they shared. Leia was no Jedi but she knew her son was a part of this massacre, that Snoke had given him orders, and that he was coming for her.

Much like the sudden command she had given to evacuate the base on D’Qar General Leia instructed the refugees aboard the Raddus to abandon ship.

“Are you quite certain ma’am?!” exclaimed a strategist with a good deal of soot on his face.
“Quite,” Leia replied. “Move now people, this is a trap!”.

A bewildered helmsman looked from the port window to the survivors around the ship “My God” he quietly realized. “But the shields on a vessel this class? How?”.

“I’ll leave that to the engineers to figure out if we live! Now move!” Leia shouted.

Fortunately the Raddus was equipped with enough scouting ships to jump what remained of the Rebellion to safety. As they boarded they confirmed their rendezvous point.

After ushering people to safety Poe took up a position overlooking the bay door of the Raddus.

“Poe?” Finn delicately asked. “Time to go buddy. Last ride out is ready to go”.

The pilot stared fiercely at the empty space before him as though willing Paige to appear could make it so.

“Her last orders were to make it to the Raddus”. Poe said simply.

Finn could see a dark sort of torment in his friend’s eyes. A trauma that filled Poe with an unbearable pain, but also fueled an inferno of anger. The longer he stared into that void, the deeper the darkness took root. The hard expression on Poe’s face told Finn that he already knew Paige was dead. Instead this contemplation over the abyss before him regarded how he would move forward from this moment.

Silently the brims of Poe’s dark eyes filled and tears fell onto his orange flight suit.

“Go” he said evenly.

Before Finn could even think about the implication of his friend’s request General Leia has rejoined them.

“Dameron!” She said sternly. “The last jump ship is waiting for it’s pilot. And now it is also waiting for its General”.

Poe took one last longing look at the vacant gulf beyond the port.

“That’s an order pilot” Leia added not unkindly.

As Poe pulled his eyes away from the window Finn noticed the fire within them.

Their shuttle maneuvered into position to jump and Leia urged her son to let go. He could make whatever show of strength he had to now that they had escaped. The Resistance was safe and she was a moment behind. As she did her best to calm, soothe, and release the conflict and tension joining their minds she was painfully aware of the struggle that laid ahead consoling the young man piloting her vessel.

Staring at the back of Poe’s mess of dark hair she couldn’t help but be reminded of Ben. The thought comforted Leia.

In a heartbeat a pulse of energy streaked across the expanse before them and made impact. The Raddus fractured from the force before an eruption of energy broke forth from its core. First Order ships soared through the orange plumes of flame that extended from the wreckage, leaving trails of fire and destruction.
The reflection of the devastation played upon Poe’s eyes. From his seat on the side of the jump ship Finn could just manage to see Poe untuck and clasp a necklace from inside his flight suit. Before his hand crashed down upon the warp drive and their shuttle jumped to refuge Finn heard Poe’s broken whisper.

“So long Poppy”.

Chapter End Notes

Soundtrack/Inspiration for this chapter is "Ghosts" by John Murphy

This chapter has a song that is a composition from the brilliant composer John Murphy. He has done a load of famous work from film and tv. This piece in particular is heartbreaking, mysterious, and as always atmospheric. There is a melancholy tone and a sort of reminiscent longing, desperation, and pain that translates well with Poe.

Hope you enjoyed!

Rey and Kylo up next!
REYLO!! We are getting to it now folks! I know it's been a slow burn but I promise all of this plot has pay off!!

We see some famous scenes from the trailer and catch up with Rey and Kylo! Plus the mention of Porgs!!

Please say hello in comments let me know there are people out there reading!

Soundtrack/Inspiration at end!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Luke had trailed her from their first meeting on the cliff on Ahch-To. There was no doubt that she was gifted. Beyond her demonstration with the lightsaber he could sense a strong inherent connection to the force. He was curious, but the past was dead, and he had no intention of exhuming those memories; until he saw the Millennium Falcon.

For hours he watched her fitfully try to rest. There was something familiar about the way the island seemed to whisper to her. Despite her talent and age she still appeared to be a novice. Untrained, unaware, and unprepared.

Cold pale blue light arrived just before the sun would rise over the horizon and with it dawn. Luke approached the camp around the Falcon and stared down at the young woman. She was finally resting but her features betrayed a sort of concentration, as though she were considering a difficult question.

Suddenly the island was quieter. One of the unnatural sounds that had invaded his sanctuary had ceased. A certain Wookie was no longer snoring. Without leaving Rey’s side he turned his cloaked head to the side to see Chewbacca with his cross bow at the ready.

Pulling back his hood he smirked wryly at his old friend. Slowly Chewie lowered the weapon, but Luke noticed he had not dropped it. When he looked back to the woman her eyes snapped open.

Large hazel brown eyes stared up with intensity. She had not spoken a word, but her gaze suggested something had changed. Something indeed had changed.

In that moment Luke realized just why there had been something so familiar about her, but how? How could she be here? He hadn’t been certain all those years ago. There were so many bodies he never saw with his own eyes; then again the world was on fire and the force was flooded with pain and anger. But he could no longer feel her in the force, he himself had named her among the dead. And all these years?...

Her movements were measured and guarded as she quickly stood and circled Luke. In her dreams, or perhaps the visions the island had shown her, Rey had now become aware of a hidden history with this place and Kylo...Ben Solo.
Rey took slow but heavy deep breaths as she tried to calm herself and restore order to her conflicting emotions. Why would he reject her? Why would Luke turn her away if he knew her? He knew Ky..Ben?! Why would he not help? How could he turn his back on Leia and a family that wanted him?

“Explain” was all she managed.

Luke guided a tense Rey and Chewie through long buried paths in his memory. She had been one of the younglings he was training on Ahch-To. Another such youngling had been his nephew, Ben Solo. Yes, they had a fondness for each other.

“It isn’t uncommon for force users to share a bond” Luke insisted. “Especially as children, you could rely upon each other for strength, guidance...companionship”.

“But it seemed like more...it was like...” Rey tried to interject.

“It was a convenience” Luke offered. “I know what he has become. Don’t trouble yourself. Like I said, it wasn’t uncommon. Many younglings training together shared a bond to some extent through the force”.

Some sad, small, strange part of Rey was heartbroken. She had felt something...nice. It had only been hers, returned to her, for such a short time. She didn’t know about love or family, but she could say she had felt something. But Luke insisted this connection was common, functional...convenient; and now the joy of it was gone.

“My family?” Rey said as she remembered passing over the notion in her thoughts.

Luke stood as he shook his head. He thought about telling her the truth, but it was only a thought. “I don’t know...you were a foundling.”

Rey seemed prepared for this possibility. Rather pragmatically she nodded before she continued. “And how did I end up on Jakku?”

'Jakku’ Luke thought to himself. That was ironic. “Another time” he said halting her questions as he called her forth waiving his robotic hand.

A tour of the island revealed several small huts that had been rebuilt. An ancient tree with several creatures who acted as its keeper, and a shrine in memory of the school and those slain.

In the center of the minimal memorial was a pillar with a carving that read: “First comes the day Then comes the night. After the darkness Shines through the light. The difference, they say, Is only made right By the resolving of gray Through refined Jedi sight”. -Journal of the Whills 7:477

Luke explained to Rey the mission of his work on the island. The work he had tried to continue after the loss of his young students. Within the ancient tree the keepers were protecting an ancient tome known as the Journal of the Whills.

Rey had a limited knowledge of what the force encompassed but apparently between the dark and the light existed a theoretical balance some sought; gray.
Not wanting to tax the young woman’s mind without first testing her strength Luke led Rey to a ridge overlooking the sea.

“Alright. If...and that is a big if...I am going to train you, I need to know where we are starting.” Luke said as he instructed Rey to take a seat kneeling on the ground. “This should be simple. I want you to close your eyes. Clear your mind and tell me what you see...tell me what you feel.”

Rey composed herself and obeyed. It took her sometime to focus after several Porgs scurried away from the ridge when they interrupted their sunbathing.

“Focus, breathe, and listen to the island. Feel the energy flowing through it, and into you.” Luke instructed.

It wasn’t long before the cool breeze and the ocean’s lullaby cleared Rey’s mind. She could smell the stone and feel the power of the force circling around her.


For a moment he thought she was intentionally goading his aim to find the gray in the force. But suddenly he noticed the ground begin to shake. Pebbles, dust, and debris rose into the air around them and a thunderous crack tore through the air as the slate beneath them split.

“And something else” she continued “it’s calling me.”

The ground they had stood upon was now a bolder cleft from the island. Slowly the rock was rising. She was being drawn towards an enormous force as if pulled by a thread. It was energy, power, force; As endless as the grains of sand on Jakku. She wanted to feel it; be a part of it.

“Resist it, Rey! Rey!” Luke shouted manically.

Not a moment too soon Rey opened her eyes and broke her concentration. The stone fell and Luke tumbled down as she fell forward gasping from the effort. Beads of sweat dotted her brow and her muscles shook with fatigue. Small crimson spots flecked the slate beneath her palms as her nose bled.

His eyes were wide with fear when she stood and offered Luke her hand. Finally he spoke.

“I’ve seen this raw strength only once before. It didn’t scare me enough then. It does now.”

Moments ago, in a galaxy far, far away Ben Solo wiped the steam from a mirror after exiting the fresher. Closing his eyes he appreciated the warmth that still spread across his broad bare shoulders. The heat helped soothe the aches of his tense muscles after the battle of D’Qar.

Niney whirred gently as she activated the fan to remove the excess moisture in the room.

The fresher had turned off automatically sometime ago but he could swear that he heard the rush of water nearby.

Ben’s vision faded and he felt weak as he bent to retrieve fresh clothes from the droid. Steadying himself on the nearest countertop he examined his reflection as the mist cleared. Blood ran
from his nose.

Chapter End Notes

"The Gravel Road" by James Newton Howard (The Village) is the soundtrack/inspiration for this chapter

*I CAN'T SAY ENOUGH, how listening to these songs will enhance it so much!!*

This is an all time favorite song of mine.

This is a fairly famous composition and is epic, romantic, thoughtful, and Reylo all at once. It narrates a journey, a relationship, and a destination all at once. There is mystery to it especially at the end which is perfect to the tone we end on.

I really hope you enjoyed the chapter and give the song a listen, it is from the original soundtrack of "The Village"
The ties that bind

Chapter Summary

I'm abandoning the pursuit of writing what I think the movie will actually do and just going with what I think is good storytelling!

*Please say hello, and let me know what you think!*  

This chapter has memories and you guessed it...more Reylo!

Soundtrack/inspiration at the end

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

That night Ben struggled to find rest. Normally, out of modesty should he be called on in the night, he slept in an undershirt and black pants. This night despite the usual chill aboard the ship he could not bear the covers or his night shirt.

He was hot to the touch and stirred relentlessly. The muscles in his back, chest, and shoulders involuntarily tensed as he drifted in and out of consciousness.

Earlier he had heard the sea. Ben could almost see the island, but now he was surrounded by fire. Smoke and ash mingled in the air and choked him. Fear, anger, and panic consumed his senses. He heard a lightsaber ignite that he could not see through the inferno.

There were shouts, screams, cries for help. Ben wildly pushed forward through the blaze in search of something. Black sheets tangled around his legs as he struggled through the memory; agitated and afraid. In his vision he tripped over something.

A small boy; dead. The orange glow of the fire danced over the child’s face, giving his vacant features an unnatural sort of animation.

In his horror Ben failed to see the burning piece of timber poised overhead. With a crack the heavy wooden beam splintered and fell pinning him down and spraying glowing embers. Several cinders smoldered through his tunic burning his shoulder. As his flesh was singed he cried out. Ben tried closing his eyes to shake the traumatic memory, but the smell of scorched skin and the sound of his own pleas were too much to bear.

Falling to his knees he stared at his boyish face contorted in anguish. Slowly the weight of the wood lifted from his small shoulders and shifted to the side before crumbling into a burning heap.

Small hands reached for his face. Ben and his childhood counterpart stared in awe at big hazel brown eyes brimmed with tears of concern. Remembering the chaos around them she wrapped a wet cloak around his seared shoulder.

Remembering their bond and the bloody nose from earlier Ben reached across the force and searched for Rey. If she had unwittingly pulled power from him along their bond earlier, he was confident he could intentionally find her.
Moments later in a galaxy far, far away Rey stirs with a shout. “Ben!”

Chewbacca hurries to his friend’s side and tries to understand why of all people she calls his name.

She is glad Chewie is the one to see her so vulnerable and not Luke. Twice now he had turned her away. She didn’t think she could bear a third rejection, and yet here they were spending another night on Ahch-To.

Rey’s breathing was ragged and labored. Her skin tingled and she reached up and behind her to run her fingers along her shoulder. The night was damp and cold but she was warm to the touch. At the point of contact she lost consciousness again. Her mind raced as she remembered something. Ben.

His boyish face distorted by agony, and the same face now a young man removing his helmet looking at her with lamenting eyes flashed before her. There was snow, and fire, red and blue saber light, pain, and something else. The closer she came to examining this feeling the further she seemed to cast her being into the force.

Chewbacca growled anxiously awaiting Rey to resurface from this vision. His young friend settled in her slumber and her features relaxed. It wasn’t where the force had pulled her being that was nearly as important as what it carried back.

Laying beside Rey, Ben stared up at the night sky. Using the force he managed to pull himself along their bond. With a trained eye he quickly mapped the stars. Turning to look at her restfully sleeping he regretted that in every way that mattered he was galaxies away.

Thankful that she appeared unharmed and remained in Chewbacca’s company, Ben looked out into the night. Spotting a distant hut he tensed before delicately ghosting his phantom hand near Rey’s temple.

“I’m on the way sweetheart.”

Chapter End Notes

Soundtrack/inspiration for the chapter is "To The Stars" by Tyler Bates composed for "Guardians of the Galaxy"

As always a beautiful and moving composition that is filled with pain but also hope. There is a sadness and a spirit to the instruments and melodies that pairs well with the tragedy and compassion of this chapter.

I hope you have enjoyed! Please, please let me know what you think! It has been awhile since I've had a comment from you folks!
Chapter Summary

The Resistance arrives on Crait and we have some more feels as the crew grieves after D’Qar

*Leave me a comment! What are your thoughts, what do you want to see?*

Soundtrack/Inspiration at the end!!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Leia wasn’t entirely certain of her strategy, but then again what was she certain of these days?

Slowly and carefully the shuttles that had escaped D’Qar and the destruction of the Raddus rendezvoused on Crait.

The crystalline planet had an old Rebel outpost they had abandoned sometime ago when the First Order started mining and manufacturing nearby.

“We’ll be hiding in plain sight.” Leia told what was left of the Resistance. “The last place these moon jockeys will be looking is right under their nose”. Thankfully because of the crystalline nature of the world its own natural frequencies disrupted any sensor technology. They only had to avoid being spotted the old fashion way. ‘Only’ Leia thought bitterly.

Not one for idleness Rose lent a hand cleaning and repairing any and every piece of outdated equipment she could find in the Crait hangar.

Frustrated to tears by a rusted hydraulic lift the maintenance worker broke down.

Finn approached cautiously, while Poe threw his arms around the small woman. The pilot's gesture was in equal measures an attempt to console himself as much as her.

“Get off!” she wept. “It’s just this kriiffing...” Rose limply shook the decrepit piece of metal before letting her sobs rack her body again.

“I know kid, I know” Poe said as he surrounded her. Tears streamed from his dark eyes as he held her close, rocking, and rubbing circles in her back.

Sometime later Rose sat with Finn and Poe in the mess hall. There wasn’t much in the way of provisions just yet, and the trio pooled their resources.

“I’ve got a fiber cookie they gave me in the med bay” Finn offered.
“I raise you a protein bar, and...half a pack of wintermint gum” Poe grinned.

Rose dug deep into her pockets and froze.

“C’mon Rosie, you holding out on us?” Poe laughed.

Slowly the young woman opened her hand revealing the crescent necklace Paige had given to her as they parted. Finn saw the flash of fire in his friend’s eyes again as they bore into Rose’s palm. After moments of stunned silence Rose offered the necklace to Poe.

Paralyzed with emotion he cleared his throat without moving. Slowly he shook his head several times before he spoke in a husky broken tone. “No point... I can’t very well give my heart away twice”.

He looked up and away, trying to stop the fresh tears that gathered from falling. “You keep it kid” he said warmly as he excused himself from the table and left the hall.

Rose seemed unsure what to do next as her own eyes watered again. Finn placed his hands over hers atop the table. Gently he lifted the silver chain from her palm and the little moon along with it. He moved to put the necklace on her and she hesitated.

“You’ll always have a piece of her with you. A reason to fight.” he observed.

“Finn, this belongs to Poe...I can’t.” she said weakly.

“And Poe was a part of Paige...You need to take this Rose”. He thought of his friend, his face the moment Leia had sealed the ramp, his utter desolation when the Raddus was destroyed, and the fury as they jumped to Crait.

“Take it because he can’t” Finn pleaded.

Carefully he clasped the crescent around her neck and she tucked it beneath her jumpsuit. Rose rested her hand over the spot and seemed grateful for the emotional anchor.

“You’re right. We all need a reason to fight” she mused. “What’s yours Finn?”.

Chapter End Notes

Soundtrack/inspiration for this chapter is "Truce" by Twenty One Pilots

It may not be immediately clear but this chapter in a lot of ways is about struggling with grief and a reason to keep going. At the very end we are introduced to the idea that Finn unlike most other people doesn't have the clearest motives to keep going and keep fighting. But he like so many others keeps at it primarily for other people. For the Resistance, for his friends etc. and not just for himself as he once almost did in TFA.

This song is about more than survival it is the priority of something else above yourself, even at your lowest when you can barely see reason to hold on...you do...and encourage others to do the same for each other...not just for themselves. Despite the fact that all things do come to an end.

"Truce" by Twenty One Pilots...
Now, the night is coming to an end,
Oh

The sun will rise, and we will try again.
Oh

Stay alive, stay alive, for me.
You will die, but now your life is free,

Take
Pride
In what is sure
To
Die.

I will fear the night again,
Oh

I hope I'm not my only friend.
Oh

Stay alive, stay alive, for me.
You will die, but now your life is free,

Take
Pride
In what is sure
To
Die.
Something dark

Chapter Summary

Ben is on the way to Ahch-to!

"Of course his eyes seemed different. Less curious, more reflective. Then bright, now piercing. Once affectionate, now always guarded. But she could change that".

*Leave comments and say hello!*  

Soundtrack/inspiration at the end!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“When I found you I saw raw untamed power, and beyond that, something truly special” Snoke slowly said.

“Prove to me you are still worthy of this insight. Bring me this scavenger. Show her the power of the First Order!” he continued as his voice raised. “If she is...truly special, she may find a place here as you have Master Ren.”

Ben released a breath he wasn’t aware he had been holding. Relief swept over him since Snoke had not ordered the death of Rey.

“Fail again though. And you will give me no choice but to discard my investment. Such a pity it would be to lose so much to the venom of compassion.” Snoke finished bitterly.

With this Ben had been dismissed. Niney was waiting in the elevator ready to head to the Supremacy’s hangar and depart. Before the droid could ask how her master’s meeting had fared his actions said everything.

With uninhibited ferocity and rage Ben drove his helmet through the control panel of the lift. Niney was grateful their destination was already keyed in as sparks sputtered from the hole left in the wall. Ben seethed as he considered the subtext of the Supreme Leader’s orders.

As usual he was aware that he was being manipulated. Snoke tried to sate his ego while challenging him to gain his approval. It was nothing new, but the thinly veiled warning he ended with referred to more than just Ben. He knew it was Rey that Snoke had always sensed beyond his own power. She was the one who was truly special. And Ben knew that if he failed it was her life Snoke threatened to snuff out.

Aboard his command vessel Ben, Niney, and half a dozen Knights of Ren, at the insistence of Snoke, headed for Ahch-to.

The journey wouldn’t be quick. In fact it required several stretches of manually travelled space
because of spacial anomalies. Every moment that passed between Star-Killer and now he knew Rey had grown stronger. Ben hoped that by the time they reached the small isolated world her power wouldn’t corrupt her heart or her new found memories of him.

Half way through their journey Ben was aware that Luke had relented and continued Rey’s training. She was focused, determined, but also confused and wounded by the cynicism and distance Luke maintained.

She rarely ventured across the bond they shared on her own. Rey usually waited for Ahch-to and the force to offer something important while she slept or for Ben to contribute a memory or feeling when she needed encouragement most.

Rey seemed unaware of the extent of their connection. In truth Ben was grateful because she didn’t sense his journey to her. He knew she would still fear him and until he could amend that he didn’t want her to struggle with the knowledge that his ship and his Knights were on the way to Ahch-to.

Not long before they would arrive on Ahch-to Ben stared into his own deep brown eyes in the mirror of his quarters.

His face was not so changed from that of his youth. He recognized the face that stared back at him. Rey would as well, wouldn’t she? Of course his eyes seemed different. Less curious, more reflective. Then bright, now piercing. Once affectionate, now always guarded. But she could change that.

Slowly he peeled the bacta-patches from his shoulder and side, then a micro-ganic bandage from the wound healing on his face. The traces that lingered were not his first marks of trauma and would certainly not be his last.

Unlike the older injuries and punishments that had been inflicted upon him, he had earned everyone of these new blemishes. He trailed a large hand over his shoulder above his chest where Rey had cut into him with her lightsaber. Slowly he continued and reached back tracing the soft uneven skin where the fire on Ahch-to branded him. Past, present, and future mapped physical and psychological trails across his face, body, and mind. For a long time Ben stood bare before the mirror considering his scars; visible and invisible.

Eventually he dressed and to his dismay and utter elation they had arrived. Ben had returned to Ahch-to.

Chapter End Notes

This chaper soundtrack/inspiration is "There's Something Dark" by Dustin Kensrue

This song is another perfect addition to the Kylo/Ben soundtrack. It is a reflective tune that considers a mans internal struggle and pain. The darkness that is inside of him, but also something else.

"There's Something Dark" By Dustin Kensrue lyrics
"There's something dark inside of me.
There is a ghost in this machine.
There is a giant jagged hole.
Twists and rips through my soul.
Like the roots of some old retched tree.
There's something dark inside of me.

There's something haunting, all my love.
There's nothing good I'm thinking of.
Still I'm gilded and groomed, gliding into the room.
Saying such bold and beautiful things.
There's something dark inside of me.

There's something rumbling in my mind.
Secrets that you weren't meant to find.
You thought you knew me so well?
I will see you in hell
Before I let you live to tell what you've seen
There's something dark inside of me.

I need someone to set me free.
So I call out your name
But you seem so far away.
And anyway, who could save one like me?
Cause' there's something dark inside of me.
Chapter Summary

Luke has memories of a young Ben and remembers the beginnings of the bond his nephew has with Rey.

Featuring itty bitty kiddie Reylo!

*Please leave me comments, let me know your thoughts*

Soundtrack/inspiration at the end!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Luke had relented. He was scared of her power and his failure, but turning her away left him feeling helpless and wary of the power she could unleash unto the galaxy.

He tried vexing her into surrender, but the young woman was as stubborn as ever. Now grown she at times reminded him of his twin sister Leia.

Rey was strong and strong willed. Training both physically and mentally came easily to her, but emotionally her growth was undeniably stunted. She was always guarded. Rey gladly offered brilliant smiles when the occasion called for laughter or mirth, but she frequently concealed her pain, sadness, and grief. The young woman had a healthy connection to her anger which crept up occasionally, but she refused to confront her issues with trust and longing.

More often than Luke was comfortable with she asked questions about Ben. Far worse was the fact she had abandoned an air of hatred for the young man. She no longer referred to him as Kylo Ren. And her inquiries were more personal and less strategic.

One evening the old Jedi master reflected on how Ben and Rey; this desperate duo came to be. Ben had always been a gifted child. After conception Leia had almost immediately gained a heightened sensitivity to the force. Luke had known then the babe would take after their Skywalker lineage.

Even in infancy little Ben had been uncommon. Han delighted in the somewhat unnatural quietness of the baby boy. Leia fussed and cooed constantly with him, but Luke sensed an awareness he had, a connection with the force and to others that allowed the infant to understand the people and world around him.

Once Ben could walk and talk and get on with the typical teething issues of toddlerhood his family became alarmed with the influence of his abilities upon his childhood. As he grew so did his power. At an alarming rate Ben was inundated with new and evolving skills. He had trouble controlling his sight into people’s hearts and minds. And perhaps most troubling were the voices he heard not from across the room, but across the galaxy.

The young boy spoke of a baby. A little girl. Han was shaken several times by Ben’s episodes while Leia was away on business. Luke remembered his distressed brother in law reaching out
several times regarding tantrums and fits regarding the mystery child. Sometimes Ben cried over phantom pains that were not his own, or pleaded with people who were not there. He preferred to spend the bulk of his time alone with this ghost; isolated from the pressure of other minds and forces.

Leia would try to convince Han that Ben had a sort of over active imagination as a result of his ability. That this imaginary friend was the companion he longed for. After all there weren’t many children amongst the royalty, rulers, and rebels his parents rubbed elbows with while traveling between planets and star ships.

The strangeness of the boy was generally accepted by his family until one fateful night when he was about 12. Leia, Han, and Ben were on Coruscant for a conference regarding the threat of several militant extremist groups, one of which included the fledgling First Order.

Ben had been complaining of ill feelings all day. If it wasn’t aches it was chills, if it wasn’t a fever it was trouble breathing, if it wasn’t some malady it was some sense of foreboding. Han had thought his son wanted to get out of meeting and greeting the pompous leaders of the star system, but concern mounted as he grew more agitated into the night.

Luke remembered the frantic communications he received. Leia and Han had awoken in the night. Ben was making a racket in the kitchen, then in the sitting room of their suite. His small voice spoke, then cried out in pain, then yelled. Han heard pleading and anger.

As with a sleepwalker his parents had approached cautiously. Ben sure enough spoke about the little girl, but alarm took over when he spoke out to a man.

Switching on a lamp Leia went to rush to her son at the sight of a butchers knife and blood. Han instinctually held her back as Ben turned round toward the light. Blood was streaming from one of his hands. The knife was on the floor, but his hands were not empty. His wound created a trail of ruby droplets as his blood pooled and fell from his hands clenched around Han’s blaster.

Luke shivered against the chill of Ahch-to’s chilly evening breeze at the memory.

Ben had looked around frantically for something, then nearly collapsed as he dropped the gun the floor. Han had thrown himself forward with Leia and kicked it away before assessing the damage.

Nearly delirious Ben had begged for his uncle Luke. The man who had never questioned his lonely conversations with a ghost he called a friend.

Leia tore off a piece of her night dress to bandage the cut on his hand. Ben had tried to stop her fussing. He had apparently cut himself while switching from the blade to the blaster in a confrontation. He mentioned an old man invading his mind; appearing in their suite. Without lingering he changed direction and pleaded with his parents to help the little girl. She was sick, so very sick, Dying. And it was killing him.

In the whole of Coruscant, a city of millions. A town of a thousand planets, languages, and species a single sedative could not be found that could still the boy until Luke arrived.

To this day Luke could not forget the burning desperation in his nephews eyes as he laid suffering. “PLEASE! Help me! Help her!” Ben had cried weakly. “I’ll show you the way. We’re running out of time”. There was a pause before another agonizing and frustrated cry erupted from the boy.

Leia sobbed into Luke’s chest as Han gripped her shoulders. She begged him to save her
baby. No doctor, matron, maester, healer, or medicine man could find a fault in his constitution. No fever, no virus, no infection, tumor, curse, chemical imbalance, or voodoo they could detect.

He had walked so slowly to the boy’s side as if he had been crossing a questionable patch on a lake frozen over on Hoth.

Tears made his small eyes shine as he struggled to raise his head. Ben reached a hand forward. One of Luke’s fears was confirmed when he realized this time his nephew was not reaching for him. Ben struggled to make contact with a force beyond him and his voice was a dry strangled rasp when he spoke again.

“Rey”.

Luke realized in shock it was not the power of his memories that pushed an impulse to the forefront of his awareness. Opening his eyes he looked to the sky above Ahch-to. The darkness was complete and still. Heavy clouds hung low ready to release a torrent that he could smell. The air itself was charged with the tension and anticipation of a storm. Quietly Luke acknowledged the force beyond the island's awesome power he now detected.

"Ben”.

Chapter End Notes

Soundtrack/inspiration for this chapter is "Forever Bound" By Von Grey

PLEASE listen to these glorious songs! I will be posting the playlist so far soon across tumblr and facebook. These songs are sooooo Reylo it's not even funny. This one the lyrics really speak for themselves folks. This chapter is all about little Ben and his bond with Rey. A little about their interactions before Ahch-to.

If you have any suggestions you think will inspire a future chapter mention it in the comments!

"Forever Bound" By Von Grey lyrics

Beautiful god you look so holy
You were always lonely
Still, so much pain wasn't graceful
Life can be distasteful towards you
I want to lay my body
Sink into your ground
Press my lips upon your brow
I want to lay my body down
I can't go without
Cause I'm forever bound
Angel goddess of the moonlight
Captured by the dark nights
Farewell, you let go
I know that you surrendered
Because you couldn't conquer your fears
I want to lay my body
Sink into your ground
Press my lips upon your brow
I want to lay my body down
I can't go without
Cause I'm forever bound
I want to lay my body down
I want to lay my body down
I want to lay my body
Sink into your ground
Press my lips upon your brow
I want to lay my body down
I can't go without
Cause I'm forever bound

I want to lay my body
Sink into your ground
Press my lips upon your brow
I want to lay my body down
I can't go without
Cause I'm forever bound
The shadow

Chapter Summary

Ben, Rey, and Luke collide on Ahch-to!!

*Leave comments and kudos please* And feel free to share with other fans!!

Thank you all for reading!

Soundtrack/inspiration at the end!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It felt as though a spring was coiling itself inside her belly. Rey arranged and rearranged the few belongings she had in her hut. Outside she heard a porg chirp and knock into her door. Some fresh air would do her a world of good.

The air smelled different. On Jakku there was a sort of static to the air before a big sand storm and the weight of the atmosphere on Ahch-to reminded her of the forsaken planet. Wrapping her cowl around her she headed for the Falcon. The walk helped her dispense a little energy and a little maintenance to one of the landing gears occupied her mind.

The wind on the island picked up and Rey noticed a shift in the energy of the waves crashing upon the shore. There was a sudden violence to the weather but she couldn’t help but be drawn to the passion of the maelstrom and the new sensations it brought.

The breeze whipped at her wrap and the moisture collected until it dripped from her brow. Rey closed her eyes and remembered the storm from her dream. The musical pattering it had made upon the stones and the tinkling sound it made now upon the metal of the Falcon. Smiling she reached out from the cover of the cock pit to let the rain kiss her hand.

There was a swell of emotion inside of her. The energy of the storm and the joy this moment brought overwhelmed her.

“Rey” she heard. She looked up but Chewie was napping with a bunch of baby porgs huddled under his fur and Luke was off meditating.

She turned to put away her tools and there he was. Ben.

Their ship had landed on the far side of the island. But the far side of an island as small as Ahch-to didn’t afford much discretion. Ben knew Luke would have sensed his arrival, but even he could not predict his intentions.

Six of his knights went in search of Luke. Orders were to distract, subdue, and capture if possible. He didn’t honestly expect to see any of them again.
Before he could disembark his ship in search of Rey he was struck by movement along their bond. Turning from the window he felt a wet stormy breeze whipping his face.

A thrill rushed through him and he focused on seeing her. When he opened his eyes it was as if he had wished her aboard his command vessel. He saw her, but not her surroundings. Yet he could feel every part of her joy. Her hand outstretched collecting rain. Reveling in such mundanity it broke the spell of her happiness and his heart.

"Rey" he thought aloud.

He could show her true happiness. A place to belong, someone she could trust, someone who would teach her...power. She would want for nothing.

Before he could break the bond to go in search of her she turned and this time she saw him. Despite the years she spent disconnected from the force on Jakku she took to her abilities with such ease. Shock played across her face before lightning flashed and he was gone.

Rushing across the rocky cliffs of Ahch-to Luke struggled to calm himself on his way back to Rey. If Ben had come to kill him he could, but he would not have that young woman, another innocent life, slain on this sacred island.

He sensed the knights following him. Luke had nearly made it back and now poised himself for combat on a plateau overlooking the bluff on the coast where the Falcon was parked. Lightening flashed and red saber light streaked by with it. Reflexively he countered with the lightsaber Rey had returned with; a lethal blow ignited the weapon and drove through the knight’s chest.

As Luke was circled by the five remaining opponents he saw a shadow move to towards the Falcon. Ben.

Spinning Luke swiftly cut up the back of two knights and rendered them motionless. The three remaining men had their backs to the scene below. Luke watched in horror as Rey walked out armed only with her staff to meet Ben amid the tempest.

Blow for blow the trio matched Luke’s advances. The Jedi’s mind raced and the following moments passed at frightening speed.

Rey looked away from Ben to look up at Luke. In a flash distress was not the only thing he saw in her eyes, but also the glow of a crackling red saber.

Without time to think, he acted. In one powerful motion he extended both of his hands. The left sent the three knights onto their backs and the right directed a powerful blow to Rey knocking her from the bluff into the safety of the water below.

Lightning flashed again and Luke jumped to the clearing below.

“FOOL!” Ben bellowed as he turned towards his uncle. Before Luke could counter or position himself to fight, Ben had dropped his lightsaber, unfastened his cloak, and leapt into the churning sea.

Rey thought she had gone mad, but in moments he was in front of her; solid and real. The
storm raged but she felt something warm now that he was here. She felt guilty knowing his crimes and still being selfish enough to crave a connection with someone she once must have called friend.

They did nothing but consider each other for a long time. Moments passed as they searched each other’s eyes for the truth.

From the edge of her vision Rey noticed Luke above them. Noticing her concern Ben ignited his saber. “No one will hurt you” he assured her.

Before he could call off the remaining knights, and calm her with a display of power he felt a surge across the force. His men fell to their backs while before his eyes Rey was thrown back off the edge of the cliff.

He could feel her shock and how it very quickly morphed into fear. A wave of sickness swept over him. Here he had another chance and mere seconds after vowing her safety she was thrust into mortal peril by his uncle...again.

It all happened so fast. The blow had caught her by surprise. Before she could process the fact that she was falling through the air she broke the surface of the sea. That was when fear gripped her.

The impact was painful and knocked the air from her chest. Precious moments passed as her body recovered from the collision with the angry ocean. She sank into the cold thrashing waves and flailed her limbs wildly in search of solid ground. The unsettled waters tossed her to and fro as she descended deeper into the dark waters.

She was running out of time, fast. Her heart was pounding and her lungs began to burn with the need for air. Looking up she couldn’t see the faintest trace of light left in this cold wet world. A fuzzy feeling filled her mind, the edges of her vision were fading to darkness. The pain in her chest stabbed and water rushed into her lungs as her body betrayed her, involuntarily gasping for air in a final moment of desperation.

Lightning flashed again and in her last conscious moments she saw the shadow of death thrown into relief by the bright white light above the water. Following her into the darkness, floating just beyond grasp, extending his hand for her.

Chapter End Notes

"In the shadows" by Amy Stroup is the soundtrack/inspiration this chapter

This is all about the bond Rey and Ben share and while they are trying to conceal it there is no hiding the connection between them and the power they share.

"In the shadows" by Amy Stroup lyrics..

What happens in the shadows
No one has to know
The truth is in the gallows
It’ll burn but it won’t go
A whisper in the darkness
In the quiet it’ll grow
you can try to hide it in the farthest place
But everybody knows

Something in the Shadows
Cuts you like an arrow
Shifting through the dark
Strength in your weakness
This Fire is in your blood
Hanging from that hope
But everybody knows
There’s something in the Shadows

It finds you in a cold room
Silhouette against the wall
Lit by the white moon
We’ll out run the dawn

You can see the faces
But you don’t know there thoughts
You can feel the traces
from the Chalk lines on my heart
To the bone

Chapter Summary

Ben and Rey in the ocean. Luke and Ben talk, briefly. And Rey and Ben bond...again.

100 KUDOS!! And nearly 5000 hits!! Y'all are too kind!

So happy that people are enjoying this, I always appreciate comments :)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

If he hadn’t been a force user he was certain they both would have been lost to the sea. The tide crushed him as soon as he broke the surface. The water was deep, dark, and frigid. Ben couldn’t see a thing and silently cursed for the precious moments he spent before leaping after Rey.

Through the rough surf he reached for their bond while both of them drifted into a watery oblivion. With effort against the tumult of the violent waves he saw a glimmer in the briny gloom. In an instant he had Rey pressed to his chest while he pulled them to the shore with the last of his strength. The icy sea sapped his physical endurance, but as they reached shore the sight of Luke renewed his vigor with a fiery rage that spread throughout his body. The Jedi had the good sense to stand back as Ben helped ease the water from her lungs. She was still unconscious.

Ben easily swept Rey into his arms as he marched towards the huts. He couldn’t help but be reminded of their encounter on Takodana as he carried her aboard his command ship. Ben wished he could do the same now, but his ship was much farther than the huts and the two of them would succumb to the cold before he reached it.

He sensed the dwelling she used and kicked the door in crossing the tiny space to a palette. He frowned at the meager facilities. A spark of force lightning ignited the tinder in the fire pit in the center of the hut. Her face was fuller than the last time they had met. At the very least leaving Jakku meant she was less likely to go hungry. He began to cover her with a scratchy wool blanket but realized she was still wearing her wet clothes. Before he could decide how to cross this delicate bridge Rey’s eyes fluttered.

He crouched in silence beside her cot until she regained her bearings. She coughed and shivered. Ben thought it would seem natural to reach out and comfort her, to rub warmth into her arms, but these things didn’t come naturally to him anymore. Instead he watched as her eyes opened wide before finally speaking.

“How did?...Thank you” she weakly offered as she realized how they had arrived to safety.

“You need to get out of these clothes...now. Are you well enough to do that?” Ben asked in a measured tone, careful not to betray his concern.

She slowly sat up and nodded. With that he stepped back outside into the cold wet wind. His uncle was waiting outside.
“My men are dead or incapacitated” Ben began. “I won’t be killing you just yet. Rey is alive, no thanks to you. Or had you forgotten she has spent nearly her entire life on Jakku?”

Luke’s eyes went wide with understanding. “I only meant to protect her”.

Ben gave a spiteful laugh.

Without pause his uncle’s eyes narrowed. Luke adjusted his gait to position himself defensively between Ben and Rey’s hut. “I will protect her” he warned.

This was a mistake. Ben could feel his restraint slipping as his lip curled in disgust at the suggestion Luke made.

Ben used the force to recall his lightsaber from the cliff face, but before he could light it Rey appeared at the door of her hut. Turning to Rey, Ben reminded himself that for now she was safe. He had not forgotten his objective here, but this was not the time.

“This isn’t over” Ben stated flatly and without another word he turned into the storm to return to his ship.

Rey was glad to be alone after Luke was done fretting over her. She wished that she and Ben had more time to talk, she had so many questions.

Her mind turned to the memories the island had stirred within her. Rey thought about their time together on Ahch-to, the day they had met on Takodana, his eyes as he had removed his helmet in the interrogation room.

“Don’t be afraid, I feel it to” Ben had assured her.

That moment called to something deep within her. Something that had awakened the moment Ben and the First Order arrived on Jakku, something that grew stronger each day.

A flicker caught her attention from the corner of her eye, her heart fluttered a moment, and suddenly her instinct and years as a scavenger told her to attack, defend; survive.

Reflexively she grabbed the nearest weapon, the blaster Han had given her, she scrambled wildly before firing off a shot in the direction of the alarming energy.

In silent horror Rey watched the bolt strike Ben.

Ben doubled over flinching automatically as the blaster bolt reached him. After the initial shock he realized Rey had not somehow broken into his study. He looked up from his phantom pain, but she was gone.

He could feel her panic so he focused on sending briefs messages along their bond.

“I’m alive, I’m unharmed. You are safe. Rest.” was the best he could manage.
Several days passed as Rey rested, the hole she had blasted in the wall of her hut was repaired, and Luke lectured the teachings of Jedi texts.

Luke had retired in the early afternoon to take some air, hike the island, and spend time meditating. Rey had her freedom, and she knew exactly what she planned on doing with it.

Not long after Luke had agreed to help her train, he had warned her about the power of the island, and her ability to tap into it so easily. Her first demonstration had scared Luke thoroughly, and Rey’s discovery of a force beneath Ahch-to nearly sent her packing for good. He had said the force was dark, and so she feigned disinterest by throwing herself into the dusty books and charts Luke kept, and so his alarm was pacified.

Rey knew there were answers at the heart of the island. She felt its force pulling her towards them, and now she had the opportunity to seek them out.

The closer she came to the center of this arcane power the stronger Rey felt the force pulsing through her veins. Dark, wet, twisted roots encircled a pit where the source of energy gathered. Taking a deep breath to calm herself Rey closed her eyes, prayed for a short drop, and lept firm in her belief that she was being drawn down into the darkness by a destiny that would light her way out.

Chapter End Notes

You know what is next don't you?!

**So excited to whip out a theory of mine in the next chapter**
Haunted

Chapter Summary

Cave time everybody! This is a little theory of mine...

*Let me know what you think! Comment if you love this theory as much as me!* 

Soundtrack/Inspiration at the end

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

In the darkness the fall felt longer than it likely was. Not knowing where the descent began and when it would end left Rey feeling adrift. With a sudden familiar force she crashed into water. Her heart and soul sank with her deeper into the hidden pool as she cursed her foolishness. Scrambling gracelessly she felt a gentle pull to the edge of the water.

He knew she was up to something.

Rey was nervous, excited; curious. She was following a power she felt within Ahch-to. Ben realized too late exactly where she was headed. He had never ventured there himself, too afraid of the truth he would find there.

Ben knew she had arrived when despair and cold water flooded her senses. Reaching across space along their bond he carefully drew her to the safety of the waters edge.

Wet but somehow alive Rey crossed the cavern to the source of her curiosity.

The cave walls before her were like no rock she had ever seen. Cracks veined the surface which was steely and reflective. Stepping closer Rey felt herself detach from the force she normally felt flowing through her on the island. Instead her being was only entirely aware of herself and this place.

Her reflection seemed different. Truer than any mirror or looking glass. Rey watched in awe as the images echoed her every move.

Slowly. Painfully slow Rey reached out to touch the wall before her. As her slender fingers brushed the nearest reflection the surface clouded over.

She should have been afraid.
Ben was afraid.

He did not know the extent of the power in this place, or its consequences.

He was standing over his desk but in the cave he was just behind Rey. When she touched the mirror before her it fogged over.

This was it. There would be no turning back from the answers they sought here. What he would see left him uneasy. Would it be violence, power, death? What was the heart of his desire, what truth could seduce him to any deed?

“Show me.” Ben said quietly.

“Show me.” Rey implored. “Show me my parents”.

Moments passed as the young woman stared intently upon the hazy reflection as tears formed in her eyes.

Rey drew breath sharply as shadows moved beyond the cave wall. One large shadow, could it be a man? Was that a second silhouette?

She couldn’t bare to wait any longer. Reaching out she wiped away the cool mist that had collected over the surface of the cave wall. The mirror cleared itself at her touch and she halted her efforts in shock and despair.

Before her was an image of herself. A perfect portrait of Rey just as she was; every freckle, stray hair, and patch of dry skin. Unlike her the reflection was content, calm, and clear.

Ben too reached out. He swallowed hard as a single shadow moved beyond the surface of the wall. As the rock cleared the one shade became two and he was struck by the enormity of this moment.

Before him stood Rey’s parents.

Chapter End Notes

Soundtrack/inspiration for this chapter is "Haunted" by Maty Noyes

*This is another one of those songs I strongly suggest you give a listen!* 

This song is another example where I think the lyrics speak for themselves...I'll let you simply enjoy this one without my running commentary lol

"Haunted" By Maty Noyes lyrics....

Love, you left me haunted
Love, I’m just a shadow now
Dark in the night
Dark in the day
The messages won't go away
Love, you left me madness
Turn me (in)to a monster now

(Let the light in)

Love, I think I’m dying
Love, the monster’s got me now
Love, I think I’m dying
Love, the shadow’s all around

Lost in years
Lost in the days
Lost, and it just won’t go away

Let the light in
Let the light in

Love, I feel you near me
Love is no more shadow now

Love, I feel you near me
Love is no more monster now
Leia stared out the broad open doorway of the base. The vast white salt flats on Crait reminded her of the blinding tundra on Hoth years ago. The memory caused a succession of thoughts that led back to her little boy Ben.

He hadn’t been able to fire. Not in time. She had felt his conflict; his pain through the force, and when they had reached safety she begged him to let go. To relieve himself of the pressure threatening to crush his heart and soul, the forces fighting to tear him apart again, the power that didn’t care if the pieces that remained were too broken to function. She had been relieved when the Raddus erupted in flame. Easing his struggle, even for a little while. It was a violent metaphor for her son’s potential; lethal, explosive, and bright.

Poe was returning from a reconnaissance mission. She needed to know the extent of the First Order’s forces on Crait. Leia knew they had been mining and manufacturing on the planet for sometime, but she had no idea what the point or purpose of the facility was.

The cavalier pilot briskly made his way to the general. There was far less swagger in his steps than usual, and while her maternal instinct urged her to embrace him she knew he needed to grieve his own way, Poe’s way.

Crimson streaks marred Poe’s wake where his boots dragged along the salt revealing the minerals beneath. Visibly exhausted the young man offered a labored smile when he reached her.

“I’m afraid it isn’t good news fearless leader” he said with a grimace.

“The scale of their facility is like nothing I’ve ever seen. It’s no wonder they tear through AT-AT’s, Tie fighters, and Storm Troopers like a cantina through Corellian whisky. They’re cranking weapons, equipment, and ships out like crappy music in the same cantina” he said wryly.

“Alright enough with the figure of speech. Their base is active” Leia reasoned as Poe arched a brow at her. “very active” she corrected. “What else can you tell me Poe?”.

“There doesn’t appear to be a large number of personnel, the majority of it is automated. But
this is clearly one of the biggest supply hubs they have, if not the biggest” he said with excitement.

Leia could see something burning in Poe’s eyes. The prospect of eliminating a key enemy target. If their own forces hadn’t been devastated after D’Qar she would have trusted him to plan, lead, and execute an offensive, but they had been crippled, cornered, and culled by the First Order.

“Excellent work, for now we stand down and await reinforcements” she stated evenly trying not to stoke his fire.

“There’s more General. Their mining operation” Poe started with a dire look in his eyes “So far as I can tell they are scooping out the innards of this planet like a ranger with a TaunTaun during a cold night on Hoth”.

“All the nights are cold on Hoth Poe...come to think of it, so are the days” Leia laughed as she began walking away from him.

“No no no no no” Poe sang chasing after her “OK enough trying to paint a picture here, look. These are the facts. This planet has a salt surface right? This planet has those crystal critters right? Those fox things?”

“Vulptex, yes” Leia answered.

“Vulp-yeah, yes those” Poe continued “well clearly crystalline structures thrive here. So the way I see it, these mineral deposits we’re standing on” he emphasized as he kicked a layer of salt away to reveal the ichor of the planet. “These deposits are crystalline also. And what sort of crystals would a crazy force frenzied First Order freak like Snoke be after?” he concluded trailing off waiting for Leia to fill in the blank.

“Maker!” she swore aloud “Kyber crystals!”.

Chapter End Notes

I'm in this for the long haul folks. I have a whole new story planned here in my vision for TLJ. I'm blending it with bits I enjoyed from the film, but I have a whole new ride. And I have episode 9 coming after this is finished!!

*TLJ novelization isn't out until March I believe so enjoy this in the mean time!*
A beautiful kind of pain

Chapter Summary

Huts and hands folks! This is not a drill!!

Reylo gets "hands on" see what I did there ehehe.**Can you spot the Easter eggs, I have references riddled throughout the story so far!**

Many thanks again for reading along!

*My favorite thing is seeing comments! Please share with other fans, kudos, keep reading, and enjoying!*

Soundtrack/inspiration at the end!!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The fire was as large as she could make it without burning down her own hut. Rey shivered against the gloom of the little room. She had hiked back from the cave cold, wet, and confused. Even after a change of clothes something cold still ached to her core, a loneliness that spread and left her feeling brittle and raw.

Luke still hadn’t returned from his meditation. She didn’t know if that made her happy or sad. She longed for company, but she also resented the look of fear that still lingered in the corners of his eyes.

She reflected on the bitter truth she had found in the cave. The farce that had led her nowhere, and left her with more questions than answers.

“You’re hands are cold” Ben observed softly with a detached tone one might summarize the weather conditions with.

Rey was not startled when she looked up to see him sitting across the fire.

“No they're not, I’m fine” she said as she adjusted the blanket she had wrapped around her shoulders.

“You’re trembling” he declared pointedly.

Rey could only roll her eyes. “So are you here to narrate my entire evening? Or just to remind me to bundle up?”

They both smirked at the absurd situation and settled into a comfortable silence for a time before Rey finally found courage staring into the flames.

“I don’t understand what, this, is. And...maybe it’s selfish, but I’m glad you’re here.” she managed quietly over the crackle of the burning wood and moss.
“Even if it means having a monster for company?” Ben asked flatly.

Rey’s gaze darkened, ‘why did he have to remind her of the horrible things he had done?’ she thought. ‘She was starting to see new depths within him, why did he have to dredge up the pain again?’ She hadn’t realized while lost in thought she hadn’t offered an answer.

“Well once I’ve figured out how, I’ll excuse myself and leave you to freeze in peace” Ben said bitterly.

“No!” Rey pleaded more urgently than she had intended.

“Still so lonely” he observed sadly, almost knowingly.

“It’s just. Nothing is as I expected it to be. Luke, this island, the cave...you.” she listed faintly. “I think the only constant I have now is Chewie”.

Ben grunted and thought before speaking. “Things are rarely what they seem” he said earnestly. “And you can’t expect to win the war if you keep running from battle. I’ve seen your pain Rey, I can feel it now.” He paused again, remembering what she did not know he saw in the cave, choosing his words carefully. "Let the past die. Kill it if you have to. It’s the only way to become what you were meant to be”. His eyes were shining in the reflection of the fire. Dark, intense, and pleading in the dim light of the hut.

“What I’m meant to be?” she started sadly. “I’m meant to be scavenging on Jakku. Left behind with all the other scraps. Alone. Just like I am now”.

At this Ben squared his shoulders and made to interrupt her sorrow.

“You’re not alone” he gently said meeting Rey’s eyes.

His support took her aback. Something in her was pulled towards him, their memories, this moment; their future. She saw his face watching over her in the storm, she heard the words she’d always longed to hear, and she felt hope swell within her looking forward.

His hand reached forward and hers to meet it. Slowly, closer, making contact. A wave washed over their bond. Finally she spoke.

“Neither are you”.

Long moments passed as they waded through the force between them, their own feelings, and the intimacy of each other. Collectively their breath caught as the door burst open.

At this moment wild whipping wind rushed into the hut dampening the fire, Luke had returned. His eyes fell upon Ben and Rey hands joined between them. The bond was broken as the scraping sound of stones drowned out a shout from Ben as he faded and the hut was pulled apart brick by brick. A cold darkness descended upon Rey as the night closed in and her master Luke with it.

Chapter End Notes

I HOPE YOU ENJOYED!!
The soundtrack for this chapter is surprising... If there were an acoustic version it would be perfect.

GIVE THIS ONE A LISTEN it is a great song! This one has a lot of great moments that have to do with moving past pain and the power of pain and letting go. It also refers to relationships and exchanges that aren't so perfect and moving forward past to something new. It's great because both Ben and Rey can relate to the song and it is a male/female duet.

Beautiful Pain by Eminem ft. SIA

I can feel the heat rising, everything is on fire
Today is a painful reminder of why
We can only get brighter
The further you put it behind ya
But right now I'm on the inside
(Lookin' out, cause)

[Hook - Sia:]
I'm standin' in the flames
It's a beautiful kind of pain
Settin' fire to yesterday
Find the light, find the light, find the light

[Verse 1:]
Yesterday was the tornado warning
Today's like the morning after
Your world is torn in half
You wake in it's wake to start the mourning process
And rebuilding, you're still a work in progress
Today's a whole new chapter
It's like an enormous asth-ma
Thunderstorm has passed ya
You weathered it and poked it's eye out
With the thorn bush that you
Used to smell the roses
Stopped to inhale, can't even tell your nose is, stuffed
So focused on the bright side
Then you floor the gas pedal
And hit the corner fast the more asserted
Never looking back
May hit the curb
But every day is a new learning curve as you
Steer through life, sometimes you might not wanna swerve
But you have to
To avert a disaster
Lucky no permanent damage
Cause they hurt you so bad
It's like they murdered your ass
And threw dirt on your casket but you've returned from the ashes
And that hurt that you have, you just converted to gasoline
And while you're burning the past, standing in the inferno and chant
[Verse 2:]
You're so familiarized with what having to swallow this pill is like
It happens all the time, they take your heart and steal your life
And it's as though you feel you've died
Cause you've been killed inside
But yet you're still alive
Which means you will survive
Although today you may weep cause you're weakened
And everything seems so bleak and hopeless
The light that you're seekin'
It begins to seep in
That's the only thing keepin'
You from leapin' off the mothafreakin' deep end
And I'm pullin' for you to push through this feeling
And with a little time that should do the healing
And by tomorrow
You may even feel so good that you're willing to forgive 'em even after
All the shit you been put through this feeling of resilience is building
And the flames are burning quick as fire would through this building
You're sealed in but you're fireproof, flame retardant, you withstood it
And as you climb up to the roof, you're just chillin' you look down
Cause you're so over 'em
You could put the heel of your foot through the ceiling

[Bridge:]
As time passes
Things change every day
But wounds, wounds heal, but scars still remain the same
But tomorrow today's going down in flames
Throw the match, set the past ablaze

[Verse 3:]
So feel the fire beneath your feet as you barely even perspire
From the heat
Exhale deep and breathe a sigh of relief
And as you say goodbye to the grief
It's like watching the walls melt in your prison cell
But you've extinguished this living hell
Still a little piece of you dies as you scream

[Hook]
Hello from the other side...of the galaxy

Chapter Summary

Time for some Hux!
Don't worry more is on the way! I will be writing into the wee hours tonight!

I got a little silly with the chapter name on this one...haha

*No soundtrack for this one, I imagine a very sterile and clinical environment before Hux goes to bed. No unnecessary stimuli before sleeping!

Armitage Hux was a patient man, you wouldn't know it from the complete and utter obedience he demanded, but every decision he made was in favor of the long game.

Although he had the benefit of an influential father and an exceptional education, he endured the knowledge that he had been sired as the result of an affair with a lowly kitchen woman. He the son of Brendol Hux a commandant of the Imperial Academy of Arkanis, was birthed by a lustful simpleton out of wedlock. He nor any peer was likely to let him forget it, until the First Order. Within the absolute structure of the militant uprising there was a clamor for power which only the most fanatical and devoted would survive, and so Hux thrived.

That was until the arrival of the mewling brat, Ben Solo. Hux had proven his mettle time and again, ruthless, cunning, strategic, merciless, expedient, and efficient. Yet the arrival of a force sensitive pupil suddenly made his contributions inessential.

Ren had always been moody but the young man he arrived as was unbearable. He lacked control and discipline, he slept fitfully, and was prone to outbursts. The First Order made what it could from the raw material the boy provided but Hux to this day remained unimpressed.

More the pity, he thought. Had he been capable of wielding the force he could have forgone years of bitter rivalry and professional detours. Had he lacked the same natural talent Solo had, he surely would have emerged the superior acolyte based upon his self command and obedience alone.

The young man abandoned his reverie and reviewed correspondence from the desk within his personal quarters. He wanted to clear his inbox before taking four hours of rest and returning to active duty. Angry red veins riddled his tired eyes as he stared intently at the datapad.

The First Order had holdings in several commodities and Hux was pleased to see their investment in Dura-steel was bringing in returns that would keep them outfitted for another decade. The brilliance of such an endeavor was that no matter what the tide of war had in store both sides and the separatists in between needed the material to fight, defend, and or protect themselves.

Crait was reporting a 42% increase in harvested kyber crystals since the deployment of the drill Snoke had developed. And they were now able to transport twice as much material via freight ship to the manufacturing plant that was The Supremacy, as the result of a newly acquired arrangement with a wealthy senator of the outer rim.

Hux snickered to himself at the contradiction of it ‘A wealthy senator of the outer rim’, but the
results spoke for themselves and he too a underestimated man of means and will appreciated the unlikely ally.

Lastly the General happened upon a brief communication from the command ship of Master Kylo Ren.


The correspondence was succinct:

“Arrived. Delayed. The girl and Skywalker here. Advise”.

It was pathetic really. Ren had become such a whelp recently, smitten with that scavenger trash, and utterly lost without Snoke. Hux clicked the screen and decided he would wait until he woke to tell the Supreme Leader. He would relish the frustration upon Snoke’s disfigured face, and the disappointment his protege had become.

Laying on his back Hux laid his hands upon his chest and called for the lights to be dimmed in his quarters. He allowed himself the indulgence of a smirk as he drifted to sleep. Before he could enter the first phase of a sleep cycle blue light and a sharp rasping voice shook him.

“General!” Snoke’s enlarged hologram boomed. “Is it now a duty of your rank to discern which of my messages is important enough to deliver immediately?!”. 

“Supreme leader I...” began Hux cut off by a crushing grip upon his windpipe.

“Or is it that your rest is more important” seethed the Supreme Leader.

As the ginger general was dragged from his bed by the pull of the force strangling him Snoke’s temper cooled.

“Now now, this is good news! The resolution of Kylo Ren’s conflict is at hand. See to it you order Master Ren to return with the Jedi and this scavenger”. With this Snoke’s image disappeared and Hux collapsed upon the cold tile floor.

Slowly the young man righted himself and adjusted the collar of his sleeping clothes before climbing back into bed. The exchange may not have been precisely what he had envisioned, but the Supreme Leader did not disappoint. He may have lost the chance to gloat, but the ends justified any means.

Kylo Ren would be brought low by his weakness, finally exposed as the craven pretender he is. His compassion and feeling torn from his chest and destroyed before his eyes as the Supreme Leader would realize his poor investment and terminate the con once and for all.

General Hux replied with a message as concise as Ren’s before slipping into deep and restful sleep.

“Snoke wants both”.

Chapter Summary

We get a few different perspectives on the events following the hand sex...and an explosive look into a blast from the past...literally!

*So thankful for the love and support this has gotten! All comments are welcome, say hello sometime!* 

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Rey followed Luke to his hut. She couldn’t tell if the blinding rage she felt was her own or Ben’s but she knew a portion was her own fury.

“What do you think you’re doing?!” she thundered. Her voice was deep, dark, and demanding and startled her as much as the Jedi.

Luke’s eyes were tired, Rey knew he had cut himself off from the force and the effort of destroying the hut must have left him drained. Beyond his fatigue was the flash of fear again, and it boiled her blood.

Silently shaking with anger she waited for him to reply.

“He’s dangerous Rey” Luke paused. “And so are you”.

It was like all the air was kicked from her chest. She felt like she was on Jakku scrapping over food with other orphans and a gut shot had left her empty and gasping.

“He is too far gone” he continued. “You can’t save him. He’s made his choice, and it will destroy you as it did him”.

“How can you say that?” Rey countered weakly. “He’s your nephew. Your family” she added with new strength.

“Because I tried!” Luke shouted. “I thought, I a Jedi master, could sway the force inside him. I was vain, I was prideful, and I was wrong”.

The aging man rested upon a rock and cast a glance over the stone pylon memorial as he continued.

“My arrogance had consequences. Innocent consequences. The time of the Jedi is over, and the order must end...with me”.

“But...my training?” Rey questioned.

“Tell me Rey, what have I taught you since you returned to this island?” Luke teased. “Name one thing my tutelage has really done other than keep you busy and tired”.

Truth and consequences
“The Resistance needs you!...Your sister needs you!” Rey pleaded through frustrated tears.

“Yes, and after a time here you would have returned to them. “Trained”, confident, inspired by the “legend of Luke Skywalker”, and given them new hope” he mused. “But I will not train a Jedi and I will never leave this island again”.

A tear ran down Rey’s cheek disappearing in the rain as the skies opened up. Luke turned in his doorway pitying the young woman and offering one last piece of advice before closing his door upon her.

“And Ben Solo is dead”.

Niney blinked and beeped to life wildly as her master roared suddenly in the night. She had been checking the progress of the two knights who had survived the skirmish on Ahch-to, but now the droid rolled cautious and quick into Ben’s quarters.

“Prepare to return the ship to orbit” he nearly panted.

He hadn’t thought much about his former master’s place in his objective. He was older, weaker, and Ben could tell Luke had mutilated his own connection to the force. He hadn’t desired any particular outcome when he and his knights arrived on the island. His uncle could have lived, died, or sat prone in meditation for all he cared; the man had been dead to him for some time.

But after the utter failure of his first encounter on Ahch-to which nearly resulted in Rey’s death, he could see Luke’s solitary penance had done nothing to change his meddling ways.

And now! He had dared interfere again, bastardizing his use of the force to pull he and Rey apart. Flashes of bricks, stones, and thatched roofing torn in all directions brought up buried memories. The thought enraged him again as he gripped a chair and brought it crashing through the table in his room. A thousand shattering sounds filled the room as glass and steel scattered the black tile floor. The shards glittered like stars and a ribbon of blood streaked the makeshift sky where his hand had smashed into the table first. His glove. Ben calmed himself. Remembering the moment he had been torn from. Reaching out, understanding; touching. His black glove’s mate still lay on the edge of his bed making him nostalgic for an illusion.

’Soo much time; wasted.’ he thought bitterly. ‘No more’.

“Open a line of communication to The Supremacy!”.

A pattern seemed to be developing on Ahch-to, somehow since arriving Rey always ended up wet and alone. In all the result wasn’t terribly different from the years on the desert planet of Jakku.

The evening had started with so much promise. The cave hadn’t shown her the truth she was looking for, but Ben had given her the belonging she was seeking. But Luke, yet again, came between them. And now in the face of all of her efforts, in spite of the war, and the lives lost, and the pleas of his own sister; his family! He was prepared to turn his back on them again.

After gathering her scattered belongings from the rubble of her first hut Rey huddled under all of the blankets and clothes she could gather in the hut beside it. The island called to her again, calming and coaxing her into deep sleep.

The strange veil she remembered in earlier dreams passed over her and she fell through the sky landing upon the pebbled beach of Ahch-to.
She and Ben were hand in hand facing an enormous slab of rock. Some years had passed. Rey the child was still fairly small, but Ben was now about in his teens.

“Ready?” the boy asked her.

Little Rey nodded and released his hand.

The air seemed to charge with the same energy Rey recognized from sand storms. Suddenly with a thunderous crack lightening erupted from the little girl’s fingers cleaving the rock in two.

The shock and joy the children shared was interrupted by the fury of Luke Skywalker. “BEN!” he bellowed darkly as Rey was drawn from one memory to another.

Suddenly all was quiet and still. She was inside a hut and someone lay sleeping in the cot across the room. Shifting in their sleep they turned. She saw the face of Ben now fifteen. Rey could see the face of the man she knew now emerging in his features. Without warning a shadow shifted in the darkness, Luke had been standing to the side of the palette deep in thought. A ‘thrum’ cut through the silence as green light burst from the lightsaber her held aloft.

Rey watched on in horror as the blade remained poised to deliver a killing blow to the young man, his nephew, as he slept.

The shift in light danced across Ben’s face, as did heartbreaking understanding, as his eyes opened. In an instant he called his own weapon to him and Rey felt herself gasp as sharp blue light blazed to meet Luke’s.

In a flash upon contact it seemed Ben’s blade could no longer bear the power supplied to it. The intensity of the saber’s light grew instantly as it became white hot and blinding. Rey thought of overloaded power conduits and transformers than blew as he reached up towards his uncle and a flare of force power detonated that sent fire, debris, and chaos raining down upon Ahch-to.

With dizzying speed impressions of moments flashed by as she was extracted from her memory. Ben collected her from her cot, other light sabers ignited, there was fire everywhere, fighting began. Students against other students, master against pupils. Luke cutting down a young man and approaching her on an open field. Lightening. Ben trapped under a beam. Blood, screams, fleeing into the night.

"I'll come back for you sweetheart, I promise".

Rey awoke pinned to her cot gasping as tears and pain stained her heart. There were still gaps in her understanding, but she was certain she had just witnessed the birth of Kylo Ren.

Chapter End Notes

The soundtrack/inspiration for this chapter is "Running up that hill" covered by Placebo

It doesn't hurt me.
You wanna feel how it feels?
You wanna know, know that it doesn't hurt me?
You wanna hear about the deal I'm making?
You be running up that hill
You and me be running up that hill

And if I only could,
Make a deal with God,
And get him to swap our places,
Be running up that road,
Be running up that hill,
Be running up that building.
If I only could, oh...

You don't want to hurt me,
But see how deep the bullet lies.
Unaware that I'm tearing you asunder.
There is thunder in our hearts, baby.
So much hate for the ones we love?
Tell me, we both matter, don't we?

You, be running up that hill
You and me, be running up that hill
You and me won't be unhappy.

And if I only could,
Make a deal with God,
And get him to swap our places,
Be running up that road,
Be running up that hill,
Be running up that building,
If I only could, oh...

'C'mon, baby, c'mon, c'mon, darling,
Let me steal this moment from you now.
C'mon, angel, c'mon, c'mon, darling,
Let's exchange the experience, oh...'

And if I only could,
Make a deal with God,
And get him to swap our places,
Be running up that road,
Be running up that hill,
With no problems [x2]

'If I only could, be running up that hill.' [x7]
Canto Bight

Chapter Summary

Canto Bight!

A brief side trip to the casino planet...things coming up are about to get twisty!

“FINN” Poe shouted “I need you to focus buddy”.

The charismatic pilot was going over the details of a plan he had hatched to derail the First Order. Since his recon mission all he could focus on was the opportunity to destroy the lifeblood of the militant war machine.

The jist was that Finn and Rose would retrieve a slicer Maz recommended from Canto Bight, a far flung pleasure planet renowned for its casino and clientele, return to Crait, codebreak the massive new drill, and destroy the chain of operations for the entire First Order. Poe would be running a team to bomb the facility and the extraction for Finn and Rose.

Finn was uneasy. He still worried about Rey so far away chasing a legend somewhere in the wilderness of space, off the grid, off the map, and without word. But his heart was also pulled toward the family he had in front of him. The pain and purpose of the friends he could help here and now.

Rose’s determination was steely. Poe was finally acting like Poe again, and Finn couldn’t deny either the chance to find closure and glory in their work for the Rebellion.

“Could we please explore for just five minutes?” Finn begged.

Canto Bight was like nothing he had ever seen in all his years as a stormtrooper. The opulence and wealth was radically different from the clinical and spartan life of the First Order, and a far cry from the ramshackle thrift of the Rebellion.

Rose pulled Finn away from a glittering fountain only to have him drag her towards chiming gaming slots. Everything was crafted to delight the senses. Sounds, sights, sensations all competing for guest’s attention.

The experience was short lived, and soon Finn and Rose were treated to the underbelly of such a swanky city when BB-8 managed to get them arrested for assaulting a patron who had confused the spunky droid for a game machine.

Rose rolled her eyes as the detention room door closed with a loud clank. “Finished exploring?”.
They bickered for a time over the set back, the plan, and the consequences of failure. Only when a ragged voice cleared its throat did Finn and Rose realize they were not alone in the Canto Bight holding cell. When the man rolled out of the bunk and into their world Finn couldn’t help but think of Maz and their last conversation.

While planning this mission he had asked Maz where Rey was.

“She is exactly where she needs to be” she said “as you will be”.

Finn couldn’t deny the power the force seemed to have in all things great and small and this unlikely meeting only convinced him further. Maz had told them to seek out a man with an old cap that would say “Don’t Join” in Aurabesh, and here he was.

Life hadn’t been kind to this man. The lines written on his face and the bags under his eyes made it hard to tell how old he was. The dirt under his nails and the grime on his shoes suggested a shifty character, but he carried himself with confidence and a strange sort of grace.

He and Rose took turns questioning the crook, as though they could somehow authenticate his identity. DJ, as he preferred to be called, had a stutter that was caused by decades of shorting out electrical panels. He made quick work of the jail’s lock, which he opened as if it were his own front door.

As they hurried along the corridor to the docking station DJ took an interest in one of his would be rescuers.

“S-s-s-so you’re a defector huh? First Order goods g-g-gone bad?” DJ said cooly.

Despite their need for urgency Finn nearly stopped in his tracks. The smile that crept across the slicer’s face was unsettling

“T-t-takes one to know one”.

“You? You were a stormtrooper?” Finn whispered in shock.

“I’ve been a lot of th-th-things k-kid. Born during the Empire, s-s-served First Order, joined Resistance...th-then saw the big picture and turned f-f-freelance”.

“The big picture?” Rose chimed in as they reached their ship.

DJ pulled a face as he pointed rather obviously to the scruffy hat on his head “Don’t join!”.

On the trip back to Crait DJ raided their transport for useful bits. He and BB-8 really bonded as the droid rolled behind him pointing out unnecessary equipment he could pillage from the craft.

Rose’s face was pinched in annoyance. She resented relying upon such an unsavory character. Her sister had died saving the Resistance, and they were supposed to trust a man who had no loyalty or love for the cause of either side. She also had no patience for the glances he kept casting her way.

“What is wrong with you?! She finally outburst. “Do you really care so little? Can you really be so selfish? I mean, we are talking about murder!” she continued.

Before her emotion could carry her any further DJ stood abruptly and stalked closer.
“M-m-m-murder. Yes.” he began calmly. “S-so you agree? You are murderers all”.

Rose’s eyes narrowed at the implication “This is war” she started gravely “lives are lost on both sides and you can hardly…”

“Let me learn you s-something kiddies” DJ cut in bitterly. “Th-there are no good guys or b-bad guys. There is m-money or p-power, and if we are l-lucky…survivors”.

“How can you be so cynical you can’t…” Rose tried.

“Canto Bight.” DJ nearly yelled. “Maz better give me a b-bonus for this kriffing gig…W-why else do you think f-fence sitting s-s-scum like me set up shop there?”

At this point the charismatic con seemed deflated. The swagger and sureness fell away to reveal a much more vulnerable man. Finn supposed no one really questioned his motives so long as he delivered what his employers wanted. This exchange had poked at something long sleeping and raw.

“War is a power struggle for few, l-lines the pockets of many, and d-damn the rest” DJ said quietly. “Forget the dead and the f-families on both sides. The manufacturers, b-buyers, sellers; the p-p-people profiting here aren’t just the F-f-first Order. Ever th-thought about that?”. He paused “I thought I was a good man once; just once. P-perspective’s a bitch, and no Jedi can m-m-mind trick that fact”.

With that their code breaker sank into the nearest chair pulled his hat over his eyes and spent the rest of the flight in silence.
Welcome to the dark side

Chapter Summary

Catching up with Poe, Phasma, and Hux.
And more on what is up with Crait and the Kyber crystals!

THANK YOU ALL FOR READING! I LOVE THE WORK I AM CREATING!

*As always comments, kudos, shares are very welcome*

And if anyone has any one shot requests etc. let me know!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Poe was nervous.

Honest to goodness, nervous. Not like the butterflies Paige used to give him, or the giddy excitement he and Finn had every time they were in the midst of some shenanigans. No. Nervous, and scared. He had kept Leia in the dark about his plan to destroy the First Order base on Crait, and now Vice-Admiral Amilyn Holdo was arriving with reinforcements to transport wounded and relieve what was left of their own exhausted fleet. The last thing he wanted was to disappoint the woman who had placed so much faith in him. But here he was plotting behind her back.

‘This is for the good of the Resistance’ he told himself as he walked to the hangar to receive Holdo and her retinue. ‘We won’t have another chance like this, we are saving lives...I can do this...I have to do this’ he thought.

He joined General Leia and others in a line as a few dozen Rebellion members filed out of a shuttle. At the end of the procession was a tall lithe woman of an age with Leia. She was feminine, fashionable, beautiful, and apparently very fond of purple. This couldn’t be the Vice-Admiral Holdo he had heard of. She was renowned for her strategy and battle prowess not her wardrobe.

The woman had a soft and easy way about her until she was giving out orders. Her tone was clipped, precise, and succinct. They didn’t need a socialite with a complex. ‘Power hungry’ Poe thought with disdain.

In the conference room the two factions of the Rebellion got acquainted. According to the Vice-Admiral their role was to observe and remain inactive on Crait gathering intel and recovering. Once safe transport could be arranged they would abandon the derelict Rebel base again and regroup in a safer star system.

“And we let the war machine keep rolling?” Dameron chimed in acerbically.

Holdo honed in on the pilot with sapphire eyes as her lips were drawn into a hard line.

“I mean excuse me Vice-Admiral, but I don’t need to do much research to see this is
the biggest First Order mining operation any of us have ever seen” he added.

“Commander Dameron right?” she began with dangerous amity. “We haven’t had the pleasure yet. I understand it you are the flight commander who didn’t have much of an evacuation plan for D’Qar” she continued with a grimace “not much of a plan B man are you? Lots of casualties” she finished with a shake of her head.

Poe felt his insides ignite as he made angry strides within inches of the woman. After several heated moments where he prayed his eyes could bore holes through her ridiculous hair and dead heart he strode off to his quarters, he had an attack to plan.

BB-8 and Poe had managed to nab First order uniforms by disguising BB with a trash bin and setting him loose on a laundry facility on the mining base. With the arrival of Holdo their plan didn’t have much time for development or preparation.

Finn had a working knowledge of operations procedures and layouts, Rose could handle, dismantle, and sabotage the equipment, and DJ could open every and any door and hack every operation program they encountered. Poe just had to hop in a ship and blow shit up. Get in, fuck shit up, get out, and blow it all to hell. Simple.

The only catch being, failure wasn’t an option.

‘Failure isn’t an option’ Phasma told herself as she looked in the mirror. She took a deep breath before sweeping back her white blonde hair and arranging her helmet.

The chrome amazon had a meeting with the Supreme Leader and General Hux. She would be sent back to the surface of Crait to lead a small security task force. Protect the assets the First Order had there and determine if a second drill could be supported by the current amount of personnel. If the past five years were anything to base the success of the assignment by, it should be a cake walk. But life had taught Phasma to be wary of the gifts fortune offered.

The Supreme Leader was in a mood. When she entered the throne room she could feel his anger bearing down on an anemic looking Hux. The fool was always trying the old creature’s patience. She however knew who buttered her bread, and it was always the person who was holding the knife.

“It is not your place to question Master Ren’s assignments or my orders!” he thundered. “Am I clear?”.

“Crystal Supreme Leader!” the General croaked.

“Never give me reason to remind you” Snoke finished with an eery softness. “Speaking of crystal, Captain Phasma I take it you and your troop are ready to return to the surface?”.

“Indeed Supreme Leader” she replied obediently.

“Very good” the disfigured man purred as he rose from his throne.
Phasma had expected to be summarily dismissed after making a brief appearance, but the Supreme Leader rising was a bad omen for such wishful thinking.

“I have invested long years at great personal cost. Such great personal cost” Snoke mused as he examined a lopsided ravine along his jaw. “I need certain assurances that your priorities and devotion are absolute”.

With the wave of a boney hand Praetorian guards moved forward to escort Hux and Phasma to the apparatuses to either side of Snoke’s throne.

“Supreme Leader please, don’t waste such precious resources on us” Hux pleaded in a panic.

“So now you think I am wasting resources! Oh yes, I think you are in need of imbuing General. What say you Captain?”.

The red hair of Hux whipped around despite the copious amounts of gel he used. He stared intently at her hoping for an ally.

“Failure is not an option Supreme Leader, any cost is justified” Phasma offered flatly.

Snoke made a noise of approval before issuing orders to release her. “As you were Captain Phasma, I expect reports daily”.

“As you wish Supreme Leader” she replied bowing her head as she turned to leave the room. Hux looked up with malice from under a furrowed brow. His upper lip curled as the guard brought him underneath the equipment.

Imbuing involved using a Kyber crystal ingrained with dark force energy to realign or persuade. Torture and pain could only push the mind so far, but imbuing a person’s very life force with a Kyber crystal harvested from Crait, saturated with the power of The Supreme Leader himself; brokered no resistance.

The process was unpleasant to say the least. And Phasma thanked her lucky stars fate favored her once again. A series of cogs clicked as a mechanism lowered itself above Hux. A laser pulsed, a syringe emptied, and a shriek issued from the throne room as a series of layered doors began to close behind her. ‘Cake walk’ she thought morbidly.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you have enjoyed!

Soundtrack/Inspiration for this chapter is "Dark Side" by Sebell.

I don't have lyrics because I literally couldn't pull any up online! BUT if anyone is interested you can hear the song and ALL the other songs I use while writing this fanfic on my spotify playlist "Writing soundtrack" Nikki Rao

**Also check out the holiday one shot I posted here on AO3 "Fa-la-la-la Forcebond" it is a fun little "Twas the Night Before Christmas style" Reylo piece, and it all rhymes!
The last Jedi

Chapter Summary

Grab some tissues, here comes a twist with feels!

THANK YOU as always for your support!

Keep the feedback coming!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Rey wasn’t certain how she had arrived in this position but she was breathing heavily, lightsaber poised overhead, and standing above Luke Skywalker in the pouring rain; night pressing in all around them on the remote island.

“Tell me!” she raged. “Tell me why you tried to kill him?! Your nephew, a boy! In his sleep!”.

“Rey...listen...you don’t understand” Luke began as though calming a spooked Bantha.

“TELL ME!” Rey screamed. “Make me understand!”

Rey’s heart was waging war against her chest. She could feel her own sadness, fear, and fury tinged with the bitter ache of Ben’s own agony and wrath.

Luke was out of his depth. Time had left him older, slower, weaker; but even in his prime he now began to question if his abilities could ever have matched Rey’s or Ben’s for that matter.

“I failed him!” the Jedi cried out against the storm.

“I thought in my arrogance, that I knew all there was to the force...to the Jedi” he began “I was wrong. I had always thought...There is the light versus the dark. I had always fought to eliminate the dark side, I taught others to reject, deny...destroy it!”.

Rey slowly lowered her weapon as Ben’s sorrow coalesced with her own, a mournful union like tears in rain.

“I sensed the darkness he was capable of Rey, I saw a dark force inside him, I thought it would be better to snuff it out than let it consume him, to scorch the galaxy. To sacrifice one for the many. It was like nothing I’d ever felt. Ben alone was too powerful, but with you...If I could see darkness even in you how was Ben to turn away from...Rey, I made a mistake! I was weak” Luke pleaded seeing the ugly turn this conflict was set to take.

“I failed Ben!” he admitted as his voice broke above the whipping wind.

“Please, I can’t fail you too. I have nothing left to teach you, the Jedi I was can’t continue. I don’t know how to guide the power you possess. But Rey...He has made his choice!”.

“No! You decided for him!” she shouted. “He hadn’t chosen anything...he still hasn’t!” she
began to weep. “You forced his hand and he has been running from you and the memory ever since, broken, and abandoned by the one person who was meant to understand him. And somehow I ended up alone on a forsaken pile of sand!”.

“Vader; Anakin Skywalker and myself...We both grew up on a desert planet. Detached, cut off, and isolated from the force, our abilities; our birthright” Luke noted. “It was clever. Another barren wasteland, dead, and unassuming. Somewhere the force couldn’t reach you easily, and no one would think to look...Jakku” Luke somberly smiled to himself. “Ben’s always had a wicked sense of irony and a penchant for family traditions”.

“What the kriff is that supposed to mean?” Rey sobbed.

“It means, *Ben* is the one who left you there” Luke sighed.

Rey was momentarily lost to her memories.

That night years ago the few who survived ran away. Ben piloted a ship and those who had homes returned to them, and the others followed the young man towards the First Order.

“Ben?” she had asked as a child sitting up and rubbing sleep and soot from her eyes.

The light filling the ship was bright and hot. Despite the blinding glare Ben stared ahead straight into it unmoving.

Even as she relived this memory Rey could feel Ben being torn apart. She clutched her chest bracing against the forgotten pain as she watched him unfasten their restraints.

“Where I’m going you can’t follow Rey” he began evenly.

“Wha..?” she made a questioning sound as her little eyes watered. “No. Ben, no. Take me with you! I’ll go anywhere!” She pleaded as her eyes adjusted and she took a good look out of the window. “Not here, please! They don’t want me! Ben!”.

“They were young, you were a baby, they’ll want you now” he tried to assure her and himself.

“They were afraid of me! They still are, you can feel it! Please they are *nothing* to me..no one!” she begged “But not you” she finished weakly.

Ben swallowed hard and Rey swore she could see a light dying in his eyes as he waved a hand before her and eight year old Rey fell limp into his arms.

“I’ll come back for you sweetheart, I promise” he whispered as he kissed the crown of her head.

Rey watched in anguish when she as a child awoke, memory wiped, as she watched a ship break into the atmosphere away from Jakku. As Unkar Plutt dragged her towards town Rey had to cover her ears to soften the blow of the traumatic pleas tearing through her heart.

“Come back! NO! *COME BACK!*”.

Rey’s hands trembled as she lowered them from her ears, finally sure the memory was complete.

“Please, Rey...This isn’t going to go the way you think” she heard Luke say.
“No.” she said in a hollow voice. “Tell me Luke, how will this end? It’s up to you now. As ever”.

With this she backed away replacing her saber at her hip. She turned into the storm before calling back over her shoulder

“But It will end with you Luke Skywalker, the last Jedi”.

Chapter End Notes

Well that was emotionally draining!

Soundtrack/inspiration for this chapter is "Dark" by Siv Jakobsen (The Martin Hviid remix)

This is a dark time and place for Rey and this song reflects that. Reflecting on the darkness inside her, in her past, and the fear she feels when she hopes for something more in her future.

Check out my spotify playlist for all of the music that has inspired this fanfic "Writing Soundtrack" Nikki Rao.

"Dark" by Siv Jakobsen lyrics

"Someone told me there's light at the end of every tunnel
said there's a light there, waiting for me
but I dont believe it, not now, not ever
so it's dark when I go home
ohhhh
ohhhh
I am the dark one in my bloodline
I fear my shadow like a beast
it's a lingering mellow that won't leave me
I fear one day it'll swallow me whole
ohhhh
ohhhh
ohhhh
ohhhh
and at times I breath where the heart is so it swallows me so that I can't breath
But the better days are oughta come my way
cause I dont believe in them
no I dont believe them".
You were never gone pt.1

Chapter Summary

Rey arrives aboard Ben’s command ship and we get that oh so wonderful shirtless force bond moment!

Thank you as always for the support and love!
Keep the comments coming to fuel me haha

**This chapter is big, and will technically be a 2 part chapter**
For now I am posting part 1 and I will polish off part 2 tomorrow :)

Soundtrack at the end THIS IS PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT SONG OF MY FANFIC (Same song for pt.1 and pt.2)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“I have a bad feeling about this” was the jist of the Wookie translation.

Chewbacca didn’t like the sound of Rey’s plan, but she seemed uninterested in his warnings.

“Once we break the atmosphere launch my pod and come right back to the surface. I still believe Luke will come around. Find a way convince him Chewie” Rey instructed gently.

“Grrrgghh arghhh” he tried.

“There is nothing for me here Chewie, Maz was right. My path doesn’t lie behind me...it’s before me.” She paused seemingly unsure of how much to share with her friend. “The people I was waiting for are never coming back, but there is one who still could. Maz meant Ben, I’m certain of it”.

“Krrghh rrargggh” Chewbacca warned.

“I know” Rey replied.

Chewie arched a brow giving a reproachful look.

“I know” she insisted. “I’ve seen what he is capable of, I was there. But there is so much more to all of this, more than I understand.”

As she spoke she climbed into the small casket of steel and glass.

“He’s in pain Chewie. I’m not the one who’ll need saving, he is”.

The Wookie sighed as Rey righted herself in the pod. A baby Porg wriggled out of his satchel and hobbled across the glass as she laid back. The casket sealed and Rey smiled at the pudgy little bird as a sedative began to release.

“If I don’t make it back Chewie, tell Leia...tell Finn...nevermind...” she trailed off as she fell
into sleep with a faint smile on her face.

Chewbacca growled with concern and the baby Porg flitted back into his satchel. His little scavenger; his friend, was delivering herself into more danger than she could possibly understand. He knew better than to underestimate her, but he wished there was another way to right the wrongs of the past. To soothe the pains of time and bring Ben home. If only they could forget, forgive, and forgo the violence he knew deep down would still be necessary. Loading the casket pod into the Falcon Chewie took one last look and thought how Rey looked like a Princess, a warrior Princess perhaps, waiting for a charming Prince to awaken her from some sleeping spell. It made him think of folk tales from his childhood, but this was no child’s play and certainly no fairy tale.

‘It’s like a fairy tale’ Ben thought as he approached the pod that had arrived.

He was reminded of a fair maiden, poisoned, who had laid waiting in a glass case, or the beauty who fell into a long deep sleep; both awaiting the kiss of a Prince to awake them. His mother and Chewie had been so fond of the stories. The slightest smirk emerged as Ben indulged a childish thought ‘my mother *was* a Princess’. Despite the infantile notion, in a twisted way Rey’s mind had been poisoned by the Resistance and his uncle. And all those years ago he had put her memories to rest in her mind while she languished on Jakku. Now here she was...finally...*willingly*; waiting to be woken.

The steel and chrome gleamed, and the glass window above Rey’s face glittered like crystal as hydraulic thrusters purged the last of the steam from their system. His hand faltered as he went to activate the revival sequence of the escape pod. Ben had brought two storm troopers with him, and now more than ever he wished Rey and himself could have this moment alone. She wouldn’t understand that he had to be ready, always ready, for all eventualities. Depressing the button he shook his head slightly clearing his doubts. It didn’t matter if she understood, how could he welcome an enemy of the First Order, a Resistance sympathizer with tremendous natural skill in the Force without a demonstration of power? If he had received her alone it would have sparked suspicion and eventually dissent, had he tried to secret her away somewhere into the ship or to some other kriffing planet, Snoke would have sensed it; either way he would have been branded a traitor and signed their death warrants.

Now, more than ever, he had to maintain control for her safety as much as his own. A gentle mist washed over her untroubled features. It was so nice to see her sleep. All those years in their youth Rey had always been the sun that dawned, rising and shining, where Ben had been the moon, only existing once he had her light to reflect. He could count the number of times he had been able to watch her dream, and the last time he had...that fateful night...if he could not go back, he would rather forget. The little smile on her face faded as her lips parted and large hazel eyes opened to look up from long dark lashes.

Ben reminded himself for what he knew wouldn’t be the last time...‘Control’.

When Rey opened her eyes she struggled to control her senses. She didn’t know if it was the situation she found herself in or the effects of the stimulant that had just roused her. Pulse pounding, blood rushing; all seemed so quiet. Everything seemed hushed as a veil of mist lifted outside the pod, and there he was; Ben.
She knew she needed to keep herself guarded, but something tugged between them along the bond. For a moment Rey dared to think that behind a raven lock she saw the same affection in his eyes he had in her memories. Rey cursed herself for looking up expectantly in wonder for so long, she wished she had spoken or reached out. Before she knew it he was gone.

Rey felt her heart in her throat when his dark shadow swept out of view. She had come so far, compromised so much, and like that he relinquished her over to storm troopers with binders! The room she was led to was surprising. She had half expected another interrogation style setting or stark meeting room. Instead Rey was deposited in a small set of rooms that had more amenities and comforts, albeit spartan, than any living space she’d had her whole life.

Instinctively she tried the door as soon as it shut behind the two troopers; locked. Moments later the doors opened and a little black ball rolled in, Niney.

“Oh, hello there”. Rey began. “I’m fine I just wanted to check the door, see if I could...”.

A series of beeps and whirs interrupted her.

“Thank you, but no I don’t require any medical attention. And it’s kind of you to call me a guest” she replied.

The little droid began touring Rey around the modest quarters. There was a living space with a set of armchairs and a sleeping area that adjoined it with a small bed. The bed/living room had an ensuite toilet and sink, and to the other side a study with a standard issue desk and chair.

“Yes, I am quite hungry. Um I’m not sure. Anything is fine” Rey admitted somewhat embarrassed.

The red photoreceptor on Niney dilated in a way that suggested disbelief.

“No really, anything. I haven’t much of an opinion in the way of cuisine. I’m not fussy. Green protein gel, brown protein bar, insta-carbs, lipid plasma...water?” she listed just about everything she could ever remember eating.

Suddenly the little bot began bleeping and spinning. For a moment Rey thought she had said some trigger word meant to set off some embedded alarm in the droid’s programming. From what she could make out Niney was scandalized by her limited palate and had begun calling out dozens of random selections. Just as quickly as she had begun naming a frenzy of food stuffs she stopped.

Rey furrowed her brow as the droid rolled out the door leaving her alone again. Had she misheard or misinterpreted some part of Niney’s instructions?

'Hold on to your appetite' was the translation Rey had reached. How the kriff was someone supposed to hold on to their appetite? And what the force was Niney up to?

Ben exhaled slowly but a little shaken after sending the communication to The Supremacy.

“En-route with the girl.”

Snoke would not be entirely pleased since his return did not include Luke Skywalker. When
Rey had reached out to him she was in distress, she was reaching out to him, again, and he had no choice but to take advantage of the situation. She insisted that the walking carpet of a Wookie, Chewbacca, would find a way to lure Luke away, and Ben really hoped she was right.

Now that she was aboard his command vessel again Ben struggled with how to proceed. They had a journey ahead of them before they would return to The Supremacy and he was unsure how to draw her closer without scaring her away. He would strangle Hux for pointing it out, but he had failed miserably so far.

Standing under the hot water in his shower Ben tried to relax. He could feel Rey become tense after he walked away, but if he was going to remain in control of himself and the situation he had to clear his mind and focus. After a long while letting the heat of the water soothe his muscles he rinsed off.

Impressions of appreciation, surprise, delight, disgust, satisfaction, and happiness bubbled up through the bond. Ben had only just managed to finish getting his pants on when Rey appeared before him. She hadn’t yet seen him. She was staring intently ahead of her and smiling at someone. A bolt of jealousy struck him to the core until he realized he had sent Niney to look in on her.

Every now and again she would look down before putting something in her mouth. Then it dawned on him, Rey had never experienced food. Actual food. A sadness filled him as he watched her close her eyes to memorize each sensation. Something else entirely swept across her lips to wet them. Now and again she would make small sounds of contentment or protest. Ben thought back to the same animated manner she had when they ate as children.

Finally she picked up what looked to be chocolate pudding dotted with fresh raspberries. At this point her sighs were too indelicate for him to endure, even if it was unintentional.

“Can we not do this right now” he declared feigning displeasure.

Rey turned to acknowledge his appearance through the bond and nearly spit a raspberry across the room.

“Oh” she softly said as she struggled on finding a point to rest her eyes.

Ben couldn’t help but be a bit pleased with the force for this moment. Getting to share another experience with Rey while also serendipitously seducing her. Despite several injuries and scars, including the ones she had given him, he knew for all intents and purposes he was a decent specimen as the result of years of difficult training. Ben tried his best not to flex as he attempted to casually step closer.

“Could you put a-a cowl on or something” she stuttered as color began to rise in her cheeks.

Ben tried his best not to let the smirk her request elicited spread into a full blown smile.

“My ship, my rules. I will come to you shortly” Rey looked up at him again and her lips parted as her eyes grew wide again in confusion? fear? anticipation? It was hard to tell.

There was still plenty of time to figure out where they began and ended along each other’s bond. For now he needed her to quiet her emotions so the connection would fade and he could finish getting dressed.

“And don’t worry, I’ll put on a shirt” Ben added deadpan as Rey swallowed hard.
So excited!!!! THIS IS THE SONG...THE ULTIMATE SONG OF THIS FANFIC

Soundtrack/inspiration for this chapter is "You were never gone" by Hannah Ellis

*THIS IS ONE OF THOSE SONGS* That I would highly recommend giving a try. It is beautiful, and relevant to the story, and full of feels! This song is basically written for my fanfic. I mean read the lyrics! Not to mention the haunting and stunning quality of the music itself.

"You were never gone" By Hannah Ellis lyrics

I felt empty space, never could explain
Like you were erased, never could replace
Now it's so clear with you right here

[Chorus]
Like you were never gone
Picked up where we left off
Like you were never gone
You were always coming home
Yeah, you were always close
Like you were never gone
You were never gone
You were never gone

[Verse 2]
How it's meant to be, you held the key
Now promise me you'll never leave
Time slipped away, we stayed the same

[Chorus]
Like you were never gone
Picked up where we left off
Like you were never gone
You were always coming home
Yeah, you were always close
Like you were never gone

[Bridge]
You were never gone
You were never gone
You were never gone
No you were never gone
You were never gone
No you were never gone, no

[Ending]
You were always coming home
Yeah, you were always close
Like you were never gone
You were never gone
You were never gone pt.2

Chapter Summary

Grab a tissue!! FEELS!!

Super proud of this chapter (baby)

"You were never gone" is still the soundtrack for part 2 as well...see end notes for lyrics...and LISTEN TO IT!

Thank you all for reading! Please leave me comments, they are literally writing fuel...and kudos and sharing with other Reylo fam is highly recommended :)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

On the brief walk to Rey’s lodgings Ben debated whether or not he should extend the courtesy of knocking. This was his command ship, but she was also his guest...and more.

Only a moment passed when he reached the door. Before he had made up his mind it opened and Rey was waiting on the other side. He thought he would be greeted by the soft gaze she’d had when she woke in her pod, but he was wrong. She was tense and her jaw was set while her eyes stared through him in defiance.

Sensing the change in her mood Ben sought to redirect the energy between them “May I come in?” he asked.

“Your ship, your rules” she began “and you’ve always made it clear you can take whatever you want”.

Ben seriously had to control his impulse to storm out of the room and punch another hole through an elevator panel. This was not going to plan, but he had always managed to control his temper with Rey and he wasn’t going to slip now.

“I have yet to force you to do anything, or have you forgotten you came here willingly?” he asked calmly.

Rey remained silent and unmoving. Ben began to search her face and mind for signs that she was planning an attack. He grew concerned since the telltale sparks of her anger, frustration, and hostility, which he had experienced on Star-killer, were missing.

The moment the first tears spilled from her eyes Ben knew he was lost. He clenched and unclenched his fists unsure of what to do with himself. Should he reach out, speak, hold her? He had no idea how to console anymore. The word even felt strange to recall.

Inside of Rey a heavy heart pulled her into darkness. Her breathing became labored as she fought against tears. The emotions swelling in her were too strong, and now that they were together again Ben made it impossible to hold the tide back any longer.
“You would *never* force me to do anything?!” she burst.

He was shocked by her words. “Of course not, I *could*, but *never*” he tried to assure her.

Rey turned from him and let sobs rack her body as she fell into an armchair. He let the feelings bleed from her along their bond. She was devastated; *Betrayed*?...He felt loneliness, and desperation creep into her thoughts again.

Eventually the wave of sorrow passed and something else was left in its wake, anger.

“*Never*?!” she began with startling volume. “I *could*, but *never*” she quoted. “You could...because you *did*!...*YOU*” she screamed as her face turned red with effort.

Rey laid her head back against the chair and stared at the ceiling as the tears resumed.

“*You*” she began speaking weakly, as if to herself. “How could you, of all people”.

Ben stepped forward and took the chair across from her. She was working through something, and now that he thought back to the feelings which had connected them when she reached out to leave Ahch-to, he realized what it was; that fateful night.

“I remembered things while I was on Ahch-to, *nice* things” Rey mused gently. “And then...*such* horror*”.

Rey tucked her legs under her chin and wrapped her arms around herself. She settled her forehead against her knees and was nearly inaudible. “Then...I begged you, but you left me, and...you never came back”.

She seemed comfortable in this position and Ben thought about how often she had done just this passing lonely nights on Jakku, trying to protect and soothe herself at once.

Ben wished he could open his wounds as Rey did now, that he could share his pain, and help them both understand. But this wasn’t about him, not now, and it was already so hard for him to speak about this night...let alone the thousands they had spent apart since.

He took his time finding his voice and the right words.

“Do you remember when you had *bloodburn*?” Ben ventured cautiously.

Rey looked up from the ball she had made of herself toward him.

“Well I suppose you *couldn’t*, you were still so small” he continued.

“Well I suppose you *couldn’t*, you were still so small” he continued.

“But I do...It was the first time the Supreme Le...Snoke found us...well, *me*”.

Ben thought back to another long night in their history. The trip to Coruscant, the knife, the blaster, and the strange man he tried to protect them both from.

“You were ill. *Very* ill. Your parents were young and *stupid*” Ben thought better of his tone and words as he felt the statement practically slap Rey. She had spent years waiting for them, she knew now he had left her on Jakku but she didn’t need to know the rest, not yet.

“They didn’t know any better” he continued. “But they had made you very sick by exposing you to space travel that was too frequent and in vessels that weren’t protected properly. The strain on children always puts them at a much higher risk”.
Ben remembered how even at the age of 8 his parents insisted on vaccinating him and never letting him travel too much or in a new ship without them.

“Whatever this is, this bond... it’s like...I’ve always been able to see...no...to feel...it’s just”. He struggled putting into words what he remembered and knew she still could not. “It’s just...how it’s meant to be” Ben said solemnly.

“So when I was born, you began seeing me?” Rey wondered aloud.

“No”. Ben replied instantly. “When I was born. This was there”.

He knew she was aware he was several years older and now that Rey’s curiosity prevailed over her anger and sorrow he changed the topic and continued.

“You were dying, and...as a result, so was I. No healer could understand. I was perfectly healthy but...” Ben trailed off remembering the fever, the pains, and the power of his desperation to save her.

“Snoke became aware of me through the Force for the first time. I thought he wanted to help. When I mentioned you he could only just sense another beyond me, but you were so weak...it was a blessing really. He only saw me. He told me to let you die, and to focus on what he could offer me instead...”.

“But...I survived”. Rey tried.

“But” Ben corrected “I tried to kill him” he smirked as he explained. “Or at least hurt him pretty badly...I thought maybe it was like our bond, that while he spoke to me he could feel the things I felt. I grabbed the biggest knife I could find in the kitchen and when that failed I...” he had become engrossed in sharing the past, even if he couldn’t share his feelings, and had forgotten control. His sudden silence betrayed him.

“And when that failed...? Rey asked “you... what?”.

He wouldn’t lie to her. Not again.

“I grabbed my fath...Han’s blaster”.

Their eyes met. The implication of his act clear. Both were pleased to find some understanding. The intimacy suddenly made Ben feel hot around his high collar and so he continued bruskly.

“My parents found me. I nearly fell into a coma. They called for Luke. He followed my directions. You were treated and survived the illness...not long after that we were both sent to Ahch-to...and the rest...” Ben gestured around them hoping that would be an end to it.

“And the rest...” Rey countered “is still a bit foggy. At least the part where I wasn't slaving away alone on a desert planet. The island only revealed so many memories to me on Ahch-to. After what you did...I’ve hardly been able to recall years of...”

Before Rey could protest any further Ben’s resolve broke as he quickly kneeled before her arm chair and stared ardently into her eyes. “What I did” he began fiercely. “Was the best chance either of us had at surviving. After what happened that night I practically became a homing beacon to Snoke...He had cropped up now and again but after Luke...there was no where I could run. Not with you, that would have been safe”.

Rey tensed at the closeness of him. She could feel heat radiating from him even through the layers of his uniform.

“What I did was tear my soul in two to keep yours intact, I erased half of myself to keep you safe...I made a decision. Give me your anger, give me your sorrow, paint me the villain for the rest of your life...at least you’re alive to hate me!...I will only say this once...”

Ben paused and swallowed hard before continuing earnestly “I am sorry for your suffering...but I will never apologize for what I had to do or having the strength to do it. I can only ensure you will want for nothing again from this point forward. But if you doubt me, tell me now...” His eyes searched hers intensely.

“I can’t be the one to walk away again Rey, ever... even if it is our doom.” Ben vowed with spite.

"And I won't apologize for this" he said as he reached forward cradling Rey's face in his hands, pulling her against him as he stood, and delivering a chaste kiss that lingered.

Energy hummed, lights became unbearably bright, glass shattered, and the room went dark as several objects fell to the ground with a chorus of thumps.

Ben swept his hand before Rey and caught her in his arms. Crossing the darkness he laid her down in the bed. Drawing the stiff blanket up and over her he thought twice about the next decision he would make. Looking up and out of the small window that cast soft starlight across them Ben saw a bright streak of light pass by in the distance.

With great focus and care Ben retraced a path he had taken last a long, long time ago.

It was done. Kissing the crown of her head he rose from the bedside and turned back to watch Rey sleeping before he left.

"I came back sweetheart, I promised".

Chapter End Notes

Boy that was another emotional one!

As I mentioned the soundtrack/inspiration for pt.2 is still "You were never gone" by Hannah Ellis

IF YOU LISTEN TO ONE SONG I LIST MAKE IT THIS ONE (But listen to them all because they are excellent Reylo songs lol)

*Spotify* Look for my playlist: Writing Sountrack, Nikki Rao

"You were never gone" by Hannah Ellis lyrics

I felt empty space, never could explain
Like you were erased, never could replace
Now it's so clear with you right here

Like you were never gone
Picked up where we left off
Like you were never gone
You were always coming home
Yeah, you were always close
Like you were never gone
You were never gone
You were never gone

How it's meant to be, you held the key
Now promise me you'll never leave
Time slipped away, we stayed the same

Like you were never gone
Picked up where we left off
Like you were never gone
You were always coming home
Yeah, you were always close
Like you were never gone

You were never gone
You were never gone
You were never gone
No you were never gone
You were never gone
No you were never gone, no

You were always coming home
Yeah, you were always close
Like you were never gone
You were never gone
Chapter Summary

*Toot toot* All aboard the pain train!
This chapter is also HEAVY with feels...don't worry some much needed levity is on the way!
But there was more back story here to explore before moving forward.

**OVER 17,000 HITS** And what means even more to me are all the comments and kudos. THANK YOU so much to those who continue reading and encouraging me to continue this story.

This chapter talks about Ben coming back, and what really kept Ben and Rey apart all those years.
If anything is every unclear or confusing let me know and I will make sure to edit or include in future chapter...Finger crossed so far so good!

Soundtrack/Inspiration at the end! **I just added a LOAD more music to my spotify playlist for those of you following along "Writing Soundtrack" by Nikki Rao on Spotify**

ALSO check out my tumblr and insta Nikkinotions :)

I am off again on Wednesday (My birthday woohoo) so I will be writing again Tuesday night and Wednesday!
ENJOY

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

‘I came back sweetheart, I promised’ she heard somewhere in the gloom.

One moment Rey remembered him bearing down on her explaining his choice to leave her on Jakku, and the next she was being pulled up against him; kissed.

A white hot energy had bloomed and spread. That same force had blown a few lights and suspended some of the furnishings in the room. The moment seemed to stretch out before them forever, until suddenly it felt like it was over too soon. After that...a gentle darkness embraced her.

At first the memories leisurely returned. Voices and dreams reaching her on Jakku. A boy with a shock of messy dark hair. She remembered Luke, Ben, and force ghosts surrounding her as she stumbled along on a patch of grass on Ahch-to.

“Rey, these are your first steps” Obi-Wan Kenobi had said adoringly.

As her chubby little legs faltered Ben rushed forward to sweep her into a spinning hug as another memory rushed by.

She saw a little boy...Doran was it? nursing a bloody nose. Yes Doran. He had pulled her hair
and insisted on studying with her. He asked a lot of questions and then he made fun of Ben. It didn’t
go well for him. Luke was regarding her and deciding on appropriate punishment. Ben seemed to
mirror his uncle’s displeasure until the Jedi went to check on Doran’s nose and he shot her a wink.

The memories continued and eventually blurred into an awareness Rey suddenly possessed
about herself. She remembered being rescued and a childhood on Ahch-to. Scrapes, japes, lessons,
boring afternoons, laughter, tears, frustration, and *fights*.

One particular fight with Ben rose to the surface. Rey was curious about her parents. She
could always remember Ben, but she couldn't recall much about them. He was angry; upset that she
wanted to know about them.

“They’re *monsters!*” he had yelled at her.

When she was young Rey couldn’t always understand the emotions he shared along their
bond, but now it all became clear.

Ben was afraid and heartbroken. This life, the island, their study, *Rey*...was all that he had. He
didn’t understand why it wasn’t enough for her. Did she want them instead? Was he being rejected
again? Why did she insist on asking him about such horrible awful people?

Tears stung her small eyes. Ben regretted causing her pain, but he still could not resolve his
own. Stalking off into his hut he left Rey to shout through tears of anger and sorrow in his wake.

‘I came back sweetheart, I promised’. surfaced again.

In her mind a partition had been removed, but something else was also *added*.

Ben had given Rey a memory that was entirely his own. Something they never shared, but he
would never be able to put into words.

He was on Jakku. Looking at him she guessed a few years had passed since they had been
parted, Ben appeared to be about 18 years old. When she looked closer his features were worn well
beyond his years. Dark circles and fading bruises painted his fair features.

Rey followed Ben through his memory as he searched Niima outpost followed by a small
retinue of the Knights of Ren. The longer he searched the more agitated he became.

Reluctantly he approached Unkar Plutt’s stall. The wicked *Crolute’s* eyes sparkled at the dark
sight of Ben.

“Ah, Solo back to-” Plutt began before his corpulent face was smashed against the metal
security grate that acted as a window in front of him.

“My name is *Kylo Ren*”. Ben spat “and you are not *worthy* enough to *speak* it”.

Ben paused still holding the scoundrel in place. He seemed to be searching for something. A
plan? the right words? Rey? Moments later he cleared his throat and continued.

“I’ve returned for the girl” he began. “*Rey*...Her parents knew I’d be back for her. I delivered
her with credits to spare. Why do I not see their house? I was to be contacted if they went off world”.

As the crook sputtered in his awkward position Ben realized he would need to release his hold
on him to have him answer.
Unceremoniously dropping Plutt his impatience, rage, and fear erupted from him “SPEAK!”.

The junkboss heaved himself back into his seat as his beady eyes grew black and he began to laugh.

“Hehe, you really thought your little friend would still be here? All those credits...you should have taken her somewhere safer, no? You paid me well to deliver her and the extra money to the fools, and deliver i did. Safe and sound you First Order brat. Don’t blame me for what happened. Parents tore through those credits like a bantha through a buffet boy!”.

Ben was shaking and Plutt was toying with the wrong guy. In a flash Ben’s saber was ignited and the sound of the blue beam sparking to life startled Plutt.

“Where IS SHE?!“ he bellowed all sense of control abandoned as his knights exchanged looks behind him.

“Dead.” Plutt replied with a firmness that derailed Ben.

At this the young man sprang forward hacking through the front of the junker’s stall and his barrier with ease. Rey thought she would see a murderous fire in Ben’s eyes, but she was chilled by the pieces of jet marble left in their place.

Ben poised himself above Plutt and probed. For a moment his grip weakened as if Unkar had landed a blow to his gut. But the seedy man remained still.

Shuddering breaths racked Ben as he struggled to seemingly exist. As suddenly as he had launched himself at Plutt a wild darkness consumed Ben. Despite the glaring sunlight of Jakku his torment seemed to devour the very light around them pulling them into shadow. Howling in pain, fury, and desperation Ben thrust to plunge his saber through Unkar Plutt’s chest.

Much like the light and force which had torn Ahch-to apart that horrible night, A violent brightness radiated from the point of contact. The brightness, the heat, the intensity of what Rey witnessed woke her with a start. Gasping, trembling, and on the edge of tears she tried to understand.

“Crolute’s are notoriously difficult to mind probe” Ben said evenly from the arm chair across the room. He had returned to watch her rest, much like he had in the interrogation room not long ago. Ben would take advantage of every opportunity. He laughed to himself at how idiotically besotted he sounded. His composure was now restored since their previous encounter and he prepared to continue explaining what he had shared with Rey.

“The brain has a great deal more adipose tissue” he continued tapping his temple. “Fat”.

“I know what that means” Rey began defensively.

Ben raised a hand half apologetically to halt her ire. “I was still young, still learning, and Jakku isn’t exactly a wealth of resources for a Force user. When that creature told me you were dead, I searched his mind...At least I tried”.

Rey felt a pang of sadness as the memory washed over Ben’s stony features as he proceeded.

“All I could see was that he believed it. In his mind, his truth, he believed that the girl I searched for was dead...I didn't know he only believed it figuratively...And so...” Ben’s voice trailed off as he swallowed hard. He raised his eyes to Rey.

“But Plutt lived? I spent years bartering with the bully until I left” Rey wondered.
“Yes”. Ben remarked “An unfortunate side effect...When I moved to strike the killing blow...when I accepted what he had told me...what I had found in his mind...Upon impact my lightsaber’s Kyber crystal fractured. When I woke later on the ship returning to the First Order I realized the trauma had also bled the crystals”.

“And you returned to the First Order...to Snoke?” Rey asked in mournful shock.

“Yes. I returned to the only reality I knew...or at least had left. The only thing I could do was devote my life to my training, and commit to revenge against the architects of my loss. Until then, only in dreams could I too die”. Ben stood and headed for the door.

He could sense how heavily the sorrow he offered to Rey burdened her heart. Perhaps it had been a mistake to share so much again so soon. It was such a relief to feel their bond rediscovering its natural harmony, but at what cost?

“You need to rest. Properly.” Ben offered as he opened the door. “At least you know now how my saber became this” he said gesturing to the cross-guarded abomination that he illuminated briefly allowing the beam to crackle with unstable power.

“And why Unkar Plutt always wore plated armor from that day forward” he added.

As Ben shut the door over the red light of the weapon reminded her of firelight dancing across his face as a child on Ahch-to. The fire that would light and warm so many fond memories, was the same fire that would destroy so many lives one night. As Rey’s exhausted eyes became heavy she couldn’t be sure if it was the flicker of the saber’s volatile blade or if Ben winked as the door shut and she fell asleep for true.

Chapter End Notes

Ooof this one also had me rolling in the feels. How can people honestly not like Kylo Ren/Ben. As a life long Star Wars fan who knew a world pre the prequels and the recent trilogy. I have to say we should all be kissing the ground Disney owns for the complexity, nuances, and storytelling they have introduced into the universe. In my opinion never have we had such a dynamic, diverse, and deeply enriching tale of action, relationships, and the depths of emotion, trauma, and healing.

**Anyone spot the line from TFA?** It is tough since it happened during Rey's force vision.

There are tons of easter eggs in all my chapters though..I'll get around to a list at some point!

The soundtrack for this chapter is "A quiet darkness" by Houses

Holy heck how perfect is just the title of this song? This is a song that PERFECTLY captures the "death" of Rey for Kylo (at this point in the story in the memory he is more Kylo than Ben”) and as you can see I incorporated the bit about how he needs to live to avenge her and only in dreams is there a way to die with her until he does. ::sniff::

::sniff:: I'm not crying, you're crying!

"A quiet darkness" by Houses lyrics
"Well Heaven rode my back
And the angels dragged my throne.
Only yesterday.

Only yesterday
I carved out your name.

Only yesterday
I built you a shrine
On the side of the road.
And I shut my eyes
And laid my hands to rest.

In dreams
There's a way
To die.

Well I towed you from the wreck
Of dimming shadows in my head
Only yesterday.

Only yesterday
I laid you to rest.

Only yesterday
I wept for your shape
In its endless decay.
And I raised your voice from a stone
With the song of the dead.

In dreams
There's a way
To die."
Of drills and droids

Chapter Summary

This chapter we catch up with Finn, Rose, and DJ...then take a quick trip to Ahch-To to catch up with Luke, Chewie, and a special droid.

THANK YOU all again for all of the support. Keep commenting, sharing, and kudos-ing!
I LOVE to hear from each and everyone of you and I appreciate your time

ENJOY

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“H-H-Hassian smelt?” DJ asked Rose wolfishly regarding the crescent necklace she wore as the group suited up for their mission.

She suddenly understood the odd glances the slicer had been throwing her way since Canto Bight.

“What’s it to ya bud?” Poe thankfully interjected.

Finn took a step forward sensing the opportunity for Poe’s fire to catch.

The scruffy code breaker looked much more threatening cleaned up in a First Order uniform, but he threw up his hands in mock surrender once the pilot was in the picture.

“C-c-cool your jets flyboy. Just m-m-making conversation”.

Poe kept a side eye on DJ as he turned to Finn.

“Ready to go ‘Big Deal’?” he asked Finn with warmth in his smile.

“Yeah” Finn replied relieved that his friend seemed stable “How about the best damn pilot in the Resistance?”.  

Poe answered with a wink as he moved on to Rose.

“Maybe you should hang onto this Poe” Rose quietly urged.

“Nah. Like I said it’s yours now. You do with it as you see fit Rosie” he insisted clapping her on the shoulder as he squatted down to check on BB-8.

Finn was nervous and sweaty. So very, very sweaty. Rose couldn’t help but think it couldn’t be normal for one man to sweat so much. They’re outfits were regulation to the last stitch, but she worried their guilty look would get them caught. Passing dozens of other First Order officers in the corridors she couldn’t help but think maybe they all looked just a little guilty.
For his part Finn performed admirably. Despite his urgent perspiration he directed their trio through the base with tact and grace. Once they arrived at the door to the engineering hub, which housed the massive drill they were after, Finn began to loose his cool.

“Alright master slicer get too it!” he nervously ordered DJ “and make it snappy!”

Leisurely DJ began assessing the door and entry panel. He turned to Rose as he deftly removed the covers and probed the innards of the locking mechanism.

“Hmm, the m-m-man says to make it s-snappy!” he casually joked as he prodded, pulled, and manipulated pieces into new arrangements.

Rose rolled her eyes and stepped away to check the hall again. When she returned Finn was sweatier than ever. She resumed her post between the two men just as DJ made a move for the necklace she wore.

“Really?” Finn nearly shouted as he went to grab the man’s arm. “Is this really the time to be robbing us?!”. Fed up with both of the eccentrics Rose had landed herself with she pulled the chain off and thrust it at the criminal. DJ paid Finn no mind as he spoke to Rose.

“H-H-Hassian smelt” he reveled as he bit down on the ornament to check its mettle.

To both Finn and Rose’s surprise DJ jammed the crescent moon into the mess of parts he had arranged connecting two circuits that sparked upon contact. The doors opened and the crooked man had a pleased look on his face.

“H-H-Hassian smelt, it’s the b-best conductor” he said handing the necklace back to Rose.

DJ kept the door securely locked as Rose got to work. The hub was a playground of parts and access points to the entire base. Immediately Rose began ordering Finn to complete easy tasks that could derail operations for weeks.

In the meantime she started the process of understanding the invention in front of her. The drill was massive to say the least and was constructed of the finest quality elements. Brute force would unfortunately not be enough to take this equipment out of commission.

Satisfied with the encryption on the door DJ scurried over when Rose called for assistance. The job called for a coder and a mechanic. While Rose harvested the vitals of the machine DJ began corrupting the systems and disabling the communications between operations.

30 minutes into a task that required a week or more, Finn spotted trouble. Along an observation deck he saw the distinct glint of armor he wished he could forget. The uniquely metallic uniform belonged to none other than Captain Phasma.

“We gotta go” Finn declared.

“Alright we’re just about finished here” Rose reasoned.

“No, we gotta go now!” he decided panic rising in his voice. “There is only one reason Captain Phasma would be here. She is conducting some sort of inspection of the facility. And where do you think is stop number one?!”.

“The infrastructure of the c-c-command will hold” DJ assured Rose with a worried look “B-b-but if
we s-skip out now there is n-nothing to manually b-bridge the signal or k-keep the connection while the file c-c-corrupts the system”.

Rose looked out onto a massive manufacturing plant as she thought. Crait was being cannibalized by this drill. The First Order mined materials for all of these weapons, not to mention the power of the Kyber crystals alone. Her hand instinctively went to grasp the moon she wore around her neck. She thought of Poe and of Paige. The sacrifice her sister had made saved the Rebellion. The man who loved her survived her and was left changed. In a world like this, not even the past was safe. Failure wasn’t an option if they were going to save anyone.

With a swift jerk she broke the chain of the token trusted to her.

“Hessian smelt, it’s the best conductor” she told DJ as she handed it to him.

“W-w-won’t be able to r-r-return it this time k-kiddo” DJ explained as he regarded the gesture she was making.

“Just make sure it works” she said as pounding sounded from the hub room doors. “We aren’t going to win this war killing enemies, we’ll do it saving those we love”.

The sentiment inspired awe for a moment before reality demanded their attention again.

“And w-w-where do you s-s-stand on self defense?” DJ japed wryly as another round of pounding came from their only entrance and exit.

Luke waited for the rain to stop and dawn to break before visiting the Millennium Falcon. Chewbacca seemed to be waiting for his old friend as he leaned against a boulder.

The old Jedi was weary. He knew he had driven Rey away with secrets, stubbornness, and fear. It seemed some mistakes were indeed doomed to be repeated.

A smile reached the edges of Luke’s eyes as he approached the Wookie. Baby Porgs nestled in the gentle giant’s fur while he sprinkled rations around the loading area for the larger ones to graze on.

“You know it’s never too late to consider a career change...Porg farmer...or maybe nurse maid is more appropriate!” Luke chuckled.

“Rrrrrghh krahhhhgrr” Chewie responded forlorn and uninterested in banter.

“I know. I felt it when she left” Luke admitted.

“Gaaahhhhrk rrrhhhakg”

“We have to trust the Force now, and Rey”.

Inside the Falcon Luke took his time reacquainting himself with the well worn ship and his memories. As he reached the back of the freighter a series of beeps and whirs roused him from his reverie.


The trusty droid lurched forward awkwardly to join his master and friend. Dust and disuse clouded his circuits as he accessed and retrieved decades of data.
“Oh it is good to see you. Some things never change” Luke sighed.

“Vreep boop bweee?” R2D2 asked concerned.

“War has finally found me here...I thought I could hide from the world, and the world would forget me”.

“blooop bee” R2 corrected.

“Galaxy” Luke laughed “Yes, indeed. I thought the ‘galaxy’ would forget me...and in a way I suppose it did. But now I need to face the things I have done...and haven’t done” Luke looked meaningfully at the droid running his good hand along R2’s domed top “But I don’t know that I can” he finished as his voice broke.

Luke absentmindedly cleared away a layer of grime from R2’s sapphire trim. The droid could perceive a change in Luke, the result of solitude and regret unchecked all these years without him. So many of his databanks were still defragmenting and his processors needed upgrades, but R2 easily recalled a hologram from a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away.

As the message played Luke’s eyes softened at the sight of his twin sister Leia. The loop continued again and again bolstering the resolve of the broken man. The blue light flickered as the image quality cut in and out inconsistently.

Closing his eyes, Luke reached his hand forward, and there next to the failing hologram he projected a perfect image of his sister.

“You’re my only hope” a young Leia pleaded as the message ended again.

A memory, a specter, a message. R2 and Luke looked to each other; the pair had an idea.

Chapter End Notes

The soundtrack for this chapter is "In a heartbeat" by Arturo Cardelus from the short film "In A Heartbeat"

This soundtrack is mostly for the Luke bit at the end. It could also apply to the first half, but is a little whimsical for the drama we finish with on their end! For Luke it is an endearing and sentimental overture that speaks to loneliness and hope.

DON'T WORRY MORE REYLO IS ON THE WAY! I'M WRITING MORE TONIGHT! :)

**BY THE WAY** I am not 100% if in the film the necklace is "Hassian, Hatian, Hestian etc." I just went with what I thought I heard. I can correct this if I find it is different!
I watched your heart

Chapter Summary

Rey has some reactions, and Ben likes baths ehehe

I don't know where this came from. I had a bunch of other ideas for this chapter and then the story took on a life of its own...funny how that happens. Don't worry I still plan on including the other scenes I envisioned but there was no way to rush them all into here. Can't rush any of it lol.

This is gonna be a long trip to see space raisin Snoke!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Rey woke up her eyes felt raw and swollen. Had she cried in her sleep? Last she remembered she had naturally fallen into a dreamless slumber after Ben had walked her through another moment in their history.

Sitting up she threw the covers off and hugged her bended knees. Rey rested her head atop them and turned toward the window. Watching the stars drift by slowly she figured they must have reached another dangerous patch of space that had to be traversed manually.

‘Dangerous space’ indeed Rey thought to herself as she remembered the events of last night. So many new memories were surfacing and she had barely anytime to process the new ones she was making now let alone the revelations Ben kept sharing with her.

Despite the urge to dive deep into the well of recollections she possessed again, Rey couldn’t help but think of Ben.

She remembered learning about Kyber crystals. Sensitive material that could focus energy from the Force. It was the critical element of all light-sabers, and was a reflection of the Force user who wielded it.

Rey thought about the decay of Ben’s light, his mind, and his soul. It had started that night on Ahch-to. Doubt, pain, betrayal, and fear had all mingled together. But the wound that never truly healed was the tear she saw within him as he had left her on Jakku, and the utter obliteration she witnessed when he returned.

Ben had sought Snoke and the First Order out because he was alone, he had been rejected, and more than anything he feared for her safety.

When Ben had returned to Jakku as Kylo Ren, he had already suffered so much. But even then there was a piece within himself the darkness could not reach, an anchor which kept his mind and soul from drifting into oblivion. That piece was Rey. She was the reason he chased knowledge, power, and the ability to rid them of Snoke’s menacing gaze once and for all. And without her Ben became unmoored, unhinged, and unrecognizable.
When he had shared his memory of that day on Jakku, Rey had watched the last shard of Ben’s broken heart shatter. The very essence of his connection to the Force; to life, death, and the galaxy, had fractured with her apparent death and it destroyed him so completely that he could no longer even recognize himself.

Without her Ben had turned to Kylo Ren to staunch his pain. Without Rey he could never be whole again, but his dark persona could deliver him to a new purpose. Where he had failed, Kylo Ren would gather power and seek revenge upon the galaxy at any cost. He would rival the legacy he had inherited and surpass his grandfather Darth Vader.

‘I will finish what you started’ she could hear Ben’s voice distantly in her mind.

Rey wondered in horror ‘could this path have been my own’? If our roles had been reversed would I, could I have turned to such darkness for shelter? She had always thought herself so alone in the galaxy, but now the whispers and dreams that reached her on Jakku made sense. Her isolation and the alteration to her memory had cut her off almost completely from the Force. But now she realized Ben had always sent interstellar missives along the Force even after he thought she died.

Where before he had returned to Jakku he reminded her “you’re not alone”, “you are loved”, “you are missed”, “I’ll come back for you sweetheart”; After his saber fractured he had begun expelling memories into the galaxy as though he was riding Kylo Ren of venomous toxins. Rey closed her eyes and remembered the images and sensations he had discarded. The nonsensical memories that had somehow reached her on Jakku. The island, laughter, belonging, wholeness.

As if on cue there is a firm rap at the door. She doesn’t answer and so a moment later the door opens and Ben stands waiting in the doorway.

“I thought you might want to shower” he says stiffly. “These are visitors quarters, not meant for prolonged stays, there is no fresher unit”.

Rey is relieved her day hasn’t begun with a fresh round of history lessons or any mention of the kiss they shared; the kiss! She panics internally. How the kriffing hell had that not been her first thought this morning. She realizes there is so much more between them than that, but the development had literally caused fireworks last night as light-bulbs burst and the room shook.

“As my guest you are welcome to use my personal facilities” Ben continued with his odd sense of propriety.

“Yes, I would like that” Rey stated trying to return his infuriating decorum. “I’ll join you! Just give me a moment”.

As she closed the door to gather her things and make use of the toilet in her room Rey dissected her comments. ‘Maker! Did it sound like?...no it sounded perfectly proper!’ she assured herself.

When she emerged Ben was standing with his back against the opposite wall. ‘Did he think she would run’? ‘Did he think she would run because of what she feared her words may have suggested’? Rey’s thoughts rushed and before she could calm or stop herself she was explaining.

“Um, what I meant is I’d join you in the hall...I just needed a moment...I didn’t mean...not in...your shower” she struggled awkwardly.

She could feel her face beginning to color, so she made a swift move to begin striding to the right down the corridor. In a flash Ben’s hand reached gently for her lower back and Rey
instinctually tensed before he began guiding her in the opposite direction.

“Understood” he nodded in response to her clarification. “But, perhaps I should lead the way”.

Ben’s room aboard his command ship was slightly larger than her own, but lacked the comfort she expected of such a high ranking member of the First Order. His bed was slightly larger, but could clearly only accommodate him. Every item had a use and beyond utility there was no need for adornment or ease.

The one luxury she had found in Ben’s life was master Kylo Ren’s personal facilities. Rey had used a few different methods in her life to clean herself. Some freshers used steam, or pressurized air, and others like the ones on Jakku often used abrasion to sand grime away painfully. But before her was an enormous stone tub laid into the floor, almost a small pool, and around it gleamed several steel spouts. Three sides were surrounded by smooth cobbled grey rock while the fourth was made of glass that reached from floor to ceiling. He must have noticed her admiration and wonder.

“Would you like to bathe or shower?” he asked pragmatically. “And if your journey has left your muscles weary after you’re done I can make it a sauna”.

When he was met with silence Ben seemed content to continue rambling. “There are several salts and oils for the bath, and the shower has a variety of settings you may find soothing”.

Something deep in him was pleased he could offer Rey some comfort, and he could be proud of something his station earned in the First Order.

Despite her best efforts Rey couldn’t help but look at Ben as if he just revealed he had a pet Happabore. “What?” she exclaimed suddenly looking back at the set up with confusion.

Ben frowned when he realized she would have no clue what he was talking about. This was certainly more involved than a dip in a hot spring on Ahch-to or getting sand blasted in a grimy stall on Jakku.

“I’ll prepare the shower for you, it’s like rain” Ben sighed. “I’ll adjust the temperature for you” he added as he moved past her to start turning knobs.

Rey took another look around as she waited. While there was a partition between where Ben slept and the bathroom she suddenly feared exposure.

Sensing trepidation Ben turned to see Rey standing back with her arms wrapped across her chest.

“There is a little shelf in the wall here. This is for your hair” he said pointing to a black bottle “and this is for ...” he continued by gesturing clumsily to his body. “When you’re done press this big silver button and it will stop the water. The screen and hutch on the far end here will produce towels and clothes”.

“Oh... modesty” he remembered as if indifferent. “I’ll activate this” Ben added as he drew circles along the glass surface modulating the opacity of the barrier. Content with the obscurity of the frosted glass Rey stepped forward and thanked him.

“Take your time, if you need anything I’ll be at my desk” Ben finished as he nodded and excused himself.
Ben couldn’t focus on the data pad he crowded over at his desk. He could hear the steady beat of the water across his room. He smirked to himself as he heard the glass door open and close several times as another article of clothing was shucked off and tossed out of the shower.

In the distance he could hear Niney tut displeasure as she retrieved Rey’s rags. He hoped she would decide on something finer for herself when she ordered clothes from the fabricator. If she wouldn’t spoil herself after everything, he would once the Supreme Leader made her his apprentice.

Of course Snoke would prefer she kept the edge her harsh life had given her, but the leader couldn’t object to using the privileges the First Order had access to in order to seduce her to the dark. He wanted Snoke to have as little to do with Rey as possible. The Force had sent her back on a collision course with Ben and the decrepit fiend had seen her after all. If he could only ensnare Skywalker, he could gain his revenge and deliver the last Jedi to his master. Then Snoke would deny him no prize in return.

A prize, he thought to himself darkly. He too had suffered. And why should he be denied anything? Ben rose from his desk to look round the wall dividing the living spaces of his quarters. Just there, only a few meters away behind a sheet of glass his Rey was warm, wet, and waiting for him.

He could feel her pleasure along their bond. The welcoming heat of the shower was even more delightful to her than the cool rain on Ahch-to. She enjoyed the sound, the feel, the awareness it awoke in every inch of her skin as soapy drops rolled down her body.

Ben could feel his jaw set as he openly stared possessively at the silhouette Rey’s frame cast against the frosted glass. Last night she had not denied him when he kissed her. Their affection had moved the force around them and something deeply primal within him. He only had to step forward now and claim her once and for all.

Possession and affection were conflicting ideas. Ben’s brow furrowed as he considered the contradiction he felt. If he miscalculated now it could cost everything. Timing, would be critical.

Rey couldn’t decide if eating or bathing was better. Unable to prioritize the things that made her happy her thoughts circled back to something that made her sad, and scared. The feelings she had; that she was still discovering for Ben. So much caring; Such deep feelings began to frighten her. Rey felt a lump develop in her throat while she felt a pulling inside her chest. Loneliness had been bitter and painful, but it had been safe all those years on Jakku. The alternative she now considered threatened to consume her and it was terrifying.

The warmth of the water cascading over her was perfect. The soaps smelled like Ben; faintly crisp and fresh, and whatever was in them she couldn’t stop running her hands over her now soft skin. For the briefest moment she recalled Ben’s hand at the small of her back in the hall, and she imagined his hand instead trailing along her smooth sides. She didn’t know how long one was supposed to stay in the shower but by her calculations she had been in hers long enough to clean herself several times over.

Reluctantly she pressed the large silver button and the water stopped. Plenty of steamy warm air remained inside the space but Rey felt suddenly cold without the warm embrace of the water. Stepping to the other side she called for towels. She wrapped one around herself and scrubbed the other fluffy and warm towel through her hair as she skimmed through the clothing selections on the screen.

There was zero chance she would be calling for a First Order uniform of any kind, and some
of the female fashions the system suggested were hard to believe. While some left little to the imagination other ensembles were so intricate she wondered how long it would take to put it on. Eventually by perusing items individually Rey assembled an outfit to her liking. Underthings, trousers, a tunic, a vest, and covers for her arms all in a blue-grey hue. The boots she brought would do since they were already broken in and soft. She arranged her hair the same fashion it was when she arrived, letting most of it dry in the air at her shoulders.

When she pushed open the glass door the air in the rest of Ben’s quarters felt frigid. The fabric she wore was not thin but she shivered as the cold sapped the warmth from the shower and made her damp hair uncomfortable.

Ben appeared and regarded her, frowning he pulled a thick blanket that was folded at the foot of his bed and pulled it around her.

“Niney!” he called firmly.

The little black bot appeared and rolled towards Rey in a hurry. Boosting herself up on telescoping stilts Niney set to drying Rey’s hair. After a few moments in what felt like a cyclone she no longer felt the impulse to shiver.

After, Ben leads her to a small table where breakfast is waiting. He pours something steaming and faintly fruity into a cup for her and encourages her to drink.

“It’s tea” he says.

Like almost everything else Rey has ingested since leaving Jakku she likes it.

Ben sees a smile spread across her features as she relishes the tea. He also doesn’t miss how quickly it disappears from her face when he speaks next.

“We need to talk”.

Chapter End Notes

Steamy eh? ehehe

This is yet another song that seems to be utterly written for this fandom/story. Rey is certainly feeling these lyrics as she considers the memories Ben has shared. What he sacrificed and how she watched him broken by it...by her. She blames herself which we will explore more of later on. But this song certainly explores the shame, blame, fear, and pain floating around with these two in space.

Soundtrack for this chapter is "I watched your heart" By Unkle Bob

"I watched your heart
It broke in two
It's not what i have planned to do
There are no words that i can say
to try to take your pain away
I feel a fear, I feel the shame
I know that i'm the one to blame
I watched your heart
It broke in two
It's not what i had planned to do

Conscious of you now
Conscious of you now
Conscious of you now
Conscious of you now (?)

There are no words that i can say
to try to take your pain away
I feel the fear, I feel the shame
I know that i'm the one to blame

don't let your heart
become afraid
to love again
and be remain
it's not your fault
it's not your wrong
but i can't pretend and carry on

I watched your heart
It broke into
It's not what i had planned to do"
Wicked game

Chapter Summary

Darth Darcy and his damned noble ass and Rey "need to talk"....that never goes well

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"We need to talk".

She should have known better. A long shower with real water, hot food and drink. Ben; the perfect krieffing host. There had to be a catch. Rey’s gaze was deliberately pointed as she lowered her third cup of tea.

“Why does that sound ominous?” she asked carefully.

To his credit Ben hadn’t looked away. Lately he demanded an unsettling amount of eye contact and it hadn’t gone unnoticed.

“It’s not ominous” he corrected her “but it is serious”.

Setting down her cup and fork Rey braced herself for another round of mental warfare. She knew he wasn’t the enemy, not really, but it seemed as though he had not figured that out just yet.

“I appreciate you giving me your undivided attention” Ben began graciously. “There are some…details, it would benefit us to clarify before arriving at the Supremacy.”

Several emotions combated for control of Ben’s features. Before continuing he schooled himself into his usual unmoved countenance.

“I know before you left Ahch-to, after Luke interrupted... I may have given the impression that my mind was somehow...changeable”. The last word was especially difficult as he pressed on.

"Our bond, re-developing at such...an alarming rate...has clearly impaired us in different ways. Physically, mentally, emotionally...”

“Ben” Rey interrupted gravely. “that moment, in the hut...when we touched...when we kissed” she flushed and fumbled with her thoughts long enough for Ben to counter.

“Though that may be...now is not the time. The Supreme Leader will sense any compassion we fail to guard. And it would be unwise to let him detect any.”

His detachment was physically painful. When she reached out to Ben after confronting Luke all she wanted was to run into the arms of this strange young man who shared so much with her, who understood so much more; who wanted her.

He too had felt something profound before Luke had dissolved their bond. Something that pulled him back to Rey, that brightened inside of him and extended soothing tendrils round his burning heart. He felt stronger for it, and for the first time in what seemed like an eternal night in the
void of space, he could glimpse a new dawn at the edge of so much darkness.

Frustrated and desperate Rey argued without truly thinking “When I offered to come to you it’s because I saw something!...I felt something Ben and I know you sensed it too! It doesn’t have to be this way. Why go back to Snoke at all?! We could...”.


“Perhaps you underestimate the reach of the First Order, or the fact I’d be shot on site by your Rebels” he finished coolly.

“We can find a way” Rey pleaded more distraught than angry at the sudden turn of events.

“The Rebellion of old thought they could ‘find a way’. And they did...A way to destroy everything. I didn’t realize it until I became a part of it, but the galaxy needs order and discipline. Vader knew it, the First Order knows it. And you see back when Skywalker used my grandfather’s weakness to destroy his resolve the Rebellion won, and the galaxy still fell to ruin. And so now the First Order rises, as the Empire did, to end the confusion and the conflict...to provide absolute order amid the chaos”. Ben finished as his voice finally threatened to rise.

In that moment Rey wanted to cry and scream and fight, but she realized with despair that part of what Ben said was the truth. Jakku was a prime example of the consequences galactic unrest had as the result of war. Without political uniformity or mass interference most outer rim planets descended into mayhem.

They were both defending different sides of a war each thought they had every right to win. This ‘Supreme Leader’ had manipulated Ben’s vulnerability and drawn him deeper into darkness, this was a fact Rey could combat. But Snoke had not invented galactic conquest, and battling an idea was a far loftier task.

“So what now?” was all she could manage.

Ben insisted they limit their contact as much as possible until they reached The Supremacy. It wouldn’t be much longer and they needed to purge themselves of the most intense threads of their bond.

After Snoke granted him Rey as his apprentice he could pursue Luke and build their future from a safer distance. But if they tried to run now he was certain that even though they could evade the militant dullards, Snoke would stalk them til the end of the stars or their own madness.

He alone delivered Rey back to her quarters. He was unsettled by her silence. Ben expected she would rage against his plot to return to the First Order, but instead he was met with the bitter taste of disappointment along their bond.

Mired in an emotion he had never hoped to draw from Rey again Ben flew into a blind rage when Niney disrupted his last moments with her before the final stretch of their journey. Unable to complete his thoughts before the droid arrived, to act as concierge for her first guest that wasn’t an official prisoner, Ben gave a swift kick to the bot which sent the black ball hurtling down the corridor. Thinking better of the emotions he may have expressed had Niney not impeded him Ben gave a low growl as he closed Rey’s door and marched away.

Ben could feel the damage he had done. To turn from Rey just as they had found each other. To rip from her the embrace he had so carelessly offered. To push her away after pulling each other
so close...and their kiss. But this was a time for strategy not sentiment. He could bear to have her scorn a while longer if it meant they would have eternity together.

Alone in her room Rey arranges and rearranges the items in her pack, uncertain if she should stay or flee. The few crew members that are aboard the command ship are rarely seen or heard. After the first troopers who had escorted her to the room Rey’s only company had been Ben and Niney, and now Ben imposed a sort of Force quarantine upon them both.

‘So what now?’ Rey thought to herself again.

Ben may think he has a handle on the course they are barreling towards Snoke, but what did it mean if he did? and if he didn’t?

The survivor and the scavenger in Rey prepared for all eventualities. She pictured several methods of execution, torture, brainwashing, and confinement. She wished everyone aboard The Supremacy and every other First Order vessel to wake from some enchantment and reject the violence and ‘absolute order’. But most of all she hoped she would live to feel the things she now recalled from her past with Ben again. And to investigate...search...explore beyond as they had with their kiss.

‘Curiosity is a killer’ Rey thought to herself reproachfully, but what a beautiful way to go.

Chapter End Notes

I know, I know! We were doing so well! There is more on the way, but I think we all know the path of true love never did run smooth (thanks Mr. Shakespeare)

Soundtrack here is "Wicked Game" cover by Ursine Vulpine feat. ANNACA

This is a WONDERFUL version of this song...seriously a rare case where the cover is BETTER than the original...And another example of a PERFECT song for a chapter...The lyrics say it all...This is a song for Rey. She is really struggling with the feelings she has, the position she is in...and the pain she knows her heart and the Force is setting her up for...

"Wicked Game" Lyrics

"Your world was on fire and no one could save me but you
It's strange what desire make foolish people do
I never dreamed that I meet somebody like you
And I never dreamed that I lose somebody like you

No, I don't wanna fall in love
No, I don't wanna fall in love
With you

What a wicked game to play
To make me feel this way
What a wicked thing to do
To let me dream on you
What a wicked thing to say
You never felt this way
What a wicked thing to do
To make dream on you!

I don't wanna fall in love
No, I don't wanna fall in love
No, I don't wanna fall in love
No, I don't wanna fall in love
With you"
Ready, run, hide

Chapter Summary

The threads of our stories begin to come together!
Poe, Holdo, Finn, Rose, DJ, Luke, and more baby Reylo!

COMMENTS are my favorite! I hope to hear from more of you!

As always share with other fans you think may enjoy!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Commander Dameron?!” Vice-Admiral Holdo hailed from across the room.

Any moment Finn, Rose, and the slicer would be giving him the all clear, this was not the time for lady lavender to interrupt his pre flight check list.

“I noticed several pilots in their flight-suits. There were far too many for a recon mission. Any idea?” she asked innocently as she accused him with subtext.

“Well your expert advice was to man our stations and await orders until we can evacuate ma’am and...Oh forgive me, there’s no way you’d understand the technical mumbo jumbo of a flyboy. You need a flight-suit if you’re gonna be ready to fly” Poe patronized.

“Thank you for putting it simply for me” Amilyn replied as her eyes gleamed wickedly.

The pilot thought the insult had caught her off guard, but striding away he heard the shrewd leader question him threateningly.

“And do the standard number of ships for an offensive mission need to be refueled and provisioned with nearly the last of our canons, mag pulses, and blasters?” She paused waiting to see his eyes.

“...To be ‘ready to fly’ that is?” she finished.

Poe could feel fire in his eyes as he looked back to reply “Always ready”.

The doors to the engineering hub opened with a bang. Phasma had used a combination of brute force and a terrified engineer to make her way into the control room. As the two stormtroopers with her filed in they were puzzled by the absence of Rebels.

Phasma cleared her throat emphatically as she spotted two First Order officers in the corner inappropriately close to each other. As if their relative proximity wasn’t enough to make the amazonian captains eyes roll, she noticed they were distractedly engaging in amorous kisses.

“Honestly!” She shouted in frustration. “Officers stand too immediately and identify yourselves!”
Rose and DJ turned slowly hands behind their backs like bashful children giggling stupidly at the formidable commander and her soldiers. Phasma could feel her lip curling beneath her helmet. She wasn’t sure if their lack of competency or their affection was more nauseating.

“Oh e’mon ‘chrome-dome’, you want a kiss?” she heard Finn sound behind her.

“FN-2187!” she spat as bile rose in her throat.

Before she could turn a heavy piece of piping struck her across the helmet. The force of the blow resonated through the metal plating of her armor as Phasma crashed to the floor.

The two troopers accompanying her scrambled to react. Rose and DJ pulled make shift tazers from behind their backs as the soldiers closed in on Finn. Careful not to shock themselves with the slapdash work they caught the First Order men at the junction of their suits at the neck.

As the trio nearly slid out of the room DJ halted to work on the doors.

“DJ!” Rose called in an urgent whisper.

“Wha? Make with the running man!” Finn nearly shouted at the slicer.

“Mmm. W-w-what do you f-figure our odds are if this lot gets f-f-found on our way out? B-b-blows our cover, f-f-foils our plan, and we get c-caught!” DJ reasoned. “GO! I’ll c-catch up or I’ll play d-d-dumb, I’m real good at that” he said shooting Rose a wink.

Finn went to argue but before he could he heard one of the radios inside the hub come alive.

“I know a lot about b-b-both sides b-buddy. A t-t-tossed coin never lands on its edge, I’ll land on a s-s-side j-j-just f-fine”.

With this Rose gave a quick hug to the lawless man and pressed her necklace back into his hand.

“I have a feeling you’re gonna need it, save something you love!” she added as Finn lead them down the hall towards their ship.

Luke sat in the quad laser terminal aboard the Millennium Falcon. He ghosted his fingers over the controls as he thought of the thrill that once ran through him shooting down tie fighters and Imperial ships from this seat. His heart ached when he thought of the pilot and second gunner aboard this ship, Han Solo.

The Jedi focused on his breathing as he controlled the emotion that swept through him. His friend become brother; dead and gone. The love of his sister’s life extinguished, and his hands had a role in snuffing it out. Pride and fear had cursed him to witness the destruction of so much light.

Luke remembered the first time he had sensed Snoke haunting his nephew. Back when only Ben, Rey, and Luke trained on Ahch-to, before other students had been found across the stars.

He had found Rey sniffing as she kicked rocks between the huts. She had been bundled up in a ridiculous arrangement of cowls, capes, and blankets only another child could have wrapped around her. Her lower lip stuck out as she looked up at Luke in sadness and frustration.

“Ben is talking to him again” Rey explained as she spotted a Porg and rushed to tottle after it.

Since they were the only humanoids on the lonely planet who spoke galaxy standard Luke
was immediately alarmed.

“Rey!” he called chasing after her and the blasted creature. “Who is him? Who is Ben talking to?”. He tried his best to sound curious instead of anxious. The chubby Porg hopped over a rock and fluttered down into a nest along a cliff face beyond Rey’s grasp. The girl sighed deeply as she turned to answer.

“The bad man” she started with a huff. “Ben can’t always make him go away so I have to go away when he comes. He says he shouldn’t see me” she finished in a whisper.

Rey noticed the concern on Luke’s face and wondered if she had done a bad thing telling him. Screwing up her features she thought of a way to remedy the situation.

“Master Luke? Do you want to know what Ben and I call the bad man?”. “Yes, Rey that would be very helpful. What is his name?” Luke pleaded.

Rey beckoned Luke closer with her pudgy childlike hands “We call him...” she paused dramatically reaching up to whisper in his ear.

“We call him...Space Raisin!” she squealed as she chortled.

The sound of her laughter chimed in the chilly breeze. As it reached out across the island Luke felt a ripple along the Force. Calling one of the guardians over to look after Rey he followed the wave to Ben’s hut.

He heard his nephew’s voice insistent and strong carrying on an animated conversation inside. As he entered the hut Luke felt another current break along the Force nearly pushing him back through the doorway.

“Shhh...You need to go back out” Ben said without turning... “now!”. With great effort Luke carefully reached into Ben’s mind to see the intruder. The moment he laid eyes upon the disfigured visage of Snoke the dark sider sensed the disturbance of a Jedi master and fled.

“Rey!” Ben shouted “What are you thinking?!” he asked as he turned. His nephew had always been fair but his face drained of all color when he faced him.

Rey’s laughter echoed against the rocks and reached the hut again as she ran in circles evading capture by the guardians. Ben flinched.

Guilt, Confusion, Fear, Anger, Sadness, Protection. buzzed amid the Force.

“She usually keeps quiet” Ben mused mostly to himself.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed!
Thank you all again as always! I am so grateful to have so many people following along with this story AND enjoying it!

I look forward to writing and storytelling with you all more than anything everyday! It is on my mind all day at work etc.

I really can't wait to move into my EPISODE IX material with you all!!

Too many scenes in this chapter to give a clear soundtrack...BUT check out my spotify playlist where i have all my inspiration songs (Over 100) Its under "Writing soundtrack" by Nikki Rao!

XOXO -Nikki
Ben and Rey have an exchange. Things get complicated.

More than a day had passed before Ben felt strange things within the Force. He was reviewing communications on the bridge when he sensed a disorienting shift. Frustrated he grabbed his datapad and headed to his quarters.

Ben was certain Rey had everything she needed and there was nearly no one left aboard the ship who could pose a physical threat to her since the last of the knights who had accompanied him were still injured. They were so close to the *Supremacy* now. Mere hours from securing a future for Rey amidst the influence, power, and privilege of the First Order. Eventually the regime would likely fall, but another would rise, and Ben could ensure he and Rey had purposeful roles and a life without want.

Another tremor ran along the Force and Ben realized the source was much further away than the end of the corridor. Meditating upon the unnatural disruption he found his awareness grip what he reached towards like a red hot pot handle. Burning and struggling against his reflex to grasp what he found Ben doubled over in pain. A raw howl escaped him as he growled; Panting against the effort of resisting Snoke’s influence. Gnarled hands clawed forward extending through space, bright red Kyber crystals gleamed menacingly.

‘How?’ Ben thought as he fought to process the power necessary to ‘imbue’ him through the Force from this distance. Muscles contracted painfully as Snoke saturated Ben’s Force signature with the dark energy of the Kyber crystals harvested from Crait. The dark Force material had been suffused for years with energy to bleed the crystals. The potent substance shocked his system. It had been a long time since he had been subjected to the practice.


After about an hour in the small training room Rey had managed a healthy glow. Stray pieces of hair hung damp and coiled near her temples. She wasn’t permitted to carry her light-saber, but Ben had granted her the staff which was her customary weapon. Again and again she worked through forms. Offense, defense, staff work, saber work. At other points she relentlessly struck a weighted bag until her arms ached.

The exertion calmed her. She had long become accustomed to physically exhausting herself day in and out as she scavenged on Jakku. Rey’s thoughts travelled back to the sandy mausoleum and the memories she tried to leave buried there. Once again she heard her own desperate cries as the ship broke the atmosphere, she saw the surge of Force as Ben’s agony rent his soul and his saber in two, and finally she saw...Unforeseen resentment welled within her until she was immersed. With abrupt and jarring violence Rey thrust her staff at the weighted bag with such force that she drove...
Ben began to clap slowly as he entered the doorway of the training room. The bag swayed gently making arching patterns of sand as the puncture bled out onto the tile floor. Rey let out a frustrated sigh as she quickly tried to walk past Ben and out of the room. The last thing she wanted was to upset him by provoking his compassion this close to their meeting with Snoke.

Halfway through the door Rey felt a strong hand close around her upper arm. Unlike the touch she felt in the hut on Ahch-To, the sensation she ached to feel again, his hand was hidden again within his black leather gloves.

“Where do you think you’re going?” he asked in a tone so low and quiet Rey had to draw closer to hear him.

“You said we should remain separated as long as possible before our audience with...him” she answered.

Ben made a sound of mild surprise as he pressed on “Hmmm, it seems even I’m capable of making poor choices...occasionally”.

Rey was unsettled by the sudden shift in Ben’s strategy and attitude. Reaching cautiously along their bond she felt something different she couldn’t quite understand.

The grip on her arm pulled her back into the room “If you wanted to know something sweetheart...all you had to do was ask” Ben said darkly as he released her and closed the door; apparently she hadn’t been cautious enough reaching into his mind.

Her heart began beating faster as Ben revealed her light-saber and offered it to her. As Rey took hold of the weapon she began the delicate ballet of navigating Ben’s emotions and her own at the same time.

“Ben” she began gently as he ignited his own unruly saber. “Do you know why I came to you?” A silence followed and she lit her own blade.

“Because you finally saw Skywalker for the lying fiend that he is” he evenly stated as he engaged Rey. A few moments passed as the pair sparred. Advancing, parrying, retreating; The dance was evenly matched and each began struggling to gain advantage over the other.

“Yes” she admitted with pain remembering how Luke had withheld so much “...and no” she finished.

The tiniest smirk she had seen play across Ben’s face vanished as she continued. “He has spent so long trying to atone for what he did on that island...but, no I didn’t come to you because of Luke”.

After a daring attempt to catch Ben off guard attacking him low to send him off balance, he met her strike and their sabers locked against one another. Slowly as Rey rose from her lower stance she explained breathlessly as their weapons sparked where they maintained contact.

“Ben, I came to you because of what I saw...that night in the hut...when we touched” she hesitated as his saber slipped errantly before he regained focus “When we touched I saw something...I think...I saw your future”.

At this Ben arched a brow and leaned into Rey bringing his face closer between their dueling sabers and putting weight behind his move to reclaim dominance in the match.
“Just the shape of it” Rey persisted against his intimidation. “But solid and clear”.

“Well?” he asked as the warmth of his breath moved the stray hairs framing Rey’s face. “What did you see?”

“You will not bow before Snoke” at this a brilliant smile escaped her. “You’ll turn” she said as she abandoned the struggle which locked their light-sabers together and lowered her weapon.

“I’ll help you” Rey offered gently looking up at Ben through her long dark lashes.

“I saw something too” he confessed tenderly.

Ben drew closer, his own saber now deactivated. His eyes moved slowly over her face from her eyes to her lips and back again. Rey wondered if he might kiss her again.

“And because of what I saw, I know when the moment comes, you’ll be the one to turn”.

With this Ben removed a glove and raised his hand to tuck a rogue strand of hair back and away from her temple. His other hand caught Rey's and held it close. Breath still came fast as they both recovered from their brief spar. Tracing his knuckles down the side of her cheek he rested the pads of his fingers at her jaw as he concluded with conviction:

“You’ll stand with me”.

'CLICK'

The trance was broken as Rey looked down at the binders Ben had placed around her wrists.

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Chapter End Notes

Soundtrack for this chapter is "Say Something" by A Great Big World

This is a great Reylo song that really applies to the piece from this point out. Basically every chapter with Ben and Rey from this point forward could have this playing in the background lol

It is all about devotion and desperation at the same time. Being willing to go anywhere, do anything...but being needing something...anything in return to keep going!

"I'm still learning to love, just starting to crawl" IS THE PERFECT LINE
ALSO "I'm sorry that I couldn't get to you"

both capture the difficulty of rediscovering their affection and trust and the failure they are having meeting halfway

"Say Something" by A Great Big World lyrics

"Say something, I'm giving up on you
I'll be the one if you want me to
Anywhere I would've followed you
Say something, I'm giving up on you

And I... am feeling so small
It was over my head
I know nothing at all
And I... will stumble and fall
I'm still learning to love
Just starting to crawl

Say something, I'm giving up on you
I'm sorry that I couldn't get to you
Anywhere I would've followed you
Say something, I'm giving up on you

And I... will swallow my pride
You're the one that I love
And I'm saying goodbye

Say something, I'm giving up on you
And I'm sorry that I couldn't get to you
And anywhere I would've followed you (Oh-Ooh)
Say something, I'm giving up on you

Say something, I'm giving up on you
Say something..."
THANK YOU all for your well wishes and continued support!

I had no idea this work would include an original character...but here SHE IS!

This story has a mind of its own and as long term details are revealed to me as I reflect upon the characters and their journey, NYX came into being!

I really hope you enjoy her as much as I do. This is a brief introduction to her before we move onto several other scenes that have been developing in our story so far. There will be more on Nyx coming up so if there are more questions, don't worry answers are on the way.

**If you want to know who is dream casting for our new character in my mind/vision: Hayley Atwell (I will be posting a picture on my Tumblr etc. of the character shortly after I post this) So keep an eye on NikkiNotions on social media**

**As always comments and kudos = LIFE **

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Major Nyx Kryze (pronounced Knicks Cries) for all intents and purposes appears unremarkable. She is a weapons specialist and strategist who ranks not far beneath General Armitage Hux in the First Order. Her complexion is porcelain, but her short hair is the color of dried blood. The violent contrast is striking, but her features aren’t pointed or delicate. Her heart shaped face and nose are rounded and her figure is taller and more ample than the average military woman. Though her lips are full, they are often pursed. The cruel irony is that her most singular qualities are what make her remarkable, and an outcast.

Standing over a pallid Hux she tuts silently considering the state of her superior. In the med bay the bright lights call attention to her mismatched eyes; One a black pearl of shadow and night, the other the gleam of a silver-grey moon.

Drawing closer her dura-steel hand rattles against the metal railing of the bed. She notices the young man beginning to stir and draws her hands behind her back regarding him clinically as he comes to.

Hux would pitch a fit had anyone but Major Kryze seen him in such a vulnerable state. Near the end of his most recent imbue-ment the general had lost consciousness. All things considered he was lucky that Phasma had been dismissed and Ren was flung to the far reaches of the galaxy on an assignment.

“Must you stand quite so close?” the flame haired general snapped as he sat up.

Nyx withdrew to the shadows beside the med-bay doors.
Grimacing at the unnatural pangs of torture still fresh in every muscle Hux hesitated as he reached for his datapad, discarded by the med-droids on the floor beside him.

Before the General could tax himself further the black mirrored surface glided silently into his freckled fingers.

His pale dead eyes looked to the shadow at the door and the flash of stars that blinked back from the gloom. Beneath his furrowed brow there was gratitude before her gaze shifted back to the safety of denial.

Denial that she had checked on Hux, denial of her past, denial of her present circumstances, and most importantly denial that she had just used the Force.

Sparks fly where Nyx makes contact with the special training dummy she keeps in her quarters. Black silicone mimics the texture of skin but beneath the surface the core is titanium. Her metal prosthetic hand has struck a fatal blow on the skull of the figure in a spot well worn with use. In the low light of her rooms the impact of her durasteel fist creates fireworks against the exposed metal.

Kylo Ren had suggested the modified equipment after Nyx had destroyed her 100th practice model, and Hux had approved the commission based on the anticipated cost of future replacements.

She smirked remembering the satisfied look on the then newly appointed General’s face when he delivered the news.

“Power has its privileges” Hux had said.

Armitage Hux couldn’t be accused of being vague or poetic but Nyx always wondered if he had referred to the power she had finally achieved or the influence he implied he had used to grant her the accommodation. Had it been the latter she knew the truth was that Kylo Ren, Master of the Knights of Ren, was to thank for her custom gear.

Nyx exhaled in short controlled bursts as she aimed several rapid fire kicks. She housed her personal training area in the small room normally dedicated to meditation or recreation. Since only two people alive in the First Order knew she was Force sensitive and she had no use for idle time she transformed the space into a practice room.

Exhausted the young woman used her artificial hand to still the figure which wobbled from her final blow. Nyx stared bitterly at the craftsmanship of her black and silver appendage; Years in the making and a constant reminder of the public humiliation and abuse Snoke had greeted her with. Looking back upon her pain allowed her to appreciate the privilege power had granted her now one way or another.

A small box chimed from the corner of Nyx’s desk reminding her to rest. An intricate, though crude, timer she had assembled from spare parts had five simple notes sound until she pressed a tiny silver button.

She neatly packed away her work on some smaller concealed weapons, stretched methodically, then positioned herself on her back in preparation for sleep.

As she looked up at the ceiling with half lidded eyes she caught sight of the primitive star charts she had etched in the metal years ago after one particularly grueling training session.
She had retreated to the safe isolation of her room. At this point she had developed a third iteration of prosthetic for her hand. It was unrefined and featured a single spike in lieu of fingers. Nyx had thought the blatant violence suggested by the design would please her superiors, but instead she was punished for its limited practicality and obvious nature.

After tending her wounds she had laid back on her Spartan bed, much like she did at that very moment, and searched within herself. She was so sore, sad, and young. She thought of Mandalore, her home-world, and the night she was found. Afraid and alone she had been resting on the cold flat stones that circled a fountain at her orphanage. Nyx had looked up at the sky when a flash streaked above her. Moments later a man appeared and offered his hand. He had spoken of things she had yet to understand; Light, power, force. He wanted her trust and her potential. The alternative of remaining on Mandalore as a bastard with no clan to claim her, no skill as a soldier, and the development of startling abilities did not appeal to her. And so Nyx Kryze had flown off into the night with the strange angel who had visited her, and in her grief and longing she had carved that moment into the ceiling above her bed.

As the Major’s mind returned to the present her sleepy eyes roamed to the next set of stars she had scratched. She thought of the years she had spent in happiness. The stars; the moments spent laying in cool long grass back when she was whole. Bundled in wool, throat raw from laughter. Nyx remembered jokes and jabs, nightmares and confessions, and the profound bond of discovery. The purity of those memories and the honesty of the connections she had made. The belonging and loyalty of the destiny that found her; that she chased even now as part of the First Order.

These stars were her way back. The way back to when, the way back to where, the way back to why, and what, and who she was fighting for.


‘Armitage Hux’ she added hesitantly.

Slowly she brought her left hand over her heart and extended her right hand out palm forward in an ancient Madalorian salute from the temple orphanage she had spent years in. ‘Nyx Kryze’ she finished somberly.

The constellations she had etched above were always the way back to herself. Nyx took several slow deep breaths as she closed her eyes in concentration. Looking back, looking inside, and looking forward. The pain was always so easy to see. The nature of those emotions were always so big and strong. But much like the gentle stars carved above her, there were always bright and brilliant things left in this galaxy to lead her back where she needed to be, and right now that place was a deep sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Thoughts?

I CAN'T WAIT TO POST MORE! I SHOULD BE ADDING AGAIN ON WEDNESDAY!

Sountrack for this chapter is "Rosemary's song" from The Giver by Olivia Belli

This composition is a wonderfully somber and powerful piano piece. I think it reflects
the depth of Nyx and her strength but also the vulnerability we know is there as well.

**If you're curious which five notes Nyx’s music box timer plays...it is the five note bridge/riff from "Waves Crashing on Distant Shores of Time" from Black Mirror (San Junipero) by Clint Mansell (Featured in Chapter 5: Waves in Time)

**For more music check out my writing soundtrack on Spotify "Reylo writing soundtrack" by Nikki Rao**
When the bough breaks

Chapter Summary

This chapter catches up with Poe/Leia, Finn/Rose, and Luke.

THANK YOU ALL for continuing to read. My 8 day work week is over and now I have 2 days off so hopefully I can get some writing in!

Soundtrack for this chapter at the end!

As always comments and kudos are life and I love all the music suggestions!

-Nikki

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Oh, c’mon BB! Happy beeps huh buddy!” Poe reassured his droid and companion.

He stared out across the blinding white salt flats of Crait. Occasionally a stray Vulptex would scurry across his field of vision and bring with it the soothing tune of tinkering like a crystal wind-chime. The pilot and a handful of others were waiting on the return of Finn and Rose. Their approach would signal Poe’s team to sweep in and carpet bomb the First Order base.

The commander felt his pulse quicken as he thought about catching the militant bastards unaware. The element of surprise would cost them dearly just as it had the Resistance on D’Qar.

He stared with intensity at the blanched horizon quietly spinning the gasket ring hanging from his neck until a steady hand reached out to soothe him.

Leia looked at him with concern. Her tired eyes and smile suggested the quiet sigh of a mother’s understanding. Poe appreciated the comfort even if she sometimes made him feel like a boy for it.

“Poe” she began with sympathy.

Her tone frightened him. To the core he was shaken by the sudden submission in her bearing. His eyes searched her face but the dark circles and the lines framing her features only confirmed his fears.

Poe gripped Leia’s shoulders and drew her into a fierce embrace.

“No one’s coming” she whispered to him in a broken voice.

The pilot encircled her small frame as he began gently swaying them back and forth. He could hear the General’s rasping voice hum softly to herself as he cradled her.

“Good thing everyone who matters s’already here” Poe offered wryly as he pulled back to look down at the woman who had given so much to so many.
“Poe” she continued ruefully “we can’t fix things this time by jumping in an X-wing and blowing stuff up”.

In the distance a ship appeared on the horizon. “General.” Poe beamed. “Permission to jump in my X-wing and blow something up?”

Finn and Rose had taken the slicer on a single ship. The cocksure pilot’s smile faded quickly as one aircraft became two.

“No” Poe quietly seemed to argue with the galaxy.

He squinted and walked out a few steps from the cover of the hangar. Concentration and panic weighed down his handsome looks. Neither of the vessels that approached were from the outdated Resistance base. Neither flew low enough to purposely avoid radar. But both maintained precise scouting formation.

“What have you done?” Leia demanded with horror as vigor returned to her.

If this was to be their final stand he was glad he had planned for drastic measures. Since D’Qar he could sense that the runway was falling away beneath the Resistance. Full power to thrusters, no more landing gear; now they had to fly or fall.

When Poe turned to face his General he noticed Vice-Admiral Holdo beyond her. A twisted pleasure ignited within him as he took a deep breath. Ready to fly, ready to fight, ready to die.

Poe responded...“I shot first”.

The last thing Finn remembered was hearing Rose scream and a terrible blinding pain.

Events pieced themselves together as he regained consciousness. They had reached the hanger and decided it would be less conspicuous to take a small First Order shuttle than to try to make it back to the site where they hid their old Rebellion rig.

Rose had spotted DJ. She was so happy that he had caught up with them. DJ however seemed distressed. She waived him over but realized her mistake too late as Phasma emerged from behind and struck her with a stunning bolt.

A small shriek rang out before she fell limp to the floor and a crushing blow from the butt of Phasma’s blaster rifle sent Finn into the darkness after her.

On their knees in front of the chrome plated menace and her cohorts Finn struggled to hold onto hope. Rose sniffled back tears as First Order officers helped DJ load a trunk with credits into a small ship. Payment for his betrayal.

“How could you?!” Rose bellowed as she struggled against her guard.

DJ’s weary and baggy eyed gaze met hers briefly before speaking to the entire group.

“Just b-b-business. We got c-c-caught...I made a d-deal”.

“A tossed coin never lands on its edge. Guess you landed on a side just fine after all you bastard!” Finn huffed.

The older man’s gaze was dark. “Thought I t-t-told you kiddos. They k-k-kill you today, you k-k-kill them tomorrow. Nothing changes. Just b-business”.
“Enough!” Captain Phasma interrupted. “As much as I relish watching FN-2187 and this Resistance runt tormented by their own naivety my patience wears thin. Your intel checks out, scouts have spotted the Resistance taking refuge in the derelict base, and you have your reward. Unless you would like to join them may I suggest you take your leave”.

“Yes ma’am!” DJ supplicated putting his hands in the air in mock surrender. “Like I always say...Don’t join”.

With a spring in his step he crossed over to Rose and returned the crescent necklace. He shot her a final wink though his eyes lacked their usual brightness and charm. And like that he was gone. Consideration, compassion, and consequences be damned.

The Falcon had broken into the atmosphere on the far-side of Crait. Their approach would be slow in order to avoid notice by the First Order, but Luke could already sense that the military base’s attentions were focused elsewhere.

A deep growl of discontent issued from the Jedi master’s chest. He had hoped the conflict the Force was so eager to stage would be small. But now the Resistance had been compromised and many more lives were endangered.

Red and white flashes of Crait’s scenery streaked by as the freighter sped along the surface low, slow, and in the direction of the old Rebel base.

Anxiously Luke reached across the Force to his twin Leia. She had been so lost moments before. He knew they could help each other ignite the spark of hope within their hearts easily. They had always been confidants, but now the anger and desperation that took root in her heart reminded him of Ben. In no time he sensed the same dark energy blooming across the bunker of Resistance members. Luke had set out on a mission but now questioned his ability to reach past such pure emotions to revive the heart of his sister and her people.

With a heavy sigh Luke watched a mother Porg line a nest she had built near an exhaust vent on the ship. Gentle warm air periodically breezed through the pale downy coat of baby Porgs inside the small shelter. The babes were hardly more than white tufts of fluff that blindly trembled together at the center of the roost. The mother’s mouth worked a stray piece of wire into the structure and Luke noticed the effort the movements cost the small creature. Exhausted the Porg nestled into the side of the nest to warm the babes and rest.

Luke appreciated the sacrifice and strain of the critter. Something about witnessing the cycle of the Force at work made him think of another little critter, his own former master, Yoda.

Back on Ahch-to as he had prepared for his journey Luke had sensed the presence of the tiny green Jedi master. Yoda had appeared as a force ghost beside the ancient tree where the Jedi texts were kept.

Strange as ever Yoda had chuckled at Luke’s somber meditation and sent a sizable branch tumbling towards him.


“So serious you looked. Perhaps early I am. Learned a lesson, I thought you had.” Yoda mused with humor.

Luke’s thoughts raced over the revelations that struck him since Rey had returned to the island, and since she left. He knew what he had to do, but he had been unsure if he would be able to do it.
After so many years Luke didn’t know if he had the strength left to fight the darkness he created or the gentleness to forgive his nephew or himself.

“Mmmmm” Yoda made a noise of contemplation. “Ready you have been many years Skywalker. Ready since that night. Since your greatest mistake. It is fear, yes. Fear and guilt which keep you here”.

Luke looked away from his teacher and up at the ancient tree. Its gnarled wood was dry and cracked. The brittle timber was a fitting representation of all the Jedi had become, perhaps all they ever had been. If the order, like the tree, could not learn to bend it would surely break, but Luke knew no other path than that of the ancient texts.

His tiny companion looked at him in knowing silence urging him to reach the conclusion he sensed Luke was reaching.


“Mmmm yes. Young Rey. Before her is the belonging she seeks. On the path ahead there is a place for her and others”.

“But how? Her training? There wasn’t enough time...She’s gone. She’s gone to him. And now she is in more danger than...” Luke’s insecurities were carrying him away with his guilt and concern.

“There is nothing left here that the girl Rey does not know” Yoda assured him sweeping his walking stick before them.

The torch in Luke’s hand trembled as he summoned the nerve to set the tree alight.

“New paths need new directions to find their destination Skywalker. To reach what lies before them your younglings can not travel in your steps”. Yoda advised gently.

Luke stared fiercely into the shadowy depths of the tree’s narrow entrance. Slowly his eyes met with the burning intensity of the fiery torch he held. He took one last look at Yoda who gave a sympathetic nod before, after so many years, Luke let go.

“It’s time for the Jedi to end” he sighed.

The flame dropped to the base of the trunk and caught alight. Luke returned to sit next to his master and friend.

A wild sort of laughter escaped from Yoda suddenly.

“So dramatic you’ve always been young Skywalker” he chuckled.

They sat in silence as they considered the burning tree. Watching as the flames slowly crackled up along the weathered wood.

“Mmmmm” Yoda grumbled. Abruptly a flash of lightning struck from the clear sky. The white hot bolt tore through the dry wood like kindling and prompted a blaze.

“And so impatient you always are” Luke jibed at the Jedi master’s handiwork.

Tears of laughter collected at the edges of Luke’s eyes. Yoda turned to consider his apprentice as they let the past die before them. His small features took on a peaceful expression as he enjoyed the wonder blooming inside of him:
“We are what they grow beyond”.

Chapter End Notes

Soundtrack for this chapter is "The Rocket Builder" (Io Pan) by Johann Johannsson

This is a wonderful composition that I recommend listening to. Much like the other compositions I have included in this fic soundtrack this song is atmospheric and haunting. It lends itself to tension and we certainly have a lot of that building throughout the scenes in this chapter. Each part of the story in Chp. 39 is building to turning points and so it makes sense that our soundtrack is about building to something. The song evolves as it develops and has a small break in the middle which I picture right before Luke's bit. it opens very sinister with a lullaby like tune played over it that is juxtaposed. I think it fits the reflections luke is having on the Falcon watching the Porgs. He is in a dark complicated place until he is reminded of his talk with Yoda. His meeting with his old master is tense and serious as well but also sprinkled with that classic Yoda sass.
Some Nyx back story!
*Make sure you read Chp. 39 it has been updated also!

Here is the experience of our new character during the show down on Ahch-to...
(2 chapters in one night! I'm trying to make up for this week folks!)

MORE REYLO COMING UP NEXT CHAPTER!

THANK YOU all for your patience. I know we are all here for the main event (Reylo) and I appreciate you sticking around for my entire tale side stories and all!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Major Nyx, to me!” Hux brusquely ordered.

Apparently an incident had occurred on Crait. Rebels had infiltrated the mining and manufacturing facility while the Supremacy was readying to rendezvous with Ren’s command ship. They were processing information as it became available and Hux was eager to please Snoke after his recent punishment.

As she fell in line beside and slightly behind the General, Nyx bit the inside of her cheek frustrated by the demeaning command. She was no pet, but his knowledge of her force sensitivity had given him an unnerving amount of influence over her throughout the years.

Storming through the hall together their presence instinctually made First Order members provide a wide berth. As they stalked the long corridors of the destroyer her thoughts traveled back to her initial arrival upon the Supremacy.

When Nyx first awoke upon the First Order ship she was exhausted and broken. In her fourteen years she had never known such pain or fear. But she would come to understand much, much more. All those years ago Nyx arrived with Ben and a small group of others. Now she and Kylo Ren were all that remained.

Years of mental duress had left Ben rightfully wary of Snoke. He feared for his own safety but mostly Rey’s. He had always been so careful to shield her from Snoke’s probing mind. But that fateful night Ben Solo had become their reluctant leader, and while he couldn’t hold onto Rey, he was determined to extend his protection to the few people left relying upon him. Protection that meant risking everything for power and a place in the galaxy.

They had all been injured in some capacity during the chaos that ensued after Luke threatened Ben. Sides were chosen and violence had erupted swiftly once the island woke and assumed the troubled prodigy had murdered Master Luke. Ben had a terrible piercing burn through his left shoulder, Rey had inhaled a good deal of smoke, and while the others had varying degrees of cuts and burns; Nyx was the only member of their group mortally wounded.
The Force had never been particularly strong with Nyx. Ben had a gift for knowing minds and drew upon his emotions, while Rey could reach hearts and pulled from the energy around her. As a duo they excelled in nearly every aspect of the Force. Nyx however could not claim to be an expert in combat nor the physical or mental techniques of Force use. Though she demonstrated her sensitivity and ability to complete the tasks of their lessons she failed to thrive or find her own source of power. But that night something found Nyx instead.

Shouts woke her and mayhem greeted her as she left her hut. The Force was desperately being torn and manipulated as pupils fought for their lives across the island. Unlike the others Nyx felt no call to join the fray. No pull to one side or the other. Made craven by her own weakness and lack of skill she stepped into the shadows and made her way to the coast.

The cold wet night air gripped her lungs tight and made it hard to catch a breath as her heart pounded. She knew a place where she would be safe. A place she would go to find balance and strength. A place she would bring Rey to read stories and sing. An underground cave where she could be alone and wait for the violent storm to pass.

As she reached the flat that opened above the cavern she heard a scream that was much too close for comfort. Rey was running in her direction toward the coast and Nyx knew she was trying to reach the same haven. Behind her were three older students giving chase as the little girl flung stones behind her with the Force trying to stop them.

“Rey!” she shouted. “This way!”

The sight of Nyx seemed to renew Rey’s power as she Force pushed the three students to the ground before reaching the arms of her friend.

“Climb down to the cave now Rey!” Nyx urged as she brushed hair out of the little girl’s eyes. Her own accent was much like Rey’s and she knew how the sound comforted her. “I’ll be right behind you. Then we can tell stories until Ben comes and it’s safe to come out...If anyone but Ben or I comes down after you bring the ceiling down”.

“Where is he?!” screamed one of the young men who regained his footing.

The two other students righted themselves and closed in on Rey and Nyx.

“Where is Solo!” demanded a girl of an age with Nyx.

“Give us the murderer and this all ends” The other boy threatened Rey.

Pushing Rey behind her Nyx hissed “GO!” one last time before addressing her peers. A splashing sound told her that Rey had jumped down into the water of the hideout.

“Please” Nyx begged as she backed towards the opening to the cavern. “We want no part in this. Stop your attack and we can figure this out. Just...”

Before she could continue the older boy lit his saber. “We’re not going back without her”.

“She’s the way we take out Solo” the girl sneered.

“Or the way we make him suffer” the other boy smirked.

“This darkness” Nyx reasoned “this isn’t you. Tonight a great wound has been rent in the Force on this island. Please resist this!”
“Come now Nyx. We all know you’re not the Padawan for a fight” the girl teased.

“Or much else come to think of it” the older boy jeered. “Unless you count babysitting that little freak” he finished.

The trio moved in and Nyx raised her hands poised to extract whatever power she could from the Force to wield in defense. A green flash streaked in the corner of her vision and a sharp rush of warmth ran through her side. For a moment the group retreated shocked by the savagery of their leader.

Nyx lowered a hand and retracted it at the searing pain of a saber burn through the side of her abdomen. Stumbling back a wet wheezing noise filled the night air as she drew breath.

On the edge of the cavern opening Nyx swayed with her eyes still fixed on her attackers.

“Last....chance” Nyx gasped as blood spattered from her mouth.

A collective growl seemed to issue from the students and she leaned back allowing herself to fall. The cold water gave Nyx a shock that ushered a sweet rush of adrenaline into her system.

She cleared her mouth of blood as she struggled to the waters edge.

Rey was clapping in triumph projecting a happy little ball of light over head before she looked in horror over Nyx’s shoulder at the three other splashes landing in the water.

“Rey!” she had panted in agony “Now...pull it down NOW!” she begged as she pulled herself out of the water.

Confused and afraid Rey struggled to grasp the harm the other students meant towards her. Hours earlier all had been well on Ahch-to and now Nyx was falling into their cavern sanctuary with a fatal light saber wound.

Rey began crying softly as her little light waned and she backed away deeper into the shadows.

“Please!” Nyx begged as the three Padawans reached the waters edge. “I can’t do it Rey! I’m not like you!”

“We only need Rey” the eldest boy instructed the others as they engaged their weapons, filling the dark space with the eery glow of their sabers.

Nyx pulled herself to her feet and the effort caused a cough that issued a stream of blood down her chin. She had never been gifted enough to have a crystal call to her or meditate and construct her own light-saber. Without a weapon she backed away and steadied herself against the cold hard slate of the nearest cave wall. Her vision was blurring and Rey’s cries tore her heart into pieces.

She was in such terrible pain. Desperate...hopeless pain. Nothing like the beatings she had endured on Mandalore. Nothing like the isolation she had felt alone and unwanted without a clan. Nothing like the aching emptiness of being no one from no where with nothing. No this pain was everything. It surrounded, filled, and completed her.

The pain and darkness extended its hands across the island and reached within her to spark something new and terrible.

Nyx could no longer see three Padawans before her. Instead she saw only the power,
darkness, and Force she wanted to twist into something else. She sensed something she wanted, something the Force needed, and a way to unite the two.

Several voices called out at once. Nyx felt something converge; past, present, and future. The light of the sabers flashed wickedly fast before sparking and flickering out. A blinding silver light flickered in bursts like a strobe light in a Coruscant club. Once, twice, three times she felt the essence of life, Force, and power twisted by the darkness that fueled her. Crystals, flesh, stone, light, darkness, pain, power coursed through her and into the cave wall, into the very island.

The wall beneath her left hand morphed from the cold rough stone of the cave to a molten mirrored surface that reflected the white hot energy that filled the cavern. Nyx’s focus broke as the liquid metal consumed her hand. A tremor shuddered through the island and dislodged the final fragments of the former stone wall. The debris half buried Nyx and pinned her injured hand under a crushing boulder.

The cave settled and the darkness resumed. Rey approached Nyx in wonder as she illuminated the space with the Force again. The young woman did not scream or cry in agony. Instead her eyes rolled back in her head as she fought the impulse to faint.

The three students that threatened their lives were gone. Nyx managed to glimpse the mirrored wall she had fabricated from their energy, power, and kyber crystals before she lost consciousness.

As shadows closed in around her vision Rey began dragging her broken body out from the collapse. As Nyx drifted in and out she became aware of the extent of her injuries. The saber wound had collapsed a lung which continued to deprive her of air and fill her mouth with blood. Her left side was crushed and several bones protruded from her pale skin. Finally her hand was a mangled heap of flesh, bone, and mirrored glass.

Nyx had prepared herself to die aboard the ship she was dragged on as they escaped. She felt Rey’s small hands run along her shattered form trying to Force heal her. Comforted by the fact she would not endure a slow painful death on the bloodied island or at the end of Master Luke’s saber she allowed herself to fall once more. As she plunged through the shadows visions rushed towards her, a desert, a clinical room, a snowy forest, a man tall and dark, a woman freckled and fierce, a moment, a question; A mirrored cave.

Reality rushed to meet Nyx as the present, more specifically Hux, pressed her face against the polished steel of the elevator panel rousing her from her memories. Her breath fogged the mirrored surface as she took a deep breath. The General’s leather gloved hand at the back of her neck.

“As much as your disobedience excites me in private Major, there’s a time and a place hmm? I need you on form. Focus. Am I understood?” He threatened darkly. Hux released her and Nyx stared thoughtfully at the reflective elevator walls.

“Last chance” she whispered to herself.

“What was that?” Hux demanded.

“Yessir” Nyx corrected.
Yeah...so there is a complicated relationship between Hux and Nyx...more on that later...ehehe

Soundtrack for this chapter is "Sledgehammer" by Rihanna (From the Star Trek: Beyond OST)

THIS IS ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE SONGS...For Nyx this song is sooooo beyond perfect. Enjoy! (Plus it is a great song by Rihanna)

"Sledgehammer" by Rihanna

"I hit a wall, I never felt so low, so low, oh
Like a waterfall, my tears dropped to the floor, the floor
They left a swimming pool of salted crimes, crimes
Oh, what could I do to change your mind?
Nothing

I'm bracing for the pain and I am letting go
I'm using all my strength to get out of this hole
I hit a wall, I thought that I would hurt myself
Oh I was sure, your words would leave me unconscious
And on the floor I'd be lying cold, lifeless
But I hit a wall, I hit 'em all... watch the fall

You're just another brick and I'm a sledgehammer
You're just another brick and I'm a sledgehammer
Yeah I hit a wall, I prayed that I would make it through, make it through
I can't survive a life that's without you, that's without you, yeah
And I will rise up from the ashes now, the ashes now
Oh, the sparrow flies with just the crumbs of loving spilled, yeah
I was bracing for the pain and then I let it go
I gathered all my strength and I found myself whole
I hit a wall, I thought that I would hurt myself
Oh I was sure, your words would leave me unconscious
And on the floor I'd be lying cold, lifeless
But I hit a wall, I hit 'em all, watch the fall

You're just another brick and I'm a sledgehammer
You're just another brick and I'm a sledgehammer
You're just another brick and I'm a sledgehammer
You're just another brick and I'm a sledgehammer...
Alone in the dark

Chapter Summary

Rey takes a solo trip into a dark Ben memory...ehehe...a "Solo" trip... 
A smattering of Reylo...a longer Reylo chapter soon to follow!

Hux is a sick puppy in this one...Oh and he speaks Aurabesh (Galactic standard) when he doesn't want to be overheard...

I know Aurabesh is typically seen only in written form so I used the written name for each letter as the phonetic sound for each letter A=Aurek B= Besh etc. (Anywhere it is used I made the first letter bold so that you can read/translate it easier)

For reference
Kylo is 15 when Ahch-to "Battle Royale" happens and they arrive to the First Order
Nyx is slightly younger about 14
Hux is about 20/21 here

As always many thanks to my enthusiastic readers! I love hearing from everyone old and new alike! Keep on dropping those musical suggestions too. I'm gonna need lots of new material for my episode IX fic coming up!

**Also keep your eyes peeled for additional one shots. I'm involved in a Reylo exchange for valentines day and the prompts I received were so good I may end up writing more than one!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Rey can’t help but feel guilty when Ben throttles one of the First Order crew members on his command shuttle. The young man had appeared promptly after their heated exchange in the training room that ended with her in handcuffs.

The subordinate had arrived to tell his commander that the Supremacy missed their rendezvous and that there was an incursion on Crait by the Resistance. The pitiful messenger had been flung across the room and out of the doorway against the wall.

She was shocked by the sudden violence of the man who had been so close moments ago. Passionate and intense, but very nearly tender. Rey felt an impulse to approach the fallen officer and check his injuries.

“No”. Ben ordered flatly.

Rey tried to sense his own intentions along their bond, but she could only find the clouded darkness that she had sensed earlier when he first entered the room. Something had changed and now a dense fog seemed to muddy the path back to Ben’s mind. To suffocate the soul she had only just rediscovered.

Venturing further into the bond red Kyber crystals bleeding with dark Force energy flashed
before her. **Isolation. Pain. Despair. Regret.** A burning need to be free from the past, to forget the present, and to grasp the future. **Possession. Power. Wholeness.**

Somewhere in the murky depths a memory rose to the surface of Ben’s mind. He had not offered her this piece of himself, but she was desperate to understand the foul chaos reemerging in him. In the scene that unfolded Ben had just arrived upon the Supremacy as a boy. His shoulder was still bloody and burned from the fight on Ahch-to. He fell to his knees as Nyx was taken from his shoulder by First Order officers.

‘Yes, Nyx’. Rey thought fondly for a moment about the young woman who had been like a big sister to her. Suddenly a delirious groan of anguish came from Nyx. The hysteria Ben felt in his memory became her own as she watched helplessly. Droids and officers scrambled around the pieces of the young woman trying frantically to revive her.

“STOP!” a curt voice commanded.

Utter silence fell across the corridor and the infirmary where nervous hands still worked to repair the patient on the table. Firm footfalls that began behind Ben overtook him and approached the doorway of the medical bay. Armitage Hux appeared to be in his early twenties.

“Cease and desist. **Immediately**” he continued in his polished accent. “That is an order!”.

Rey could feel the panic rising in Ben as those attending Nyx dropped their equipment and halted the droids assisting.

“**Captain**” began one of the nurses cautiously. “The Supreme Leader himself instructed us to be ready to receive this young man. His companion here will not live long if we do not intervene. Even with our best work I’m not certain we can...”.

The ginger militant raised a hand to quiet the woman.

“The Supreme Leader believes **this** whelp may be an asset. He said nothing about squandering supplies and military resources on the band of misfits in tow” Hux sneered.

“The Supreme Leader may evaluate the suitability of the dregs we have here who are **fit** to serve”. He added raking an appraising eye over the others beside Ben.

A gasping wheeze issued from the medical bay as Nyx coughed and a fine mist of blood coated the sterile apron of a droid.

At this Ben howled in anger and struggled against the arms of others trying to restrain him. His wound and his exhaustion weakened him considerably and Rey could tell how powerless he felt as Hux walked closer and stood over Nyx.

“Control yourself!” Hux scolded Ben coldly. “I won’t **hurt** her. I’m not a **savage**”.

He moved closer to the young woman as the medics and droids cleared away to give him the room. The bright surgical lights made the Captain’s hair look like a halo of fire as he hovered above Nyx.

“At the very least I can expend one shot and give your comrade here a swift...honorable death”. His voice seemed uncharacteristically soft as he considered the situation. “A creature like this shouldn’t spend their final moments in agony”.

Rey could feel tears sting the corners of her eyes as she watched. She had never considered
that Nyx may have died from her injuries. She had always thought...hoped that what little they had healed with the force while escaping had been enough. A silent sob racked her chest when she sensed that Ben began to question if this young soldier had the right idea.

Hux removed a black glove and traced his fingers over Nyx’s alabaster cheek, bloodless and yet somehow becoming. Her eyes fluttered weakly and opened up at the officer.

“Besh-esk-aurek-usk-trill-isk-forn-usk-leth” he whispered in awe of the uncommon allure of the girl.

His lip curled when his gaze finally fell to the gore of her injuries and mangled hand.

“I bet she was kind. Don’t you think this is kind?” Hux continued as if to goad Ben into compliance.

“Well...kinder”. He corrected himself as he subtly unholstered his blaster.

Ben inhaled sharply as the flame haired captain aimed his weapon at Nyx. Rey openly let tears stream down her face as she felt Ben prepare for the loss. As she felt him decide it would be the kind thing. That after a night and a day of running, of so much pain, and loss, and suffering; she could feel how he so desperately wanted something kinder. Even at this cost.

Nyx coughed again and Rey could feel a flicker along the force as she pleaded to Ben.

“I tell you what, what say you we let her decide?” Hux mused feigning indifference while he relished the control. “I couldn’t care less either way...but I won’t have it be said that I’m not the sporting sort”.

Rey wished she could reach out with the force and impale the man with every sharp object in the infirmary, but she was merely a spectator in this memory.

“Tell me her name” he asked not ungently as he straightened the hem of his uniform while looking down at her.

Ben swallowed hard as he struggled to comprehend, but Hux’s impatience rattled him back to reality.

“Out with it! Or do you like to see her suffer?!”. 

“Nyx...Nyx Kryze” Ben said with defeat.

“Kryze...” The Captain repeated as he tried to make sense of the familiarity of the name in his mouth.

Hux leaned in closer to Nyx and Ben shifted as unbearable anxiety overtook him. A hush fell over them again and the sound of labored wheezing was all that punctuated the tension.

“All you have to do dear...is speak”. Hux smoothed back a patch of her hair matted in dried blood that was camouflaged by her dark auburn locks.

“Nyx” he cooed trying to draw her from her wounded stupor. “Speak to me. Just one word hmm? And I have the power to let you live”.

She struggled and failed to sit upright before another gush of fresh blood threatened to suffocate her. As it trickled from the edge of her mouth Hux discreetly gripped his blaster and took
aim from his hip.

Rey thought perhaps there was some twisted sense of decency in the way he concealed the weapon as he prepared to fire.

“That’s good. That’s enough” Hux assured Nyx as he continued running his bare hand over her pale face.

The soldier took a deep breath and reached for a handkerchief to wipe the blood from her mouth. He cleared his throat loudly, masking the soft click, as he disengaged the safety on his sidearm.

“Clean them up for their audience with The Supreme Leader” he ordered without looking away from his task. Ben thrashed wildly as officers tried to drag him and the others from the scene.

“Isk Aurek-mern Senth-osk-resh-resh-yirt” Hux breathed as Nyx’s eyes drifted closed.

Rey nearly shouted as the flicker from Nyx drew upon the pain radiating through the Force to bloom into power.

The Captain’s eyes widened as a foreign voice spoke within his mind.

Rey realized this was the moment when Hux learned that Nyx was also Force sensitive.

‘Mern-esk Trill-oorenth’ she could sense Nyx project into his mind.

The blaster hidden in Hux’s hand was drawn quickly into Nyx’s as she managed to raise only her arm to point at him unwavering. Their eyes met and a strange sort of energy passed between the soldier’s dead gaze and the animation of the girl’s. Like two pieces of cold ice beneath a shadow and the dawn.

“Bang” Nyx whispered aloud before collapsing into unconsciousness.

A moment passed in sheer wonder as the weapon finished skittering across the polished floor into a corner.

“Medic!” Hux finally howled as the spell seemed to break.

Hux backed slowly away from the table. A wraith surveying his work from afar as he casually reached for his blaster on the floor. The red head took up a post outside the doorway scrutinizing the medics as they resumed work upon Nyx.

Physically and emotionally drained Ben too lost consciousness in the memory and like that Rey was thrust back into the present.

Ben sensed concern in Rey. Not just for the injured crewman he had thrown across the ship. Prodding along their bond he could see the outline of something new. A memory she had retrieved and then tried to replace amongst the others. But like an old book returned to a shelf, the disturbed dust was evidence she could not undo. He could feel a growl involuntarily rip through his chest as he turned on her.

“NO!” he bellowed. “What have you done!”
The soundtrack for this one is something I feel can apply to either Reylo...Or the bizarre Armitage/Nyx...Armityx? Thing going on.

*Side note: Just noticed age differences between Reylo and Armityx are the same...weird

THIS song is another WONDERFUL suggestion that i would highly SUGGEST listening to lol

It is melancholy as most of my chapter inspirations are. It relates so wonderfully to a space opera with the darkness and light and stars. It speaks to the loneliness that is so universal in this story amongst the characters. There are metaphors about power, healing, status, belonging, home, being lost, darkness, stars, life, death...ugh it just screams STAR WARS

"Alone in the Dark" by Will Cookson lyrics

Come lay me down
Come heal me now
Come take this crown
Don't need it anymore

What's going on
There's something wrong
Been lost so long
But it happened all before
I'll wait up until you're home dear
I'll shine a light in the dark
Don't leave me alone here
Amongst the stars

Can't fight the dawn
Can't ride the storm
Can't carry on
Without you anymore
I'll wait up until you're home dear
I'll shine a light in the dark
Don't leave me alone here
Amongst the stars
Tragedy

Chapter Summary

It has been awhile folks! But all of you and this story have been on my mind plenty. I've also started another 3 part fic which will go live soon, that was part of a Valentine's reylo gift exchange!

This chapter is another doozy. I'm not sure how all of us will react to what I've done here. I really hope you have faith in the story I am telling and continue to read along. If any choices I make do prompt you to unsubscribe or stop reading I sincerely would love to hear from you! Although I will likely stick to my creative decisions I am always open to improvement.

This chapter follows up with Reylo and then back to where we left Finn/Rose.

::Bracing for impact::

Hope you enjoy?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Rey was certain Ben had gripped her and dragged her from the training area with enough force to bruise. As they crossed the threshold of her room he released her and withdrew with such vigor it was as though she had burned him.

“You will remain here until it is time for your audience with the Supreme Leader” he commanded with a hoarse voice.

“Ben...what happened? Why are you doing this? I just-” Rey began before being interrupted.

“You just?...you just!? You just traipsed through my mind and plucked the nearest memory like some low lying fruit!” he spat furiously.

“You seemed so different. The way you... I thought-” she offered in a small voice remembering the nearness of him; the intimacy of his gaze and touch.

“You thought wrong!” he howled as he threw the room’s desk against the wall.

“And while you thought! And you just!...You forgot! You forgot everything I asked of you! Everything I warned you about! Every part of this that now puts you in danger!” Each statement he made was punctuated by the sound of the dura-steel desk being twisted and crushed through the Force in the corner where it landed.

Rey had indeed forgotten. It seemed remembering so much recently had robbed her of the caution that had kept her alive so long. The separation and disconnection Ben ordered hadn’t lasted long. And when he had entered that training room she felt like a woman possessed by the Force... by hunger...by need. He may have joined their physical spaces but it was Rey who greedily coupled
As she stood alone with Ben and his unbridled fury she did not cower in fear, but slowly backed away until she sat on the edge of the small bed. Exhausted and ashamed. Here stood the man who had suffered along side her all these years in a way she had only just begun to understand, and she had prioritized her own want over a single request he has made for her safety.

How long had she known loneliness, hunger, desperation, despair? How many times had she wrapped her arms around herself, stroked her own hair, wiped away the tears she shed on Jakku? And yet, she had not been able to deny their connection. She had not turned from the pull she felt along their bond. The path that traversed time and space between them. In that moment she could not resist, and knowing the risk, she had been content to rifle through the nearest memory she had found.

Her face felt hot and she was angry at herself for the tears that stung at the edges of her eyes.

“I'm not used to this” she managed almost to herself.

Ben’s mouth which had been set in a hard line worked and shifted at this. He ceased the contortion of the metal desk and began to breathe deeply. He tasted blood when he realized he had bit his lip in anger at himself. Anger at how quickly he had become the very things that pushed him to darkness. How he misunderstood, mistrusted, and feared. How he had assumed for himself and decided so much.

He shook the thoughts away knowing that so close to safety it was her recklessness that had provoked him. Her recklessness and Snoke’s imbement. The darkness within him would be more potent then ever and so near the Supremacy, and their meeting with the Supreme Leader, he and Rey still needed space. As he turned to leave she spoke.

“I'm not used to feeling like this. I couldn’t help myself. It was like that time I found a plasma alternator and got two dozen rations at once” she smiled to herself remembering how sick she had been after gorging herself.

“I'm not used to..to having so much”. Rey finished with large wet eyes.

“Having so much?” He asked incredulously as he walked to the door. He surveyed the spartan room and the small pack Rey had brought with her.

“And what do you have?” he asked cooly from the hall, more a statement than question, as he punched in the security code.

A breath before the rush of the door and the seal of the door’s magnetic lock Rey replied.

“You”.

Rose was shrieking and fighting against her captors, but DJ was long gone with the bounty and ship the First Order awarded him for betraying them and The Resistance.

“Her first” Phasma ordered through her shiney mirrored helmet.

The only Storm-trooper who was still able to fulfill their duty after the tasers in the engineering hub stepped forward. The soldier seemed to particularly relish activating his weapon. A long armed battle axe crackled to life. The equipment was an extension of his arm. It extended from his grip in both directions acting as a guard that reached to the bend of his arm below and a laser blade above.
Finn immediately felt himself jarred from his stunned silence. FN-2187 knew this as a tool used for execution. Panic spread through his veins like a poison and he felt its fire compel him to move, to fight.

“Phasma you bitch!” he roared as his muscular form struggled against the First Order officers restraining him.

While Rose suddenly seemed to blossom into her own sense of dignity. She took deep breaths and as the Stormtrooper approached she looked up out of the hanger into the bright white sky that reflected miles of snowy salt flats. As though she had found some answer there she remembered her surroundings and lowered her face back to their tragedy. In her own time she settled her eyes on Finn.

“What are you fighting for Finn?” she asked calmly just as she had back in the canteen when they had first arrived on the other side of the planet.

She raised her hands to remove the crescent from her neck. In that moment the soldier had reached his post behind her. With a brutal kick the small woman was forced down onto the ground. The necklace flew from her hands and skittered across the space between them landing in front of Finn.

The light that glittered within Rose’s eyes was dazzling. Delicate white clouds developed around her face as her breath stirred the dried chalky salt dragged onto the hangar floor by so many black boots.

“Save - what you - love” she groaned as the Stormtrooper pressed his boot to her back pinning her in place.

“That’s enough preamble...do it!” Phasma commanded.

Finn couldn’t tear his eyes from Rose’s. He only just managed to see the trooper’s shoulders rise and fall. The movement reminded him of a farmer breaking ground in the spring. A holo that was part of his conditioning when he was very young. The shovel cutting into the soil quickly and violently in order to birth a harvest slow and gentle.

For the briefest of moments Finn thought the weapon had malfunctioned. Rose’s gaze remained peacefully locked with his own. Her shiny dark hair framing her rounded features. And yet. Delicate white clouds no longer stirred from her labored breaths. There was no gore to affirm the violence because the blade’s laser cauterized the injury with cold clinical precision. But most telling of all was the glittering light that had left her eyes.

Instead warm blood pooled in Finn’s palm where he gripped the necklace with enough might to cut into his own flesh. The Storm-trooper stepped over Rose’s lifeless body towards him and Finn felt Phasma deliver a kick to bring him flush with the ground.

Finn held fast to the token in his hand. He stared at the crescent moon bordered by his own blood. In that moment he couldn’t help but think how funny it was to adore any moon. So often they were barren, rocky, pointless things. No light or life of their own. Only able to reflect the light some star was willing to share. So much like him he thought.

Phasma herself took the axe from the soldier, and she pressed Finn down as though she was trying to crush a bug beneath her boot.

“You were always scum FN-2187” she sneered.
In rapid succession a series of high frequency blasts hit targets near by. A shower of blood marred the polished chrome of Phasma’s armor and rained down upon Finn. The First Order Captain abandoned the traitor to take cover.

The bolts were coming from a small shuttle across the hangar. The blasters outfitted on the ship were effective against dura-steel. So they were certainly unnecessary force against a handful of personnel.

Suddenly the helmet of the executioner Storm-trooper made impact in front of Finn. Scorched and bloody. Now he could confirm at least one casualty of this unexpected onslaught.

‘Perhaps not so unnecessary force after all’ he thought to himself bitterly.

A comm. system from the shuttled crackled and blared to life.

“Your ch-ch-chariot awaits k-kiddos!”.

Chapter End Notes

I hope some of you completed this chapter and are still with me! I promise there is a point to this...like everything I do.

Rather fittingly the soundtrack for this chapter is "Tragedy" by Brandi Carlile

The song, its sound, its lyrics are so fitting to so many of the emotions in this chapter and the story overall. Mistakes, the past, pain, memory, friendship, love...It is a really beautiful song if for nothing else but the emotion the singer is able to communicate just through the sound of her voice.

"Progress, changing..Growing then giving up..Somehow I'm never quite prepared" This one is all about Kylo...Two steps forward...one step back.

My days always...Dry up and blow away...Sometimes I could do that too"

Rey gets this series of lines

"But you know I'll defend...The tragedy that we knew as the end"...gut punch..poor Finn.

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

"Tragedy" by Brandi Carlile lyrics

"Sorry, I'm only
Human, you know me
Grown up, oh no guess again

My days always
Dry up and blow away
Sometimes I could do that too
But make no mistake that

When you need a friend
You could count on anyone
But you know I'll defend
The tragedy that we knew as the end

Progress, changing
Growing then giving up
Somehow I'm never quite prepared
But I understand that

When you need a friend
You could count on anyone
But you know I'll defend
The tragedy that we knew as the end

So taking you with me would be like
Taking all your money to the grave
It does no good to anyone especially
The one you're trying to save
It's so hard not to say

When you need a friend
You could count on anyone
But you know I'll defend
The tragedy that we knew as the end"
Fire and tears

Chapter Summary

This chapter finishes up where we left off with Finn and then catches up with Poe and the Resistance!

More should be on the way soon. As it turns out...Back when I was sick about a month ago, I was apparently much more ill than I thought. I have pneumonia and may need more time off than I thought (I took 2 days off). So I will have plenty of time to write!

I'll keep you folks posted!

Soundtrack at the end notes!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“T-t-tick tock” DJ goaded from the shuttle.

“I didn’t j-j-just plan a dramatic entrance b-buddy...this p-p-place is about to go b-b-boom!”

Finn suddenly couldn’t comprehend the language DJ was speaking. He lunged to pick up the battle axe and ignite its laser blade. All he understood was that he was alive and somehow so was Phasma.

It felt as though his heart had grown ten times its size. A steady violent thrumming and thumping was radiating through his entire body. Phasma was cornered on a mechanics gangplank shielded by a stone barrier from the shuttle’s blasters.

To the Captain’s credit she remained as cold and poised as ever when she reached for her weapon. Finn did not break stride as he rushed her hiding spot without a care for his own safety. He knew she was a crack shot, but even a blaster rifle at this range would not stop him from claiming her head before he died.

With tactical precision and murderous intent she primed and fired at Finn. A clicking sound issued. Phasma fired again and this time a wet squeak escaped the muzzle of the gun. Apparently the blood and ichor of the First Order members DJ had decimated had saturated the necessary components of her blaster.

A primal snarl ripped through Finn’s chest as he brought the axe down barbarically. Phasma met his blow with her rifle and managed to hold the laser blade off mere inches from where her helmet met her armor. Finn pulled back and aimed a cracking blow to her head with his elbow allowing the shield that extended there to fracture the helm.

A sliver of her humanity was savagely left naked in the daylight. A pale blue eye like the waters on some warm sunny world stared back at him. Her fair skin seemed paper thin and gently wrinkled from expression and the advance of age. Somehow Finn noticed a faded scar above her brow as she struck out at him again.
He jammed his axe against her weapon and for the first time wondered how long she had struggled and fought. When he had defected he had only just entered the field, but for Phasma...something told him with or without war she had needed to fight her entire life.

As the pair struggled for power over one another a ringing seemed to fill the air. A high pitched frequency that seemed to build as it got closer. The sound continued to charge and build until both Finn and Phasma could bear it no longer. Breaking the lock between their weapons they had just enough time to shield their ears before a devastating explosion shook the hangar and a wave of pressure and combustion flooded the lower levels.

A searing heat bore down on them and smoke, ash, and embers burned the air in their lungs as they recovered from the blast. Finn retreated as the gangplank’s metal began to melt from the inferno below. The structure shuddered as it groaned and the supports below twisted.

“Move!” Finn implored as a steel cable snapped, like a piece of thread over a candle, and whipped through the air.

“I don’t want your pity!...Scum!” she stated with resolve and derision.

This wasn’t what he wanted. This wasn’t the justice he craved. Ironically amidst the blaze the fire within Finn had died. He thought of Rose. Of her words, and her sister’s. This was not how the war would be won. There was nothing decent, heroic, or honorable in this. Finn could feel the Hassian smelt necklace growing hot still pressed into his palm. He lowered the axe and deactivated its erratic laser blade as he backed away towards DJ and the shuttle.

Phasma seemed genuinely confused and threatened by her opponents behavior. A series of smaller explosions rocked the hangar and the last support on the right side of scaffolding gave way. The First Order Captain was pitched towards the drop-off and Finn instinctively reached out toward woman.

Sweat beaded and streamed down Finn’s brow. Even the upper level of the tarmac had become unbearable. As he wiped his forehead Phasma seemed to regain her footing and rise.

Again the former Storm-Trooper reached forward silently imploring the fierce woman to accept his hand. Urgent shouts echoed from the distance when officers arrived to look for their superiors.

“What are you trying to prove?!” Finn shouted desperately. “This isn’t a trap, I’m trying to kriffing help you”.

A moment passed, but it somehow felt much longer. The expressive blue eye Finn had unmasked narrowed. Phasma righted herself and rose to her full imposing height. A metallic screech issued nearby.

“I’d rather d--” she began as the gangplank surrendered under her weight and finally collapsed.

In an instant her massive reflective frame was swallowed by the flames below. Finn was suddenly aware of how heavily he was breathing his hand still outstretched and shaking. The crescent of the necklace clinging to his outstretched hand; embedded in flesh and blood.

“Cuffs? Really? Look Holdo everybody’s into something..but there’s a time and place am I right?...Is this entirely necess--”. Poe tried reasoning with charm.
“Vice Admiral” Amilyn Holdo corrected frigidly as she, Leia, and Poe entered a private meeting room in the old base.

“Poe, for once please try to take this seriously” Leia advised wearily as she massaged her temples.

The glint of her ring caught Poe’s eye as she tried to will her frustration and fatigue away with her fingers. He thought back to the time when Leia had shared with him the strange and sentimental story behind the Corellian blue pearl halved by her little boy.

They had been awaiting orders while laying low in orbit around a little moon near the core of the Hosnian system. Leia had been able to drink most of their retinue under the table. At last only she and Poe remained and only then did the hull rotting, Bantha blinding, booze seem to disarm the guarded General.

That night his long time friend and surrogate mother had shared many memories before she wept large uninhibited tears of shame and regret in his company. At one point she had carded her hand through Poe’s own dark curls, something she hadn’t done since he was a rookie. Leia had caught sight of the ring again as it resurfaced amongst his raven locks and been struck by a wave of grief renewed at the sight.

Poe had clutched at her hand. Vowing to throw the offending ring down the nearest garbage chute straight to the trash compactor.

This had made her smile for a moment before she explained. “Never again” she had rasped.

The ship’s sub-light engines hummed peacefully and stars had drifted by slowly out the port windows.

Clearing her throat Leia continued. “The greatest teacher, failure is” she said thoughtfully. “A very wise man...well, man like thing once told me”.

For perhaps the first time in his life Poe remained silent and listened as he gave Leia the time and space to find her words...her feelings...without his smart-mouth getting in the way.

“A long time ago...what feels like yesterday and yet in another life...I...I failed Poe” she confessed as fresh tears gathered in her deep brown eyes.

“I failed my baby. My son...and I...” Her tears retraced the trails made earlier as she struggled to revisit her past.

“And I...failed the man I love”. she sighed deeply before she could move forward.

“I failed my little boy when I let my let fear corrupt my heart and cloud my mind, and I failed Han...when I pretended it had not”.

“Ben was special...gifted...afraid...a boy” she told Poe as though she was reminding him.

“He needed to feel safe...understood...he needed to be loved...he needed his mommy. And I...I sent him away”. Leia’s tears silently flowed and Poe had tried his best to console her.

“It’s not like any kid comes with an instruction manual. You and Han did what you thought was b--”. He began before Leia interrupted.

“Han”. She keened. “Han wanted...he was afraid, we both were. But...he never wanted to
send Ben away! He didn’t want Luke to...teach him...to raise him. He wanted to keep him close...keep him home...keep our family together...no matter what”.

Sobs racked her petite frame between each piece of information. “But I insisted...Luke was so much stronger with the Force than me...He had been so much closer to our father...to...darkness....I was so afraid to lose Ben...I was so afraid of Ben...and I let Han take the fall for all of it...those kind of mistakes...never again...what kind of woman am I?”.

At this Leia had dissolved into a heap of navy silk and tears. And even now Poe remembered the words he hushed her with as he carried her over the drunken and prone crew members to her quarters.

“The kind of woman who worries about the mistakes she’s made...who learns from them...who wants to heal herself...the man she loves...her son...and the whole damn galaxy!...The kind of mother who cries over her child’s happiness...and drinks a room full of pilots under the table cause she’s an ugly crier”.

Some point between his final jab and the door to her room Leia had fallen asleep. As he gently laid her on the bed he realized her tears had dried. Poe had been happy to take care of her in some small way for once. As he tucked her in he vowed he’d never drive her to drink...unless in celebration. Never cause her to shed a tear...unless in laughter. And to remind her everyday of the kind of woman she is...misunderstandings...missions...mistakes...no matter what.

....

It dawned upon Poe as he watched Leia slowly trace the hemispheres of her ring that he had made a terrible mistake.

“As you are now aware none of our allies are able to come to our aid” Vice Admiral Holdo began summarily.

“A spat of failures, limited resources, and growing fear have only damaged the Resistance’s network. And now this stunt!” Holdo’s lavender hair bounced as she brushed away an errant strand with vigor.

“This is the largest manufacturing base we have yet to encounter--” Poe attempted.

“It’s THE biggest anywhere.. Commander. And how do I know this? Years of planning, recon missions, undercover operations...patience!” Holdo scolded.

“What exactly have you done Poe?” Leia asked as she tried to steer the energy of the room back on track.

The hinged double doors leading into the small office opened with a bang as BB-8 rolled in urgently.

Poe smirked as the droid reported a signal on his frequency and the appearance of a shuttle.

The pilot triumphed as Holdo pursed her lips. “Haha yes! Happy beeps buddy! First Order scouts be damned...They’re back!”
This soundtrack is all about Poe and Leia. As usual this is a great song and I highly recommend it. It really fits with the tone of the scene for the two characters. It reflects Leia's pain and Poe's helplessness very well.

"Her Diamonds" By Rob Thomas

Oh what the hell she says
I just can't win for losing
And she lays back down
Man there's so many times
I don't know what I'm doin'
Like I don't know now
By the light of the moon, she rubs her eyes
Says it's funny how the night can make you blind
I can just imagine
And I don't know what I'm supposed to do
But if she feels bad then I do too
So I let her be
And she says ooh I can't take no more
Her tears like diamonds on the floor
And her diamonds bring me down
Cause I can't help her now
She's down in it
She tried her best but now she can't win
It's hard to see them on the ground
Her diamonds falling down
way down

She sits down and stares into the distance
And it takes all night
And I know I could break her concentration
But it don't feel right
By the light of the moon, she rubs her eyes
Sits down on the bed and starts to cry
And there's something less about her
And I don't know what I'm supposed to do
So I sit down and I cry too
But don't let her see
And she says ooh, I can't take no more
Her tears like diamonds on the floor
And her diamonds bring me down

Cause I can't help her now
She's down in it
She tried her best but now she can't win
It's hard to see them on the ground
Her diamonds falling down

She shuts out the night
Tries to close her eyes
If she can find daylight
Then she'll be alright, she'll be alright
Just not tonight
And she says ooh, I can't take no more
Her tears like diamonds on the floor
And her diamonds bring me down
Cause I can't help her now
She's down in it
She tried her best but now she can't win
It's hard to see them on the ground
Her diamonds falling
Ooh, I can't take no more
Her tears like diamonds on the floor
But her diamonds bring me down
Cause I can't help her now
She's down in it
She tried her best but now she can't win
It's hard to see them on the ground
Her diamonds falling down

I can't take no more
Diamonds on the floor
No more, no more, no more
Diamonds falling down
I can't take no more
Diamonds on the floor
No more, no more, no more
Diamonds falling down
I can't take no more
Diamonds on the floor
(No more, no more)
Her diamonds falling, all her diamonds
Diamonds falling down
I can't take these diamonds falling down
WARNING! *Trigger warning*

This chapter gets dark...like 0 to 60 muppets to Quentin Tarantino dark (You be the judge?)
If you take offense at colorful language or violence do not continue past the break after
the Supreme Leader scene. I will post notes at the end of the chapter which you can
scroll down to and will summarize the most important bits.

NYX's weapon: Kusari (Google Kusarigama and take a look at pic on Wikipedia)

This chapter we see Snoke/Space Raisin...and then follow up with Hux and Nyx

This chapter is very important in terms of character development...I am honestly telling a
complete story here folks...So I promise there are enriching and important bits!

I hope you enjoy

AS ALWAYS THANK YOU ALL for reading and writing to me
I love that people are still discovering this work for the first time...and there are still
people in it from the start! Aghhh I really do think about this story all the time...and all
of you! I am always so eager to hear what you think!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The throne room:

Much like his right, the left hand of Supreme Leader Snoke is gnarled and mottled. One patch
of wrinkled parchment skin is much like the next save for the adornment of a thick gold ring with a
jet black crystal that gleams in the low crimson light of his throne room. The menacing Kyber crystal
is dangerous in as many ways as its jagged surface is fractured into erratic facets.

The black diamond is a conduit between Snoke and the Force. Where most Jedi and Sith
construct light sabers, he had chosen to root his power directly upon his person. The massive rock
rested on his left index finger where ancients believed a vein ran directly to the heart. In theory the
gold setting conducted energy from the Force through the stone directly to that vein and the core of
Snoke. The ring aided him with imbueement and over the ages countless lives had been consumed to
sustain the creature he became.

No one is certain of the decrepit man’s origins. Only that he has spent an unnaturally long life
intent upon eradicating the Jedi, the Resistance, and establishing the First Order to command the
galaxy.

Snoke’s obsession of all knowledge of the Force led him into both the exploitation of the light
and the uncharted and murky depths of the dark side. His discovery of Ben solo, the creation of his
ring, and the imbueement of Crait all sprang from his illicit studies.
While Snoke was confident in his ability to groom and manipulate his acolyte Kylo Ren, he still harbored concern about the power of Ben Solo and the twin flame within the Force he had sensed so long before. He had always been able to sense something beyond Solo, which completed him, but as Kylo Ren emerged the line to his bond mate had grown slack. It had been foolish to think his father anchored some part of his energy. No, it had been the Scavenger all along. Since the Force awakened the dormant connection the shadow and light betwixt them consumed and blinded. But Snoke knew if the union were severed, this time permanently, Master Ren and that immeasurable power would be indefinitely bound to him and the First Order.

While he contemplated the cruelest way to snuff the light of Ren’s compassion he was acutely aware of his disgust as Armitage Hux entered the throne room.

‘My rabid cur’ he thought wickedly as the young man bowed a little too long.

“General, save your graces and airs...explain yourself!” Snoke began sharply.

Nyx shifted uneasily in the back of the room positioned to the left of the door. Hux stepped forward confident he was too valuable as a ruthless task master to dispose of flippantly and knew that Major Kryze, a secret Force user, afforded his defense the element of surprise.

“Supreme Leader” Hux’s affected voice rang out. “Our most recent reports indicate that the mining and manufacturing base has been...compromised”.

“Compromised?” Snoke sneered. “I think it best you choose your words with more care Hux!”.

“Gravely damaged sir. The base of operations has been attacked, but is not beyond repair. Our timeline has been shifted by events but–” Hux was disrupted by the squeak of his boots as he was dragged forward through the Force and thrown forward onto the black marble floor.

Experience told Hux he needed to recover and rise as quickly as possible despite the metallic tang of blood in his mouth and the ache of his nose.

“Know that this does not bear repeating bastard, TAKE CARE OF IT!” Snoke commanded with uncommon fire.

The General silently accepted his instruction and hastened to his ready room with Nyx in tow.

Snoke struggled to regain his composure after his encounter with Hux. He was still shaking after the heavy doors to the throne room had closed and his Praetorian guard had resumed their posts beside it.

With his eyes trained on the optic glass across the room that enhanced the image of space beyond Snoke lowered his left hand into a crate beside his throne. Crystals clinked against one another and scratched at his frail hands before he held one up to the light.

The imbued Kyber crystal had been bled and rather fittingly gleamed scarlet. It had been years since Snoke had imbued Kylo Ren remotely. So often he relied upon other less intimate methods of transferring the dark Force energy to others and manipulating it. He had imbued Kylo earlier and was now reminded of the side effects. The heady thrill and rush of connecting to the energy inside these crystals again, to the raw power Kylo Ren had imparted on Crait, to his rage and fury!

Snoke had experienced Master Ren’s disdain for General Hux through the essence imparted in the crystals, and the unfortunate fool had suffered the consequences.
Relishing the rediscovered access the process afforded him to his apprentice’s soul Snoke laughed mirthlessly as Kylo Ren’s command shuttle came into view of the optic glass.

The ship was distorted by the magnification of the device, but Snoke saw how he would strip his disciple of the final vestige of Ben Solo perfectly clear.

He held the blood red crystal up before the command ship and watched as fractured and twisted reflections sailed through facets of violence, desperation, and pain; All of Kylo Ren’s making.

Snoke released the stone satisfied with the shattering sound it made as it joined so many other shards beside his throne.

“Ah Ben Solo...It’s been too long” he mused aloud as he prepared once and for all to kill the past.

‘Bastard’ Armitage Hux seethed to himself as he stormed down the corridor. The Supreme Leader had never so blatantly mocked his lineage in his presence before. He was no imbecile but even Snoke had more tact than to openly prod such an obvious wound.

Nyx had only just managed to enter the ready room before Hux gripped the manual handle of the door and hastened its automatic closure with a thunderous bang.

As the sound of steel ceased resonating in the stark space, the sound of silence descended quickly. The Supremacy was in orbit above Crait so there were no sub-light engines humming to disrupt the quiet.

The Major surveyed the damage the General had sustained from the Supreme Leader. The bridge of his nose already appeared slightly swollen. The point of impact was red and splotches radiated from that point beneath each eye. Purple bruises were forming underneath as well and blood dripped from his full lower lip.

With a detached expression and the ease of practice Nyx retrieved a small dura-steel box from the inner pocket of her jacket; a small first aid kit. Removing her gloves she slid open the first panel and dipped her fingers into a shallow reservoir of bacta-gel. Gently she smoothed it over his nose and beneath his eyes, shushing him when he initially winced. The worst of the discoloration immediately stopped and the swelling began to subside. Sliding open another panel she removed a sterile piece of gauze and dabbed at the blood around his mouth. Once the mess was cleared away she positioned the corner of the box in front of the cut and pressed a button to spray an antiseptic with a milder bacta-compound for abrasions. Hux grimaced at the sting and she marveled at the man who would silently endure decades of beatings but pull faces like a child when she tended his wounds.

Inwardly with great shame she equally enjoyed seeing him suffer and bringing him comfort. Armitage Hux and herself had a long and complicated history rife with pain and some twisted thing akin to pleasure.

A long time ago:

His interest had been clear from the start. She had been in a coma for nearly a year after they arrived. But kept alive at his insistence and expense after their first encounter. Once she had recovered from her injuries she was kept isolated from Ben and the other boys from Ahch-to. Hux had been the one to tell her that her hand had been amputated, he had been her only visitor in the
medical bay. It had been he who kept the secret that she too was Force sensitive. He who developed a curriculum that suited the education she had on Mandolore. He who had allotted her a very small, but private room, instead of assigning her to barracks with the others.

But his attentions and kindness knew limits. It was also he who explained she owed a debt to the First Order, and loyalty to him. He who insisted she must craft her own prosthetic arm, and hone a skill while developing grit. He who watched as she was beaten bloody when her first dozen prototypes proved useless. Yet Nyx wasn’t naïve and knew even her limited Force abilities made her an investment Hux planned on yielding returns from. He deemed her mind worthy, but insisted on punishing her body for her shortcomings; Breaking her down and apart until she adapted.

Not long after her eighteenth year she had developed a hand that held up well in solo training. Nyx yearned for contact with others. Staring every night at the constellations she had etched above her bed recalling memories of friendship was no longer enough. Proving herself capable would soothe her lonesome heart and earn approval from Hux.

After a few months more of training with droids, running forms, and tinkering with her arm Hux relented and agreed to let Nyx spar again.

The evening he had brought her to the sparring room she could sense his surprise when he found actual opponents. Nyx knew Hux had intentionally brought her during an unusual time, after dinner, in the hopes he could delay the exchange. The last prototype that had failed had been nearly eight months ago and it had taken almost two weeks for her to recover completely.

Panic crashed in waves though as Hux realized who exactly was in the room that night. Ben Solo, who had been Kylo Ren for some time now after returning from a trip to Jakku, was matched with one of his knights. While the third man, another of the Knights of Ren, named Doran awaited a partner in the corner.

They had spent the past week on Crait, special orders from the Supreme Leader. Years later Ben confessed to Nyx what exactly they had been doing there. During the trip to Jakku years ago Ben had learned that Rey was dead. He had felt something inside himself fracture along with the Kyber crystal in his saber which bled. Snoke then tasked Kylo with imbuing the abandoned planet of Crait with this endless source of dark Force energy this rift within him provided. Pouring his anger, agony, and despair into the world had been easy. It was painful and lonely work that offered no relief, but Kylo found some catharsis in the outlet; bleeding into the void. That was before Snoke ordered Knights to accompany him on these trips and reap the darkness that Kylo had sewn.

On the night Nyx and Hux found the trio in the training room Snoke had just finished another experiment, using the Kyber crystals Kylo had created to imbue his Knights. All three men were influenced by the concentrated essence of the torment and fury harvested on Crait. It appeared as though Kylo and the other Knight were fighting to the death rather than sparring. Their aggression and subconscious misery hemorrhaging through the Force around them.

Doran had spotted Hux and herself and without ceremony raised his weapon to engage. Hux tried brokering civility angling himself briefly between Nyx and Doran trying to explain the parameters of sparring and First Order training but was cut short by the snap of the Knight’s laser-whip.

“How dare y-” Hux began.

“Shut up and get back!” Nyx replied as she darted to the side and unholstered her own weapons.
When she wasn't developing her artificial hand Nyx spent time developing weapons. At that moment she drew what she called Kusari. Two metal cylinders she pulled from her belt and extended in each hand. She depressed buttons at the top of each and several mechanisms inside reacted. Suddenly a silver light beam arched from the top of each forming a saber sickle, while a length of dura-steel chain dropped from the bottom of the weapons with heavily spiked weights.

Nyx had designed the pair of Kusari with her needs in mind. She wasn’t particularly adept or strong when it came to combat and so she had to rely upon a weapon that could injure and disarm from a distance. With a flick of her wrist she could extend the chain and use it to topple her opponent or grab their weapon. While in close combat, which she wanted to avoid, the saber sickles curve made them difficult to lock.

Kylo and the other Knight did not relent and continued their own battle as Doran paced in front of Nyx while he considered his next move. Hux oddly enough did not exit the room to the observation deck as he normally would. Instead he had braced himself against the wall only 5 meters away.

Doran cracked his laser whip menacingly as if to taunt Nyx into engaging. As the snap rang through the training room he used his other hand to retrieve a thick steel dagger from his hip. Slowly and without breaking eye contact Nyx loosed a length of chain and began swinging one of the weights of the Kusari above her head.

The Knight lashed out again but Nyx was still out of range of his weapon. Before he could manage to recoil she feigned a swipe with her sickle in the right hand and launched the chain from the Kusari in her left. The maneuver worked, he instinctively retreated from the hand with the blade and the distraction allowed her to strike with the other hand before he could notice.

Unfortunately she missed. Nyx wanted to disarm the whip but instead her blow wrapped around his arm near the shoulder. A switch on the side of her Kusari allowed a quick electric pulse to travel down the chain and stun Doran. She activated it for the briefest moment to claim a point in their spar. The amber flash in his eyes in return made Nyx wish she had set the charge’s strength higher. She could sense the unnatural miasma of darkness suffocating these men, and yet she had “poked the Rancor”.

A primal growl wrenched from him as he rushed her position. Before she could retreat out of range he arched his whip and in a flash red hot pain raked across her abdomen. Unlike her weapons Doran had no non-lethal modifications meant for sparring. Nyx cursed her ignorance as she felt fresh hot blood soak through the cloth that wasn’t in tatters near her ribs.

Abruptly Kylo and his other knight stopped. The scent of blood had drawn other predators to the show of violence.

“Enough! that is quite enough, well matched Doran Ren” Hux ventured in alarm.

However Doran did not stand down.

“Well matched?” Doran bristled in a voice much deeper than Nyx remembered. “This is no match”.

Behind the man Kylo and the other Knight took up attack stances. Their faces shrouded in their robes like reapers come to claim her. The darkness that possessed one seemed to infect the others.

“No.” Doran continued. “This is the chance to teach your little cunt here a lesson Hux. You
never let her out to play, how will she ever learn?"

“*Excuse me!*” Hux fumed. “You are speaking to a *superior* and my protege! You will be lucky if I don’t report you for-”

A shadowy tendril reached through the force and thrust Hux back against the wall. Desperately Nyx had flung both Kusari to disarm and maim Doran. One wrapped round his whip wrist while the other was snared around his blade. The strength of all three men seemed to flex through her opponent as Doran Ren wound the length of chain around his blade drawing Nyx nearer. Despite the unrelenting waves of electricity she emitted from the weapon he persisted. His whip arm rotating and pulling her in as well.

If she let go...If she abandoned both Kusari now she would be left defenseless and that would not halt Doran or the others. In fact reason had told her such an act would be cowardice in their eyes. But if she held on...Nyx shuddered to think of the consequences.

Eventually she trembled inches from Doran. Abandoning the hope that she could stun him with the electro pulses, she tried igniting the sickles of each blade and lunging. The curved blades clashed against his and though they did not lock against his weapon Nyx was drawn too close to retreat. Without much effort he flung the chain of the Kusari wrapped around his blade up and off.

Nyx could hear Hux sputtering in the background struggling to stay conscious.

The blunt force of a staff cracked the ribs along her disarmed side as the other Knight stepped in. As the one man beat her with his Bo staff Doran dragged Nyx by the weight and chain he had unwound from his whip arm until she fell to her knees before Kylo Ren.

“Ready to let go?” Doran taunted.

Blinded by pain Nyx struggled to focus on a singular source of agony. While the Knight beat her, Doran made shallow slices along the arm she still clutched her final Kusari with.

“*Cry for us Kryze!*” Doran jeered running the edge of his blade along her face. “I bet you *cry* for Hux!” he laughed viciously resting the bloody tip over her full lips.

With that the man lowered his knife to the softness of her belly and thrust. A guttural sob escaped Nyx as the blade bit into her while Hux’s boots thumped and scuffed frantically against the wall.

When Kylo Ren gripped her chin Nyx felt as though flame engulfed her entire body. And something scraped along her mind as the inferno spread. She saw Kylo alone for days on Crait trying to expel the compassion and suffering which tore at his soul. She saw him weak and spent on the endless salt flats willing death to take him. And then a whisper...cruel and clear. Luke passed through her mind. His smile, his laugh, his scolding tone. An image of him poised with his light-saber ignited in the dark the green beam illuminating his metallic hand and his face in a macabre glow. From that point Kylo no longer relinquished the energy with sorrow, but relished the fury, power, and wrath it called forth.

Nyx could feel her own hand outstretched before her just as Kylo’s had been in the final image of rage he showed her. But then a crushing blow brought her back to her hellish reality.

Kylo Ren slowly and torturously crushed her artificial hand with the Force. Compressing and smashing the components together until the fragments pierced the flesh of her arm below.

“*LET GO!*” Kylo’s modulated voice thundered within her mind and the training room as he
gripped her mangled hand with his own gloved fist.

Doran Ren twisted the blade still sheathed in her tender flesh and laughed as Nyx primitively screamed rather than shed a tear.

Hux seemed to convulse.

“Don’t worry Hux...It’s just the tip!” Doran gloated admiring the sheen of blood on his blade.

The last thing Doran Ren would ever see would be the knife he dislodged and the horrific shine of blood. Distracted by his own depravity he failed to notice the blaster Hux unholstered and had slowly been positioning inch by struggling, and agonizing inch.

A lifetime of militant precision, perfectionism, and lofty aspirations made Hux a sure shot. The bolt struck true and bisected Doran’s skull in an instant.

His body crumpled in a heap on the floor and Nyx felt the chain of her Kusari go slack. Without standing she clutched the silver sickle of light to her chest marveling that she never let go.

Without reprieve the Force around them all coiled dangerously and Nyx knew Kylo Ren was prepared to strike. Ready to finish what had started and repay Hux in kind for killing one of his Knights.

On the edge of consciousness Nyx felt as though maybe she never left the cave on Ahch-to. That perhaps she died and was fated to suffer every iteration for all eternity instead of joining the cosmos; For being weak, for being unwanted, for being an abomination of the Force. A bottomless well of failure, pain, and sadness drowned Nyx in her memories. The agony amplified until a white hot flash cut through her mind.

Several sounds softly thumped and pattered against the ground moments apart.

‘Is this the start of rain?’ she thought. ‘This must be Ahch-to’.

With that Nyx slipped into dreamless sleep unaware that the sounds of rain could have the same impression as bodies hitting the floor.

---

Some time later:

They had all been found unconscious in the training room.

Somehow accessing her pain Nyx had been able to unintentionally sedate everyone present.

Hux was surprised and suspicious when Kylo Ren lied to the Supreme Leader. Insisting it was he who shot and killed Doran Ren. Claiming the Knight had disobeyed a direct order to stand down.

Snoke was keen to believe the farce and applauded his apprentice for executing his authority without restraint for the acquaintance.

After Nyx recovered Hux spent every moment away from his duties training her. She had eventually protected him and in turn herself, but at great cost. She had sustained devastating injuries again, while he had to kill a capable Force user. It would never be enough to simply have a hand that did not break against a training droid. If she wanted to survive she had to harness and control what little power and strength she did possess. And he would be the one to help her...to focus and wield her pain.
Back in the ready room:

Despite the suffering she had experienced at Hux's hands over the following years it was Nyx who pitied him. He who struggled so valiantly for the favor of his superiors. He who accepted his lot in stride. He who time and again accepted punishment for faults not his own.

After Hux and his wounds were righted he decided he had relinquished as much vulnerability as he could for one day and cleared his throat meaningfully. Nyx stood at attention beside the black conference table in the center of the room.

She did not need the Force to sense the small hairs standing on end at the back of her neck as General Hux moved out of her line of sight and behind her.

His cool and soft glove circled the back of her neck gripping tight as a master would the scruff of a pup’s collar.

“Tell me” he began without a care for restraint or the trembling in his voice. “that it is taken care of”.

“Tell me!” Hux continued as his grip tightened and Nyx felt him draw closer behind her. “that the Resistance is done for”.

“TELL ME!” he shouted suddenly as he forced Nyx down so her face pressed against the cool table while his tall frame towered flushed against hers “THAT THIS ENDS NOW”.

From the corner of her eye Nyx could make out her own reflection and that of her red haired tutor in the polished finish of the desk. A thrill took hold of her as his fingers reached around to grip her throat. Pressed against her she could feel his arousal. Hux firmly applied pressure to her windpipe and snapped his hips while squeezing her face against the black marble.

Her pale and sensitive complexion was sure to bruise from the effort. And while Hux canted again thrusting her thighs against the hard edge of the table...Nyx felt it; Power...pain.

Chapter End Notes

Ok...so I'm not sure if this was as bad as I made it out to be?

If you haven't figured it out by now Armityx will be our lead into smut. I'm testing the waters with them before we get to that point with Reylo...which don't worry...is on the horizon!

What you may have missed after Snoke's bit:

*Hux and Nyx go to ready room and she cleans up his wounds
*Nyx thinks about their strange relationship
*She thinks back to a distant memory

In the past:

*Yes Hux is essentially grooming Nyx into exactly what he wants
*Yes it mirrors the way Snoke has groomed Kylo/Ben...except Nyx is a young woman
and Hux has impulses
*We learn that Hux has been kind and cruel to Nyx in equal measures
*She has had a lot of trials and errors developing her hand
*Hux keeps her secluded...easier to manipulate her and make her dependent
*Even though he watches her take a beating many times, he feels it is much like the hazing he had to endure to grow stronger
*Despite this he doesn't want to harm her beyond reason
*He doesn't want her to spar with the Knights of Ren

*Nyx spars with Doran (From Ahch-to/kid who used to have a crush on Rey...He's a man now)
*The Knights have recently been imbued for the first time and they have gone crazy with a capital C
*Doran is nuts
*Doran attacks and goes for the kill
*Nyx won't give up...she knows it is a lose/lose situation...if she surrenders she will be beaten to death and if she doesn't yield she will be beaten to death
*Fight Fight Fight
*All 3 knights end up attacking...Hux is paralyzed against wall
*The knights want her to give up...to surrender..."to let go"
*Kylo enters Nyx's mind and shows her what it has been like on Crait imbuing the kyber crystals...She hears Snoke in his head and see's how he fuels his aggression toward Luke
*Yes there is a parallel between Nyx seeing Kylo's memory of Luke standing over him with the light saber and Kylo crushing her artificial hand after the visions
*Eventually Hux manages to position his gun and shoot Doran in the head
*Before all hell can truly break loose Nyx goes into another mental state and wonders if she ever left the cave on Ahch-to...since this fight feels similar...she taps into her pain again accidentally and knocks them all out including herself and Hux..

*After the incident Hux decides Nyx must learn to connect with pain to use what little Force power she does have. (wink wink...If I have time I am implying that Hux is gonna get a little Mr. Grey on Nyx to help her draw upon her strange connection to the Force)

Back in present:
*Back in the ready room after Nyx has cleaned up Hux after Snoke smacked him around he is done being vulnerable and reminds her who is in charge...and gives her a little booster...to remember where to draw her power from ;)

NO SOUNDTRACK for this chapter...It was a long and strange one...and I apologize...but it happened...If anyone has any other questions let me know! I kinda filled this out stream of consciousness but as usual there are reasons for everything in this chapter ;)
Enough

Chapter Summary

I'M BAAAAAAAACK!

Thank you all, and I really mean it, for your patience!
This chapter isn’t as long as I first intended. But I wanted to share what was complete!
I cut out a lengthy scene I'm still developing. It's giving me a spot of trouble but I
actually think it will work better being placed a bit later in the story either way.

As always feel free to share this work, comment, kudos etc.

I ADORE hearing from everyone!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Poe retched on the hanger floor. Sick managed to spatter across the stone and salt despite his
empty stomach.

Rose was dead. Paige and Rose. ‘Poppy and Rosie’ Poe thought to himself grimly as he wiped
his mouth. Finn’s gaze was miles away and DJ couldn’t manage to meet anyones eyes.

Amilyn placed her delicate hands on Leia’s shoulders to comfort the General. The Princess
closed her eyes and with several deep reviving breaths she managed to return to herself.

“Let her sacrifice not be in vain” Leia’s deep voice commanded.

The words seemed to have particular meaning to Finn as he stalked off the tarmac purposefully
and DJ mournfully followed suit.

A moment later a knowing look between the Vice Admiral and the General, long time friends,
set in motion a rapid series of events.

Holdo drew a slim blaster from the draped fabric of her lilac gown and stepped forward. Calm,
composed, and potentially lethal.

“Commander Poe Dameron you are relieved of your duty. Surrender now to face a trial
hearing for your reckless behavior, insubordination, and refusal to follow direct orders” Amilyn’s
voice asserted evenly.

As two Resistance members struggled with Poe to secure his wrists in binders she continued.
“You will be held until your hearing may be summarily assembled. You will be granted counsel
should you request it, you...”.

“You frigid bitch!” Poe burst while the trio wrestled to the ground. “Is it better to walk away?!
To ignore what is right in front of you?! WHILE PEOPLE DIE?!”.

“ENOUGH!” The Vice Admiral made sure to project so the small crowd gathering around the
scene could hear.

“This, is war. And yes” her voice trailed off before gathering her will. “...people die. People die alone...and together by the millions. They die for a cause and without reason. Death, much like the enemy does not discriminate. And war, like life, demands tribute to yield a victory...demands sacrifice, suffering, patience, and tears, and blood” Amilyn finished sternly.

“COWARD!” Poe raged.

The lavender lady tilted her slender neck and looked at Poe with a sigh. The deep sapphire intensity of her eyes now seemed a paler shade of blue. He had expected anger or resentment, but not this woman’s pity.

“I will gladly be remembered as a coward if it means I sacrificed my reputation for the greater good. Sometimes being the hero means looking like the villain. I consider the cost of every one of my actions...and the high price of my inaction Commander. Do you?...Considering the death of Rose Tico, I’d say no.” Coolly the Vice Admiral turned away and returned her pistol to its hiding spot.“Ready the transports and continue siphoning the power cells of my ship to the other shuttles, I want-”.

Poe continued his struggle as he began to shout “How dare you! Don’t you dare speak her name...any of their names! Now you want to run away! You’ll kill us all! Listen to me...Those ships have no defense! No weapons! This is suicide! We need to fight! NOW!”.

In the tumult the pilot managed to land a few choice shots against his captors and grabbed his own blaster back. Amilyn’s lilac locks barely moved as she swiftly turned to meet his assault with poise.

“All pilots engage operation phoenix...now!” he ordered wildly as he raised the weapon.

Poe’s attempt to undermine Resistance leadership halted immediately when a streak of charged energy struck his core...hard. A single blaster shot cut through the tension that gathered heavy in the air.

Leia lowered her blaster which smoked at the muzzle; the grit of disuse burning off as Poe went limp. The bolt had stunned his body as thoroughly as it had his expression, shock touching every feature.

While Vice Admiral Holdo stepped forward to direct and arrange for Dameron to be detained Leia felt a disturbance in the Force...a presence now on Crait she had not sensed in many years..."Luke”.

“And what do you have?” Ben remembered asking Rey with a sneer.

As he sat in his quarters replaying the moment in his mind Ben wondered if he had imagined her response or misheard over the gentle sound of the doors closing over.

“You”.

The thought sent warmth along his spine. While a radiant spark leaped in his heart. It seemed the feelings he had were mutual, and Rey...Rey felt blessed...grateful for this...belonging.

Rey had confessed that their union and subsequent reunion happily overwhelmed her. That
without more than a sack, a stick, and the rags on her back...he alone was so much more than she
could have ever wished for. He was enough.

He questioned the sincerity and perhaps the depth of her emotions. But she had been so
unguarded...so open and honest when he confronted her. So pure despite his corruption. As if she
genuinely couldn’t believe her good fortune.

Ben always had a possessive nature and his relationship with Rey was no exception. To hear
how dearly she held him in return was priceless. A treasure he had never expected to uncover again.
That he had thought he was no longer worthy of claiming.

‘Worthy’. The word called forth a dizzying variety of memories. Snoke at the center of each.

‘Snoke’.

A feral sort of noise escaped him as he swatted at the ceramic vessels he used during meals.
The satisfying sound of shattering crockery sent tendrils of energy through his veins. Shadows and a
fiery red energy gathered and clouded his mind again. Ben began breathing heavily as he provoked
the darkness. Poking and prodding his deepest wounds to build walls within himself. Again seeking
refuge in the absolute void of rage and pain. A strong shield of honest suffering he could once more
hide himself and Rey behind until their business with Snoke was concluded.

“You” he heard Rey’s soft voice call in his heart.

The revelation was unexpected. But then and there, the plan had changed. He had changed.

Ben would not beg forgiveness or seek permission. Rey would not be his apprentice nor
would Snoke force her to become an acolyte. She would never be punished or tortured as he had
been. No. Ben was finished proving himself; earning scraps of power. No longer was he a child in a
mask. Never again would he demand power or a place in this galaxy...he would take it.

He, Ben Solo, was enough. But for now, just once more, he would become nothing.
Consumed by the dark side... for his sake, and hers.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you to Nikki Cowboy for suggesting "Young God" by Halsey

I'm making it the soundtrack this chapter, and for last chapter! It is a great fit for the
story AND I have added it to my writing soundtrack playlist on Spotify look for "Reylo
writing soundtrack" by Nikki Rao
So excited that at the moment the playlist has 25 followers!

Thank you all again!

I am feeling much better and I am happy to announce I am moving into my own
apartment may 5th so I will have so much time to spend writing!!

MTFBWY
-Nikki
No one's every really gone

Chapter Summary

I know, I know this is a REALLY short scene.
But this one is important and deserved its own spotlight/soundtrack so I didn't want to
join it with the next scenes I have planned (throne room/battle of Crait etc.)

I'm hoping I will post another chapter by Wednesday night!

THANK YOU ALL FOR READING! GOSH GOLLY!
I am pleased as punch by the response and every comment sincerely keeps me going.

Now get ready for some Luke and Leia feels!

Chapter Notes

This scene is dedicated to my big bro Danny

I have not let ANYONE in my family read my fic...I have admitted to them that I am
writing one...and I gush about the comments y'all leave me...but if I let anyone read this
someday...It could very well be my brother.

Here is to all the awesome siblings out there!

*I also have a sister who is my best friend, Kris/Kristen...she will get a dedication too :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Resistance members who escorted Luke Skywalker to the General’s office maintained the
sort of distance that communicated both a fear and awe of the Jedi legend.

When he arrived his profile blotted out the cold light that fell through the doorway. Leia lifted
her dark sparkling eyes and smiled; relishing the sense of wholeness she hadn’t been able to feel in
all the years her twin had spent disconnected to the Force.

The night of the incident on Ahch-To Leia had been across the galaxy at a political summit.
She had nearly collapsed when the waves of turmoil, fear, and regret reached her. Several urgent
impressions blared along the connections she had with her brother and son.

Two very different, very distinct messages which haunted her to this day echoed over and over
until they faded into oblivion. Final words which heralded Luke Skywalker’s separation from the
Force, and her son’s journey to the dark side.

“I’m so sorry. I’ve failed him. I was wrong. He’s gone”.

And.
“Ben Solo is dead”.

So many long years had passed since then, and yet Luke appeared before Leia the very image of the man she had seen last nearly 15 years ago.

Brother and sister united in silence. No need for words when they could so easily sense the truth they sought to share. The smile that had reached the corners of Leia’s eyes at the sight of her twin quickly faded as she realized the implications of just what Luke had come to Crait to reveal.

Tears gathered in her eyes as she considered her brother. Slowly he extended his upturned hands at his sides. As sunset reflected off the salt flats the light which streamed through her doorway framed Luke from behind and created a saint like silhouette. The prodigal son returned. The thought made her smile wryly through her sorrow.

It was comforting that he had come to her as the man she remembered, untouched by the past; The reality which had spiraled beyond repair. He beckoned her into his arms, but Leia knew she would never feel the embrace of her brother again. Luke Skywalker had reconnected with the Force for one reason.

To confront himself. And so there he was ready to reach out to Ben one last time, to say goodbye to his sister...to bring hope.

In the fading light of Leia’s office she begins to cry in earnest. A breath away from her twin brother she moves to kiss his cheek. Her gently wrinkled lips never reach their destination. Brushed against the image of Luke she can only sense the energy of his Force signature.

In a galaxy far, far away a crimson teardrop ran into the grizzly beard of Luke Skywalker from his nose. The effort of his Force projection taking a toll across the expanse.

“No one's ever really gone” he whispered.

Luke Skywalker had come to Crait to die.

Chapter End Notes

I'm not crying...you're crying!

The soundtrack for this chapter/scene is "Tiny Little Notes" by Nicholas Kirk
*PLZ listen to it while you read (you may need to play more than once since it is a short song)

If you happen to read at the same rate as me, you will finish this chapter just as the song ends which makes it that much more emotional :(

The song is a composition and isn't overtly sad, but rather soft and sweet at times with melancholic undertones. It has a very nostalgic feel and captures the grief but also the intimacy of this family reunion.

I had originally planned a dialogue filled quip fest between Luke and Leia before getting to all this...but as a little sister with a big bro (ok not a twin but close enough) I feel like
this version of things is much more sentimental and emotional.

I HOPE YOU ENJOYED!!

*Catch me on Tumblr as Nikkinotions* And check out my Spotify playlist "Reylo writing soundtrack" by Nikki Rao*
Chapter Summary

The elevator scene!
Again I have opted for more internal monologue than dialogue. At this point I have used a lot of the lines that were integral to this scene already so I felt it was more important to disclose what is going on in their heads at this point. :)

THANK YOU ALL for reading! Writing and telling this story makes me so happy! I will be doing edits soon to polish up a few things also! As always I really appreciate the comments, kudos, song recommendations, and support!

***This chapter the soundtrack was suggested by user __________. They suggested "Fragile Heart" by Westlife which led me to this song by Leanna Cawford...but I can't find their comment anymore..If it was you let me know!***

Next chapter will feature another song/dedication to the user who suggested it! Stay tuned to see who it is!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

‘What am I doing?’ Ben thought to himself as he watched Rey descend the ramp from his command shuttle into one of the massive hangars of The Supremacy.

She held her head high but kept her gaze locked upon the ground. Ben exhaled deeply as he tried to control his churning emotions. Insecurity, regret, and doubt amongst other things fought for control of him. As his eyes roamed over her down past her arm wraps he found the conflict escalate at the sight of the binders on Rey’s wrists.

For an instant he closed his eyes, but took the moment to meditate deeply. Ben centered himself and remembered his ability to endure. To go on, even if only to spite the odds. He had no plan, no allies, no advantage; and yet there was hope. For the first time in such a very long time he had more than spite to keep him going. There was so much more for him to live for; so much more he would die for...so much more to lose. The thought sent a heavy weight to the pit of his stomach. Fear.

Ben straightened his posture, opened his eyes, and led Rey away from the storm troopers escorting them. As they entered the hyper-lift he dropped the gloved hand he had ghosted along the small of her back. Clasping his hands behind him he took his place beside her after entering a series of codes and allowing the lift to scan his retina.

Ben’s panic crescendoed beautifully as the dark chrome doors closed before them. This was it. Now they waited. He concentrated and used the fear to saturate his own energy in darkness, and to construct walls as unyielding as those around them to shelter the truth.

Suddenly the lift engaged. Ben held his ground, unfazed by the abrupt acceleration and long accustomed to the sensation. Rey on the other hand had only spent time in star destroyers half the
size of *The Supremacy* buried in the sands of Jakku and so she wavered as her eyes darted around the small space.

After a moment her gaze landed upon Ben, a pale towering specter wrapped in shadow. She calmed and tried to take him in unnoticed. Ben’s fair features stood out in contrast to the darkness that embodied every other part of him. Woefully Rey examined the still tender flesh of the scar she had given him on Star-Killer.

‘What have I done?’ Rey thought.

She had seen just how far the mark reached when his chest had been bare. Even now she could imagine where the scar would trail below Ben’s high black collar. Rey was surprised by her urge to trail her fingers along the damaged tissue. From the corded muscle of his shoulder to the freckled skin above his brow.

Some part of Rey foolishly thought that she could heal the wound she had made. Rey had so little experience with touch, she had been so desperate for it for so long, that she supposed there was something magical about it.

‘If I had only known then what I know now’ she thought mournfully. She had been so afraid...Of Kylo Ren, the man who she had just witnessed murder his own father...one of the few kind people she had yet encountered, Han Solo...Of the danger of the planet that had crumbled beneath her...Of herself, and the strange new power that had awakened in her. The blinding light...and the devastating darkness. She had felt like a monster.

Inside Rey laughed bitterly at herself. ‘Monster’. Claiming the title she so often bestowed upon Ben. The accusation she had permanently carved into his face. Guilt soured her stomach at the thought. He dove deep into darkness after Ahch-to, after Plutt had convinced him she was dead, and he had committed terrible acts, but Ben Solo was no monster. Not to her. Not when everyone in his life, even his *family*, had been so sure...so quick to fear him.

‘Not anymore...never again’ Rey thought as she recalled her own cruel memories and the wounded look in Ben’s eyes. A chill ran along Rey’s spine as she looked into his eyes now. Cool, distant, and calculating. So unlike the warmth and feeling she had seen in the hut, or the heat and ferocity when Ben kissed her on his ship. No, these were the eyes he had kept hidden behind another mask. The eyes which had no place upon Ben. These were the eyes of Kylo Ren.

Rey looked ahead quickly and caught sight of her distorted reflection on the durasteel wall of the lift. The image made her think of the cave on Ahch-to, then the comfort she sought from Ben. That moment had been the catalyst of the truth. But knowing...did that change the woman she had become? Did that change the life she spent waiting on Jakku? If not, would she always be nothing more than a scavenger? And would Ben always be the hostage to Kylo Ren? Had he been broken by fate as badly as she? How long would it take to sort their pieces out and see what could be salvaged? See what could heal?

In the reflection of the doors Rey saw Ben’s profile turn to look at her. Quick as a flash of heat lightning in the desert she looked over to see him quietly take her in. In the time it took him to get from her boots to her belt Rey could see the spark of hope she needed. As Ben’s eyes reached hers Rey turned to take a step toward him slowly. Shifting her gaze repeatedly between his full rosey lips and the depths of his mahogany eyes as she rested one of her fettered hands upon his forearm. He looked so young; so vulnerable suddenly. As though there was some magic to touch after all, and hers had transformed Kylo Ren.

“Ben” she breathed gently.
He swallowed hard as his softening glances seemed to memorize every inch of her. Ben parted his lips to speak, but before he could the lift halted. His eye’s darkened, hardened, and faced forward as the doors opened. Rey dropped her bound hands in front of her and clenched her fists reflexively.

In contrast to the world of light and shadow aboard Ben’s command ship, the throne room of Supreme Leader Snoke was awash in blood red. A firm hand returned to the small of her back to gently guide her forward from the elevator. Rey couldn’t help but notice even Ben’s touch was conflicted.

Head held high she stepped out into the hellish light of the throne room. Uncertain of herself and the man beside her, unsure of how long they had, or how damaged they were... Rey clung to one thought...one certainty...one fact...No matter what happened next, Jakku had trained Rey to do two things better than anyone else. The first was to salvage broken things, and the second was to wait.

Chapter End Notes

The soundtrack for this chapter/scene is "Fragile Heart" by Leanna Crawford

*A reader had suggested a song by the same title by Westlife and it led me to this song! For some reason I couldn't find who it was in my comments, so if it was you let me know!

I actually can't find the lyrics anywhere online, but you can listen to it on youtube or on my Spotify playlist "Reylo writing soundtrack" by Nikki Rao ;)

It is a beautiful song, and I have included some of the lyrics that spoke to this part of the story the most!

"The worst of it is over now, the storm becomes the calm
Sun is slipping through the clouds showing me the damage done.
To say that ive been beaten up doesn't even scratch the surface
I'm past the point of acting tough, cause you know how deep my hurt is"

"When a fragile heart finds healing hands, and places numb by pain start to feel again
Where you fall apart becomes where you begin, when a fragile heart finds healing hands"

"I'm sure there will be lessons learned and purpose from the pain,
But right now I don't even have the strength to turn the page"

"All the tears turn into memories, and the chains they fall down at your feet
Right here is where, what was broken now is beautiful, what was ashes now is miracles"

GIVE IT A LISTEN!! IT'S BEAUTIFUL!
Gosh! I am so sorry for the lengthy delay...I really mean it when I say I will be devoting a lot more time to my fic again. I'm just about all moved in and all the furniture I have bought so far is built! Loving my new place, new computer, and the free space I will have to work.

*I HAD ISSUES GETTING MY INDENTATIONS TO WORK SO FORGIVE THE WAY THINGS ARE BUNCHED TOGETHER IN THIS CHAPTER*

This chapter covers some ground between the groups. Leia, Poe, and Nyx/Hux all have cameos this time around. Don't worry REYLO/Throne room "thigh grab" #suckitsnoke is coming up next...I want to get it right, but I promise to crank it out as soon as possible...Honestly I do some of my best work under a deadline so the more pressure the better! (Feel free to comment and bully me for more content anytime...it really helps!)

ALL SOUNDTRACK SONGS/LIST available on Spotify look for Nikki Rao/Reylo writing soundtrack

Thank you as always for the interest and support! <3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Although the First Order base on Crait was primarily a mining and manufacturing facility it was still equipped with a small fleet of scouting and defense ships. At that moment survivors of the chaos that Finn, Rose, and DJ had engineered were either fleeing or fighting back.

Those officers who did retaliate were the cause of the shuddering blows that rocked the bunker of the Resistance base. One by one, closer and closer First Order vessels blanketed the once concealed entrance to the bunker with the heaviest artillery they could find.

By the time the fourth mortar shook dust from the rafters Finn was leading the first small group of Resistance members to escape shuttles.

Amilyn Holdo directed people, supplies, and strategic cover fire with a firm and even tone. One of the many silver bangles which formed gleaming bracers on her delicate wrists chimed as it made contact with the rugged steel frame of a diagnostic transport monitor.

Holdo righted an errant wave of lilac hair that fell limply across her eyes as she began to perspire. On more than one occasion the woman would look up from the screen to evaluate the progress of the evacuation she ordered. A far off look overtook her refined features as she calculated the odds against the reality.

“Never tell me the odds” Leia grinned when Luke passed a projection of Han’s dice to her.

She knotted the small chain that linked the dice with her aching hands. Her aging joints eased suddenly when she clasped the token and closed her eyes. Another piece of her heart called across the Force, a piece she feared gone forever; Han. And Leia smiled.
For a moment she wondered if the tremor she felt was from thunder or the pounding in her chest. Luke’s return to the Force had revived the petrified remains of her heart. Knowing what he planned to do; to sacrifice to heal her son and himself breathed life into her soul. And feeling Han within the Force gave Leia hope. But the General sensed something ominous about the cause of the quake disturbing the bunker once again.

As she looked into her twin’s eyes Leia sighed deeply, with a strange sort of contentment. “I know” she said meaningfully with a wry smile.

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Poe was floating. A pain had strangled every muscle and nerve in his body and left him freer than he had felt in decades. Without much alarm he wondered if perhaps he was dead. Keeping cool, charming, and witty under so much stress had always taken a toll but only now relieved of the weight which bound him to his body he wondered what was worth anchoring himself to. Paige, his Poppy, was gone. Rose, his friend and her little sister, dead. And the Resistance, cornered and scared, was now ready to make its last stand by fleeing. Retreating, only to presumably be shot in the back as they fled into the stars.

Dreamily shuttles and ships streaked across a deep dark sky dotted with constellations. The vessels seemed to wander as weightlessly as Poe along the void. Bright, beautiful lights chased the shadowy silhouettes until meeting one another in the heavens. Darkness and light bloomed into fiery chaos where the two met. The heat and glow of the collision reached Poe from afar until every ship was destroyed by the same violent union of shadow and light. The final canon shots that streaked through the sky like luminous confetti extinguished themselves slowly like the sparking embers cast off by a crackling fire.

In the aftermath Poe stared out into the darkness. The twisted wreckage of dozens of shuttles littered the sky and mangled steel glittered eerily in the starlight. The pilot drew himself deeper into the ruins and squinted as smaller darker specks drifted between the destruction. The nearest star, a small red sun, cast a bright crimson glow across the nearest patch of debris that reflected off of a broad hull panel and illuminated a tableau of static violence.

Closer and closer Poe felt an awareness return to his body. His heart beat harder, his blood pounded, his mouth dried, his limbs became heavier. The Resistance, or what had been left, was scattered amongst the stars; Bodies...Still. Unmoving, unseeing, unfeeling...lifeless.

Suddenly the light reflected from the star was blinding. Staring into the red glow of the steel panel cold terror gripped Poe. The eyes that looked back at his own image were dead and clouded. Ice had formed along his brow where a sheen of sweat should have been. Panic swelled within him. All at once a desperation to live, he thought long gone, emerged as he withdrew and sank from the vision like a stone.

As Poe fell time seemed to unwind like a coiled wire. The galaxy slowly put back together what man had put asunder. Fragments, splinters, bit, bolts, and bodies drifted back together as tiny lights sparked back to life. Fires and explosions shone and shrank back into the darkness. Poe’s stiff and frozen limbs moved once more as he felt himself spin and tumbled back into his pilot’s seat. A beautiful cascade of steel, glass, and flame showered over him as his x-wing reassembled. Powerless he looked on as every other pilot in the Resistance was similarly resurrected. Harder, heavier, and faster until the horizon of light between the darkness of space and the brightness of Crait’s salt flats blinded him.

The light was white hot and Poe felt it course through him, cleansing him, as it burned away the last shadow of fear. Purged at last, a different sort of weight lifted even as he felt his lungs crushed by his backward deceleration towards Crait.

‘I’ll never need to fly again to always be your co-pilot’ the words; the voice...Paige; All at once
seemed to overtake him body and soul.

As powerless to time moving backward as he normally is forward, Poe braced as Amilyn Holdo ordered him to stand down. Her clear voice cutting. He flexed his fingers experimentally and surprisingly they responded to his will. Rapidly losing his grip upon consciousness and this illusion Poe leaned in hard to the left and smiled content with the relief he had unintentionally found as he rolled his ship into the lower atmosphere of the crystalline planet due west toward the Resistance base and the warm light of the setting sun.

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Nyx knew her fair skin would bruise from the punishing grip Hux used. He grasped her throat tight and rested his weight against her back so that she was pressed firmly against the table. As the General thrust angrily she remembered how shocked she was years ago when their bizarre union began.

After the incident with Kylo and the Knights of Ren, Armitage Hux was different. Before that night he intentionally treated Nyx with a cool indifference. He had maintained a special air of aloofness he felt demonstrated his control. But after that fatal night, he knew there would be no pretending; never again.
The injuries Nyx sustained were severe. Even with the best care the First Order could offer it was several weeks before she was well enough to leave the medical bay. When she regained consciousness a shock of tidy flame tresses caught her mismatched eyes.

Hux was sleeping in a chair at the side of her bed. His head bowed forward over the arms he kept tightly crossed over his chest. The nearest medical protocol droid which began examining Nyx, noticed her curiosity.

“The General has monitored your progress diligently Ms.Kryze” the machine offered in a robotic voice.

Nyx blinked repeatedly as if to shake herself from the strangeness of the scene. The appearance of a Twi’Lek’ nurse confirmed the revelation when she noticed Nyx had regained consciousness.

“MD-3!” She tried to shout as she whispered urgently. “Why have you not woken the General?! His instructions have been very clear! Ms. Kryze is awake!” The nurse continued nervously as she began rearranging her Lekku in anxiety.

The woman screwed up her pretty blue face in concentration as she thought about how to proceed.

“Ms. Kryze…” She addressed Nyx in hushed tones.

“Please, call me Nyx” the young Mandalorian implored.

The nurse thought for a moment but seemed to decide against the request as she continued speaking as she eyed Hux sleeping.

“Ms. Kryze, General Hux has been very attentive during your recovery. He gave very specific instructions as to your care. Including updates on your status and the protocol to follow when you awoke. He would be very irate if he discovered you came to while he fell asleep for what I assure is the first time.” the nurse reasoned.

Nyx could connect the proverbial dots easily enough. She didn’t want Hux to reassign this nurse or dismantle a hapless med-droid because she had woken unexpectedly.

“I think I follow what you are implying” Nyx nodded towards the sleeping man. “I’m still quite sore…and tired. I see no reason I couldn’t lay back down awhile…perhaps rest my eyes until the general has woken up”. Nyx finished the hint off with a comically unsubtle wink.

Somehow the nurse’s green complexion seemed less sickly as she helped Nyx lay back again in the bed. The offending droid rolled away none the wiser into the next room to see to it’s next patient.

At some point while Nyx was meditating and cataloging each of the singular pains which still
ached throughout her body, Hux stirred beside her. The young man gained his bearings quickly and after a brief examination of the room returned his sights to Nyx.

The shift she had been changed into during her stay in the medical bay revealed more of her porcelain skin than usual. On a given day Nyx preferred a high necked black undershirt, a sharp looking fitted black jacket with grosgrain piping, and black trousers. The entire ensemble was equipped with several pockets and zippered areas for the tools she built her weapons with. First Order issued boots and a pair of black utility gloves completed her customary attire and ensured there was hardly ever an inch of skin showing.

Now the thin grey material of the shift barely whispered above her snow white skin. Hux stared openly and raked his eyes over her bare arms, chest, and legs as if he were committing every fading bruise to memory.

Nyx shifted nervously; Blind and vulnerable to the intensity of his gaze. Even with her eyes closed she knew full well she was being scrutinized from the moment he woke which prompted her decision to finally stir. As she moved slowly she heard Hux clear his throat quietly and adjust his collar and gloves, a tell she knew well from their years together. She couldn’t imagine what had him feeling anxious.

As Armitage looked down upon Nyx he felt a strange sensation wash over him. A feeling which seemed to electrify, chill, and warm all at once. He was grateful they were already in the medical bay for when she opened her eyes the peculiar wave transformed into a tingling throughout his body.

Her deep, dark, red hair was mussed. He noted that would need tending to immediately as he lingered on her mismatched eyes. One silver-grey like the moon, the other black as a starless night sky. As if unchanged by the horror she had managed to survive, her eyes blinked back bright, innocent, and somber as ever.

“Armie…” Nyx began.

Hux was startled by the effect her voice had upon him. She had spent a good deal of time sedated as she healed from her injuries. He had grown accustomed to their conversations, her questions, the comments she made under his tutelage; and after so long denied her company Hux found himself moved by the sound of his own name. Albeit a nickname.

Nyx’s lengthy recovery had given Hux a lot of time to contemplate the moment she would return to him. And yet no amount of strategics had prepared him for this.

Without a care for propriety, protocol, or pretense Hux lunged forward from his chair. One hand grasped Nyx’s neck while the other settled against her cool cheek, and as he pressed himself close enough to feel the reassuring rise and fall of breath in her breast, Armitage Hux deeply kissed Nyx Kryze with an intent and purpose he had never known before.

Chapter End Notes

THOUGHTS?

I promise juicy REYLO time is coming up next!

This chapter I listened to quite a few songs. The moods and scenes differ a lot. For Leia and Poe I listened mostly to classical/movie scores that had melancholic yet sweet melodies. And for our Armityx...(or maybe I should refer to them as Krux?)...I listened to "Holding on (acoustic)" by FYFE

The title of the song ended up suiting the entire chapter too
These lyrics from the song went through my mind in particular:

"I thought I heard you calling up my name
Climbing ups on Michael's tower again
And it seems like we're two worlds apart

Trust me, you never know it's special 'till it's gone,
We're not holding on for nothing and please believe me
Far away from where we start our fun,
But we're not holding on for nothing!
Please keep holding on, and on and on and on and on and on
Please keep holding on, holding on, and on and on and on and on and on and on.

I called again, but you're not there
So stand alone where you'd last went,
I hope that this message finds you well
Standing out across the clouds with friends
So spending thirty thousand feet again
I wish you could see that this might tear me down"
Chapter Summary

Everyone has been so quiet! Leave me a comment so I know y'all are still out there!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE!

I feel like I'm getting back into the flow of things, please let me know what day you would prefer I post my updates also!

This chapter develops Rey and Ben further as characters. I'm a sucker for details, backstory, and layering in memories. Moments like these are the juicy bits that create the characters we know and love...at least in my mind!

I hope you enjoy! NOTES AT THE END AS ALWAYS

*IF YOU WANT TO LISTEN ALONG AS YOU READ THIS CHAPTER'S SOUNDTRACK IS "SPIEGEL IM SPIEGEL" BY ARVO PART*
It is instrumental so don't worry there are no spoilers! But I highly recommend listening to it as you read!

*CHAPTER SOUNDTRACKS AVAILABLE ON SPOTIFY: NIKKI RAO/REYLO WRITING SOUNDTRACK

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Snokes's throne room on The Supremacy was overwhelming. The massive space was minimally furnished and as a result made Rey feel as though she had fallen into the hollowed void of some wreck on Jakku. As Ben pressed her forward into the cavernous space Rey thought back to the frightful time she spent alone and broken at the bottom of an Imperial cargo ship.

***

She had been about 12 years old. Rey had been on Jakku a few years and other scavengers took note of how resilient, resourceful, and solitary she was. Some respected her, others pitied her, and Tito... well he saw an opportunity.

The diminutive Jawa followed Rey to the crash site. The cargo ship was much farther out than the wrecks most scavengers searched and presented him with the ideal environment to ambush her.

Tito planned to force Rey into servitude. He wanted to take the profits himself and pass along just enough resources to keep her alive. If the whelp refused to scavenge he knew she was not far from developing enough for him to sell off to Unkar Plutt. Either way...Pure profit.

Rey was prying open a hidden panel near the center of the ship. The Durasteel was unmarked. No scratches or blaster marks. Her instincts told her that the hidden cargo would still be stashed inside. Just as the panel gave way with a satisfying pop Rey felt the telltale prongs of a
Jawa’s electric prod at the base of her neck.

“KRİFF!” The young girl cursed loudly without turning. “If you had dibbs on this loot Tito you could have just said!”

The silence was such that Rey could still make out the sounds of Jakku’s winds whipping at the ragged hole blasted in the side of the ship 50 feet overhead.

“S’just a few bottles of Mandalorian Mead.” She revealed. “Decent payday. I’m sure some Imperial dunce thought he was clever hiding it here…Care to split the bounty?”

In that moment something in the air seemed to charge. Whether it was the electric prod or something else Rey was uncertain, but she was sure she had to move.

The small creature fell forward and an arch of electricity connected with and scorched the metal panel Rey had just been crouching in front of.

“Kriffing Hell Tito!” Rey cried as she backed away from the Jawa.

All at once she understood as Tito turned away from the hidden hold with the liquor inside and removed a pair of binders from his brown hooded cloak. She was the bounty.

Rey stepped back and realized no small corridors connected to this alcove and the position of the ship created a hollow vertical atrium where the main hold of the cargo was kept. Nothing but a vacant open space, a void she teetered on the edge of as she panicked.

Tito took small leisurely steps towards Rey as he opened the binders. His glowing amber eyes were all that she could see in the darkness. Eyes that seemed to mock her as the Jawa glanced from the drop off, to the binders, and back to Rey.

If Tito’s intent had been to force Rey into making a decision…he had done just that. Although it was hardly the decision he was expecting. Without another moment of hesitation, she launched herself from the edge and into the wide open space behind her.

Rey knew gripping the wall closest to her would do no good since it was the cold, smooth, dark tile Imperial ships always had lining their floors. Instead she quickly tried to use her staff to catch in a radiator, control panel, anything that would halt her dizzying dissent into the bowels of the ship.

About 20 feet down the staff caught on a vent and Rey was flung towards to the wall. The impact was hard and it didn’t take a med droid to know her shoulder had been dislocated. Tito swore loudly and though she wasn’t yet fluent she heard something about “Crazy human, suit yourself, and I’ll find your bones someday”.

This far down the darkness pressed in on Rey from every direction. No light reached this place. There was no way of knowing how much farther there was to fall, but she could hear the light weight metal of her staff beginning to groan.

Despite the dark Rey closed her eyes as she tried to somehow hide from the world around her. She closed her eyes to the dark, to the danger, to the loneliness and despair. The smallest part of a child left within her wanted to cry out against it all, in search of love, in search of help, in search of home. But even the child within her knew no one would come looking, no arms waited to embrace her, and home was an overturned AT-AT picked clean by scavengers like her and the unforgiving winds of Jakku.
And with that, a piece of metal shrieked and snapped... And Rey fell.

Even after the dark stopped rushing past her, even after the snap of her ankle, and even after the scratch of the metal grate against her cheek when she collapsed... Rey felt as though she was still falling.

Alone and broken she somehow fell deeper into the darkness of the hull. Unaware of how much time had passed or how much longer she could last before she lost consciousness Rey did not hear a voice, but rather felt one within herself...” You’re not alone”.

Rey was in a dire position. Miles away from a lifeform of any kind, let alone one willing to help. And yet the darkness that pressed upon her lifted slightly. The voice, perhaps another reason she was rejected and left behind, was a strange but welcome companion. A voice she was grateful for when weakness consumed her. When she cried herself to sleep, when her skin blistered under the merciless sun, when her hunger and lonesome misery left a hole inside her no ration could ever fill. The voice reassured her as much as it seemed to convince itself of the affirmations.

Rey had spent 3 days and 3 nights at the bottom of that cargo ship. 3 whole days lifting herself from the endless darkness of its depths. It was night on the 3rd day when she limped into the arid but bitter night breeze. Shivering against the cold and the strain of her injuries. She had fashioned a crude splint for her ankle out of scrap metal and one of her arm wraps, popped her shoulder back in place as she threw herself repeatedly against a sealed steel door, and bolstered herself with a measured swig of the Mandalorian Mead she retrieved on her way out. There was no telling how long these injuries would impede her and Rey wasn’t about to turn away a pay day because of what had happened. When she returned to town the rations she received for the mead would have to last. Tomorrow the sun would still scorch, Niima outpost would still bustle with barter and trade, and Rey would inevitably be hungry.

***

As Rey shuffled forward deeper into the cavernous throne room she steeled herself with the voice inside she knew so well, the voice which she now knew just happened to belong to the man at her back. Ben Solo.

Kylo Ren, though terrible, broken, and dark had served to keep Ben Solo alive for more than a decade. If it hadn’t been for the caustic hope he secretly clung to, the mocking dream that fueled his pain and rage, the prayer that ate away at him for nearly 15 years that he would reunite with Rey; Ben would have withered away into dust back on Jakku.

Ben took powerful strides behind Rey deeper into the throne room. Intentionally walking into the den of the twisted creature that had deformed his soul and turned his own mind against him after the fateful trip he had made to Rey’s home world years ago.

Snoke had never been foolish enough to believe that Ben Solo did not want him dead. He knew the boy resisted his teachings. But Kylo Ren, was exactly the malleable, unhinged, and unstable apprentice he had sought. When Ben Solo returned as the Dark Prince he yearned for, more powerful than ever before, he manipulated the opportunity and the objective the young man once possessed into a purpose which served the First Order implicitly. Snoke convinced the grieving youth that using his power to fuel the greatest weapon of the First Order, imbued Kyber crystals, he
could force wastelands like Jakku into stability and prosperity. That taking power, demanding change, and removing choice was the only path to peace. And so Kylo Ren was delivered his calling.

Ben kept his eyes forward. Staring at nothing, and everything at the same time as the room surrounded them and shadow and blood consumed his vision. The moment ‘the girl’ returned Ben Solo had been resurrected. But now he and Rey needed Kylo Ren more than ever if they were to survive.

In moments he was upon the familiar spot where he bowed on bended knee to the Supreme Leader. Rey stopped only a few steps ahead; meters away from Snoke. A sick feeling roiled within him. Ben lowered his gaze struggling to focus and redirect the thoughts he knew would soon be laid bare to the decrepit wretch.

Ben gazed into his own eyes. In the darkness an echo stared back, a reflection in the polished black floor of the imposing throne room. As he locked away thought and purged all feeling, a memory provided resolve.

***

A mother in politics and a father in smuggling birthed a particular set of insecurities, but one perk little Ben Solo was fond of were the sights of the galaxy. For one thing never spending much time in one place meant the eccentric child didn’t have to worry about his problems socializing, and for another meant he didn’t have to witness the fallout when his abilities inevitably wreaked havoc.

An isolated trip to Csilla in the Unknown Regions with Han Solo was called to mind by the dark reflection of the black marble. Since Han had taken his son with him to give Leia a reprieve Ben roamed alone in one of the subterranean ice halls the Chiss inhabited. Han’s logic maintained that without a ship the five-year-old could only get so far.

The blue skin and bright red eyes of the other children intrigued Ben and since the Chiss normally preferred to trade, mate, and socialize with their own kind the appearance of a humanoid and his tiny progeny meant the feeling was mutual. After a few hours comparing, contrasting, talking, and playing Ben, ever the introvert, needed time to himself and a good nap. Chiss children, and adults, as a result of their atmosphere and physiology were stronger and rarely fatigued and so the other children shrugged at the dark circles under Ben’s eyes as he wandered off.

The deeper into the glacial tunnel system, heated by the core of Csilla, little Ben ventured the warmer it became. His fleshy fists rubbed at his blinking eyes after he arrived in a pleasantly temperate cave tucked away in a corridor that led to a residential area of Csaplar. Ben yawned as he ran his pale fingers over the glossy ice of the cavern. A gentle humming sound lured him deeper into sleep’s embrace, and a moment later the child was curled up on the floor.

Ben felt weightless. The impression of warmth and quiet surrounding him. Not far off he could sense the familiar light which always seemed to find him. An energy that, though foreign, he was inherently drawn towards. In the presence of this light Ben could feel the Force gather around and within himself stronger than ever. His awareness of something greater than just him, another piece of a larger puzzle, became clearer. As Ben’s small voice reached out towards his glowing counterpart a terrible crack cut through the air. Images gently flooded him. An island surrounded by sapphire seas appeared, rain, darkness, light, belonging, the grey and green isle was a cycle of growth and decay, a man and a woman stood side by side, strong forces pulled and pushed inside the pair, but together the Force seemed to sing at the balance of their union. Another violent crack sounded and severed Ben’s restful meditation.
Ben was still weightless, but now found himself submerged in deep rushing water. While he had slept the warm waters that passed underneath the floor of the cave wore down the ice and gave way beneath him.

Before he could regain his bearings Ben was swept under the surface and beneath a new patch of unbroken ice. A flash of panic helped brace him against the chill of the water, but he was quickly losing control of his body. Deep within such a cold, unfeeling, and lifeless glacier Ben struggled to connect with and use the Force. The lack of oxygen fatigued his muscles and the little strength he had waned as he beat against the shiny blue ice.

Ben’s fingers reverently ran over the bright blue glacial ice; smooth as glass; reflecting a faint image of himself slowly drowning. The unique mineral content of the planet gave the ice cavern, like the Chiss, a singular appearance. ‘Peculiar and ultimately dangerous, just like him’. The thought seemed to open up a cavernous void inside his heart. A pit that felt to deep and dark to ever fill. The last of Ben’s air escaped him in large roiling bubbles as he pressed and focused his might against the barrier separating life from death.

Darkness slowly began fading into the corners of his vision. The reflection of his big brown eyes bluring as he faded. Distantly he heard a man make a cruel noise of disappointment. It seemed the stranger who would visit his thoughts would offer no help. His father wouldn’t notice he was missing until dinner, and his mother was across the galaxy. If he hadn’t been surrounded by water Ben would have felt tears run along his pale cheeks instead of just a sting at the corner of his eyes.

His young life had never been easy. Sleep often escaped him, and when he did find rest a mysterious man demanded his attention. His mother and father misunderstood him. People feared him. He feared himself.

Even at the tender age of five, Ben wondered if dying would be easier. He figured the next step would be uncertain, but welcome. Pain, loneliness, fear, rejection would all be left behind. Perhaps returning to the Force would mean finding the light which always consoled him…but then again, perhaps not.

The thought of that special light and the prospect that he may be separated from it rallied Ben’s will to survive. Something in him called out for the light; his voice suddenly stronger and certain.

‘Mine’.

 Barely any light reached Ben under the blue-ish ice but he felt an illuminating energy fill him. Pressing his small hands against the frozen ground above him, Ben urged it away. The brightness within him caught quickly and grew from a glow to a searing inferno. As an ancient part of the Force connected the light Ben knew with the voice he had suddenly found, small fissures formed within the ice.

Ben felt his small form shudder as he struggled to stay conscious. The voice within him bellowed and keened in rage, agony, and desperation. The light radiated urgently and burned with an intensity that should have melted the hull of the Falcon and yet the tiny fractures split no further.

Just as he gasped, just as a rush of frigid water rushed his burning lungs, just as Ben was ready for this fateful light to consume him, just as the voice within him broke…a beat sounded from the other side. A blow that thrust a mighty pulse through the ice and into the very soul of the dying boy beneath.

The first strike had broken the knuckles on Leia’s right hand, the second those on her left.
Frantically she tried to aim her fists at the cracks Ben had undoubtedly formed. Leia wished she were disciplined enough to summon the power Luke helped her harness. Her throat tightened painfully cursing herself for denying her birthright; The Force, which connected all things except her and her baby at this moment.

Leia had spent one sleepless night on Chandrilla before she followed after Han and Ben. Hours after touching down on Csilla she had felt a disturbance from her boy. Fine clothes be damned she had sprinted through the snowy tunnels of Csaplar following a voice and a light to the cave where she beat her fists bloody into the unyielding ice.

She pushed through the pain straight into numbness as she thrust her unfeeling knuckles into the floor of the cavern. Seconds felt like traveling on a sub-light freighter across the entire galaxy. Within moments Leia was throwing herself bodily against the frozen barrier, and in an instant the ice gave way.

Instinctively her hands pushed through the jagged shards of ice, blood, and water towards her son. Leia clutched Ben to her chest convinced that if she could hold him she could heal him. That if she kept him close he could not go far. And though Leia was not right, she was not completely wrong.

Big brown eyes, more soulful than any five-year old’s should be, blinked up at her as Ben coughed up water. The boy regained his bearings quickly and hardly spared a moment before wriggling from his mother’s concerned grasp. His efforts disturbed her injured hands and Ben stepped back as his mother winced.

“I’ve had worse scraps at Senate hearings sweetheart” Leia tried to convince Ben as he stared at her broken and bloodied fists.

“I-I-I’m sor-” Ben began before Leia stopped him.

“Don’t you dare Benjamin Solo. This! Is not your fault” Leia chided softly as she pulled Ben back into her arms.

“Do you hear me?” she whispered nuzzling his big cold ears.

“Hard not to with these satellites” Ben countered.

“Wha? Ben! Who said your ears are…?” Leah fumed before her son quickly answered.

“Han” Ben pouted.

“Your father” Leia grit as she packed ice into her pockets to soothe her hands on the walk back. “Your father is the only smuggler who’s never managed to grasp trash talk. But never you mind Benny. You’ll grow into your big ears, but your father hasn’t managed yet to catch up with his big mouth!”

A giggle peeled from Ben at this before he took to shivering violently. Ben was big for his age but that didn’t help the fact he stood dripping wet in an ice cave.

Leia swathed Ben in her big black over cloak and he grasped her pointer finger as they exited the cave. Absent mindedly Ben’s small fingers toyed with the blue Corellian pearl ring she wore. Less a pearl and more a small spherical amalgamation of chemical, organic, and metallurgical materials from the ship building planet Han hailed from; Now a bifurcated symbol of the danger and vulnerability of her little boy. Leia cringed at the memory of how the bead was rent in two and the possibility that her son, like this pearl, may never be whole again.
She wondered how she would pull the ring from her contorted hands later that night, or if bacta could heal the damage she had done to her bones. The initial pain had turned to numbness and now the numbness to a dull aching pain that throbbed with each step. Her fingers, joints, and knuckles would certainly never be the same, and somehow she knew neither would Ben.

“Mama?” Ben asked with concern.

Leia released a heavy sigh and smirked at her boy “Nothing to worry about Benny boy, I’m just gonna kill your father” she teased with cool indifference.

She can’t tell if it’s the cold but Ben tenses. His lips are slightly blue around the edges and he stutters as he shivers and responds “N-n-not if I kill him first”.

***

The gruesome irony of his words as a child made something within Ben ache, but it wasn’t long before his attention was called to the fear and disdain Rey was broadcasting loud and clear as Snoke inspected her.

Suspended like a puppet Rey strained and struggled for control against the Supreme Leader. His beady eyes lacked light or soul and she recoiled in disgust as such a manipulative creature reached for her.

Snoke taunted and teased, poked and prodded, belittled and berated Rey until finally he coax ed the darkness out of her. It wasn’t the threat of pain or the assurance of death that lured the shadows from within her, but the promise that the Resistance, her only family, would suffer.

At that moment the oculus in the throne room magnified a massive explosion on the surface of Crait, and Snoke began to cackle.


Rey’s mind was awash with violent designs and vengeful words with one vow shining through.

“I’ll kill him” she thought.

As Ben closed off the last bond he could feel between he and Rey, before Snoke breached his mind, before Kylo Ren emerged once more; he delighted in the sweet irony his thoughts would bring to fruition.

“Not if I kill him first”.

Chapter End Notes

The soundtrack for this chapter is "Spiegel Im Spiegel" By Arvo Part (Angele Dubeau & La Pieta)

PLEASE GIVE THIS ONE A LISTEN AS WELL! (This song makes the shortlist for sure on my Reylo playlist)

This song is an instrumental piece and is perfection for almost any Ben/Rey memory. It
is a nostalgic melancholic sob fest. If you ever need to have a good cry put on this 8+ minute song and contemplate your sorrows...you'll be bawling in no time!

But in all seriousness it is a beautiful song and fits well with the tone of the chapter.

CHAPTER 50 WILL BE A DOOZY! I CANT WAIT TO START DIGGING INTO IT! 50 WILL BE A REAL CLIMAX TO THE STORY (AS IN THE MOVIE) SO I WANT IT TO BE A MILESTONE...EXPECT IT TO BE LONG...EVEN LONGER THAN THIS CHAPTER...AND IT WILL FEATURE SEVERAL SCENE JUMPS BETWEEN INTERSECTING STORYLINES THAT ARE DRAWING TOGETHER AT THE SAME TIME....SOOOOO EXCITED!
Chapter Summary

THIS IS IT
BIG OL’ CHAPTER 50!

I honestly cut a bit off the end because I couldn't make you lovely folks wait any longer! There are a few more juicy scenes with loads of feels I was going to include in this milestone...but they can wait...I have to have a few things left up my sleeve to lead us up to the conclusion!

*As always enjoy and please reach out! But be kind...I do have a fairly odd style...And I tend to free write. I don't edit or correct. It comes out as is...Once I finish the entire story I will go back and do 1 massive edit...but that's all folks*

On Spotify I now have a chapter 50 playlist and am building a Episode IX playlist (Spotify:Nikki Rao)

**Also please don't hate me for the turn this takes...It's a theory I've long had...one I find very intriguing...indulge me!**

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Despite her cosmopolitan looks Vice Admiral Amilyn Holdo was not born into a life of privilege or opulence. Her home world was Gatalenta, a serene planet known for its tea, emotional intelligence, and conservative values.

In her youth Amilyn joined the apprentice legislature as a way to expand her horizons and her mind. The more she saw of the galaxy the more the solitary, though peaceful, life of Gatalenta frustrated the eccentric young woman.

Rejecting the austere lifestyle of her isolationist home Amilyn dyed her hair vibrant colors and dressed to match in protest of her excessively passive roots. After Poe had been incapacitated they lost visual on the scout ship of the First Order base. All was still and the Resistance bolstered themselves amid the calm before the storm.

While Leia retired to her office to meditate and reflect, Amilyn instructed the small group who accompanied her to Crait along with the survivors of D’Qar. Afterwards she was drained and retreated to a decommissioned medical room deep within the bunker.

Her long slender fingers disturbed the decades of dust that had settled upon every surface. She sleepily watched the motes dance in the artificial lights which flickered as they activated for the first time in ages. In the far back above a small basin was a mirror. With great care Amilyn cleared the grime covering the glass with her palms. She examined the muck on her hands happily and looked up into the reflection of her clear blue eyes. It had been a long time since she had gotten her hands dirty.
It hadn’t been a bad life on Gatalenta, but it had never been the life she wanted. Amilyn had always admired her homeworld’s zero tolerance stance on slavery, but could not abide their inability to assist the Rebellion in her youth against the Empire.

Now. At the end of all things. At the edge of the known universe, on the desolate salt flats of Crait; The wisdom of her years cleared her vision of the past. A slurry of rust colored filth circled the drain as she rinsed her hands. ‘So much blood’ she thought woefully. Her thoughts wandered to the red capes of her people’s stark garb. Such an ironically bold choice for a society that abstained from violence.

The water ran clear and she pressed cold wet hands against her pulse points. The delicate flush which had risen in her cheeks subsided. For the first time she wondered when time had given her the features of her age. She wondered when she started seeing through the eyes of her enemy, and why she had never stopped. There was a lesson lightyears away on Gatalenta she now knew she missed. More than thirty years gone by and she still felt like a girl on a long journey with the apprentice legislature. A long journey far from home, far from peace, but perhaps…not so far from over.

DJ retreated to the back of the shuttle. Away from the others, away from Finn and a still unconscious Poe, and as far away from reality as possible. As he sunk upon a cushioned bench he took a long pull from a flask hidden in his overcoat’s inner pocket. The strange slurry of spirits inside calmed some of the more persistent thoughts which raced through his mind.

His instincts had been to take the money and run. The instinct which had kept him alive for nearly three decades. The instinct which kept his belly full and his head on his shoulders. The vagrant took another long pull when his thoughts turned dark and he pictured Rose’s lifeless decapitated body still amongst the ruins of the First Order hanger.

“Don’t Join” he sighed aloud as Finn and another Resistance member carefully laid Poe down in the ship. DJ still remembered the day he enlisted. The day that inspired the only persona or piece of advice a man like him had any right to dole out. The moment, the source, the root of all ills which birthed a far reaching series of consequences and tragedies not only for himself, but the entire galaxy.

He still remembered; and so DJ drank until his flask was empty and the shuttle was full. He drank until the tides of war would shift again, he drank until he could forget.

Nyx stood beside Hux as they stared at the surface of Crait from the bridge of The Supremacy. The crystalline world looked like a small grey pearl from the distance and she admired its beauty before another series of explosions marred its terrain.

From the corner of her eyes she noted Hux’s shift in position. No news from the ground was not good news. Could it be that the Resistance had gained the upper hand?

“Orders sir?” Nyx cut in suddenly.

Hux was shaken from his anxious thoughts.

"Standby Kryze. Dispatch no tie fighters”. He responded tersely.

Several officers turned toward their leaders in confusion.
“Sir, we will not be able to give chase should they decide to run. We need another hour at least to finish refueling The Supremacy”. A painfully shy navigator offered.

“There will be no chase”. Hux responded coldly. “We put them down when they flee. The First Order’s failure ends here. There will be no parlay, no surrender, no quarter” he continued with alarming vigor. “The Resistance dies today. End of.”

“Well well…such spunk!” Supreme Leader Snoke rasped as Rey lifted her chin and fixed him with a decidedly pointed glare. A spiteful smirk flashed across her face before she scowled again.

The decrepit man preferred his pupils to have a touch of madness. A rebellious streak which kept them spontaneous and unhinged, but he had no tolerance for disobedience. Rey’s nearly imperceptible demonstration of dissent earned her a force grip unlike anything she had ever experienced.

Ben had used the Force to immobilize her before, especially on Takodana, but she saw in that moment that he had used a level of skill and care that Snoke purposely lacked.

In an instant Rey felt as though her skin and bone had turned to glass. All at once she was rigid, vulnerable, and fragile. She felt as though a strange frequency passed through her and overwhelmed every sense and movement she made to regain control. Where Ben’s influence had been strange and unexpected, Snoke’s manipulation was domineering and painful.

A violent spasm traveled through her muscles when the Supreme Leader decided he was done enjoying her anguish and wanted to continue.

“Look here, now” he snapped as he repositioned Rey flinging her like a mistreated puppet before the Oculus across the throne room.

“The entire Resistance is on those transports” he continued as tiny blinking beacons of light emerged from the smoke and destruction of Crait’s surface. “Soon they will all be gone. For you all is lost”.

Tears brimmed Rey’s eyes and the little lights of dozens of shuttles doubled before her as her vision blurred. Her sorrow took hold and the tragic kaleidoscope continued as a pulse burst forth from The Supremacy.

The warning shot which evaluated the range of the Resistance burst not far from the lead ship. The scene was basked in a threatening red glow and Rey cringed. Something deep within her was unsettled by the nightmarish flare. She thought back to the way she’d flinched at the sight of Ben’s saber. The fury she channeled when their blades crossed on Star-Killer. But in this moment a new but much older memory was disturbed by the blast and the unnerving familiarity of it.

Rey struggled against the Force. Something feral within her reacted with the instinct of a cornered animal. With all her might she reached out for her saber. The one Ben had brought and placed before Snoke.

The silver hilt flashed through the air. Ben’s years of experience allowed him to narrowly escape a blow to the head as he ducked and avoided the weapon. His eyes woefully returned to the floor as the saber continued along just out of Rey’s grasp and struck her mercilessly before returning to Snoke’s gnarled hands.

“Oh! Still that fiery spit of hope!” he laughed cruelly as his knotted hands mockingly applauded Rey’s efforts.
“Such spirit…like that of a true Jedi…and because of that, you must die” Snoke vowed.

But Rey had stopped listening some time ago. The scarlet warning shot that had illuminated the shadows of her mind, awoke something dark and terrible. And the slow, persistent, demeaning clap of Snoke’s twisted hands, angered it.

They had clapped.

They clapped, snapped, and whistled at her frequently. From their guess she was about seven or eight now. For all they knew it could have been another kid, and for all they cared…it didn’t matter.

She was bigger now, and the strangeness she had as a babe seemed gone, but her birth parents couldn’t help wondering what good years of Jedi training were if she couldn’t earn her keep on Jakku. If that stupid boy and his kriffing uncle brought back a softened youngling, they would only have another mouth to feed.

On more than one occasion they ditched her at an outpost outside of Niima, or a crash site somewhere remote. All in the hopes she would be found by others weaker and more foolishly compassionate, or that the natural order of things on Jakku would play out and she would die quickly lost among the scorching dunes. It was just the way of things.

Time and again the girl marched her way back to Niima. Heartbroken, sunburnt, and sad.

Rey remembered her last journey back…she thought she remembered something…

“Come back!” little Rey wailed again into the sky. Sunlight burned her searching eyes and Plutt’s grip bruised her arm.

“No! Come back!” Her sorrow was painful. Her desperation palpable. Her fear metallic on her tongue. Her fury electric in her veins.

::BOOM::

::BOOM::

A second blast from The Supremacy made impact with a defenseless Resistance vessel. The shot rocked Rey from her memories and she almost swore she felt the heat from the explosion caress her cheek as Snoke wrenched her across the throne room.

Yes. Rey remembered something. Something that returned to her when she held Luke’s saber for the first time. Something that brought tears to her eyes and a darkness into her heart that she wanted to put back into the old chest hidden away in Maz’s castle. Something that Ben once touched, but Snoke now disturbed deeply.

RED.

“CLOSER” Snoke bellowed.

The Supreme Leader dragged Rey’s tense frame before him. Ben was all too familiar with the
torturous dance he was leading her in. Snoke’s mangled fingers traced along the warmth rising in Rey’s cheek.

“Yes, there it is…Darkness rises…and light to meet it. I warned my apprentice that as his power grew stronger…his equal in the light would rise…Yes, I had assumed Skywalker…Wrongly. Hmm yes…Something always laid beyond his power” Snoke drawled as he let his eyes close in concentration.

“It is you” Snoke smirked as his bloodshot eyes snapped open.

Ben and Rey collectively recoiled as the words were drawn from their memory.

Suddenly Rey was thrust back and up into the air. Suspended between the throne and where Ben knelt before it. The pain of Snoke manipulating her body was nothing compared to the agony of him probing her mind. Her back arched and she ground her teeth as every fiber of her seared. She cried out with the effort of resisting the invasion and the blinding anguish.

“Now now…Before you die, you will give me Skywalker! He may not be a match for Kylo Ren, but if Skywalker lives, the seed of the Jedi order lives. I’m certain you know where the fool is headed next. No doubt running coward since my apprentice retrieved you…Oh but you still don’t understand though, not truly…” Snoke mused.

Rey was suspended. She balanced on the precipice of so many things. Light, dark, hope, despair, belonging, rejection, understanding, and uncertainty; The list went on. Incapable of breaking Snoke’s hold Rey willed her gaze to turn.

“Ben” She pleaded as her eyes settled upon the familiar, but unwelcome intensity of Kylo Ren.

A sickly thud announced that Rey had been released and Ben winced at the sight and sound as she laid beaten on the floor. His fists clenched at his sides as he fixed his gaze on his saber before him.

Rey stirred and the Supreme Leader scoffed.

“You underestimate Luke Skywalker…And Ben Solo…And me!” Rey declared defiantly.

Somehow Rey found the strength to right herself and rise to her feet. Snoke laughed mirthlessly and she bared her teeth reaching towards Ben and calling his saber to her. The weapon flitted into her grasp and she ignited it with ease.

The bold, bright, red blade crackled violently and Ben was in awe. He had supposed since Star-Killer that the bond they shared enabled Rey to call to his grandfather’s saber, a relic now entrenched in light sider history, but to call to the fractured heart of the monstrous lightsaber he wielded, was a power beyond his greatest expectations. She was a fearsome vision of survival and might, scarlet light ablaze in her eyes.

As the guards moved to circle Rey…Snoke, like a true predator, sensed blood in the water, one last weakness he needed to root out. Eyes trained on Rey, Snoke continued relishing his own brutality.

“Oh, have you seen something?” he asked feigning surprise. “A weakness in my apprentice?...Is that why you came?”

A flash of panic tore through Ben’s veins. ‘Had he been careless, had Snoke seen?’.

“You will give me Skywalker!” Snoke ordered before dropping his voice to I whisper. “Then I will kill you…with the cruelest stroke”.
"YOUNG FOOL…GIVE ME…EVERYTHING!" Snoke spat at Rey as he delivered a bolt of Force lightning that threw her back and onto the ground before Ben’s boots. His weapon flung from her limp hands scittering across the hard floor.

Ben no longer cared about the odds; he became well acquainted with failure over the years. But he knew there was only one chance left. Snoke had always encouraged his wrath, he foolishly dismissed Ben’s fits of rage presuming incorrectly that they were born from a desire to take his master’s place.

‘Six Praetorian guards, and Snoke’ he thought to himself not for the first time. The elite guard were formidable. Their technique relied upon fighting as a pair, and so no one who faced them in mortal combat lived to tell the tale. However, the Supreme Leader’s apprentice had the benefit of studying their style during grueling bouts of relentless sparring. And though no one adversary had triumphed, he was certain that two could disrupt the warriors’ equilibrium.

Rey slowly regained her senses as an eerie and unnerving sound grated through the air. Closer and louder until she saw the well-worn hilt of Kylo Ren’s saber scrape across the black marble floor until it stilled before Ben who kneeled, head bowed; waiting.

Throughout life Rey had found herself in some tough spots. Whether it was quick thinking, luck, Ben’s voice, or The Force itself…she had always managed to get by. But in the throne room a devastating silence encircled her. A moment when doubt threatened to suffocate her.

‘You are not alone’ she desperately tried telling herself, recalling a moment that perhaps changed everything.

“It was I who bridged your minds!” Snoke thundered and broke the silence sharply.

Ben took a deep steadying breath as he looked up from under his brow and the curtain of dark tresses he hid behind. He looked up at the aged leader from bended knee. Ben’s gaze charged with a mixture of hatred and insecurity.

‘LIAR!!’ he thought fiercely, anger rising as he fought against sorrow. ‘From the very start…she had always been there. Before she could have even been born the connection was there…and SNOKE!!...NO! That had been so much later…so long after…although…he had been…he had been so young…a child’ Ben’s mind raced anxiously as he swallowed hard glaring up at the man. ‘NO’ he thought repeatedly trying to smother his doubts; reassure his spirit.

“I stoked Ren’s conflicted soul. I knew he was not strong enough to hide it from you” Snoke resumed.

At that breathing became very difficult and Ben was certain, if a capable heart still beat in his chest, he felt it break. With great pain he fixed his eyes on Rey.

“And you were not wise enough to resist the bait!” Snoke persisted towards Rey, twisting the metaphorical blade he had managed to sink between them as they knelt before him.

A small wound at her brow wept blood as she looked up into Ben’s eyes, searching them for answers…for certainty…a promise.

“RISE” Snoke commanded towards Ben. “Rise my worthy apprentice…son of darkness, heir apparent to Lord Vader”

Greedily Snoke’s fervent gaze raked over Kylo Ren as he towered above Rey. A pillar of shadow, darkness, and wrath.
The sight excited a devious thrill in Snoke as he narrated the tragedy before him “Where there was conflict, I now sense resolve”.

At this Ben picked up his saber, his eyes flitting to the Supreme Leader atop his throne.

When their eyes met Snoke began absentmindedly toying with one of the bright red Kyber crystals he drew from the pile beside him.

“Where there was weakness… strength!” Snoke continued as he closed his eyes, clenched his fist round the gruesome stone, and revealed amidst the shift he sensed in his apprentice.

‘The cruelest stroke indeed’ Rey thought as Ben’s arm extended towards her saber in hand. The same hand which had reached across the galaxy, across a burning fire, across an endless darkness; Across a war….to touch hers.

Aimed at her breast the weapon, and Ben, stood poised and ready. Snoke laughed idly as if they had all the time in the galaxy. The sinister black crystal of his ring gleamed in the light of the throne room.

A warm bitter tear cleared a trail down her cheek. She finally understood. She stiffened her lip firmly. ‘Strength’ she thought. Willing herself to be like the great wrecks of Jakku. Strong...enduring...immovable; Hollow inside, perhaps, empty and alone…but proudly withstanding each dawn, each storm, each scavenger. Skin of steel she thought, and a heart as empty as a stripped freight hold. If she had been wrong to let Ben in, she would make sure there would be nothing left to plunder but the sand he had swept in with him.

“Complete your training…and fulfill your destiny!” Snoke roared triumphantly reaching out as if to direct the scene.

As the booming sound of the Supreme Leader’s voice quieted, deep dark eyes weighed heavily on Rey. Looking up she was met with the profound and inscrutable intensity of Kylo Ren’s gaze.

“I know what I have to do” he uttered nearly to himself.

The words cut straight through the heart of Rey as she recalled the gangplank on Star-Killer. Kylo Ren and Han. The world tearing itself apart, red lights fading into darkness. The horrific deed of a boy she knew, and a man she clearly did not.

“Ben?” she wondered pleadingly.

“You think you can turn him?” Snoke scoffed

“Pathetic child…I cannot be betrayed! I cannot be beaten!” he howled as he hurled the tainted crystal back to join the others.

The minerals seemed to shriek as the surfaces grated against one another attempting to balance lest they fall and scatter across the black marble floor; bleeding stars hung in a black sky…a cosmos of pain and sorrow…orchestrated by Snoke; fueled by Kylo Ren.

“I see his mind!” he continued. “I see his every intent!”

Spittle flew from the man’s mouth as he relished illustrating his power.

“Yes” Snoke preened as he closed his eyes euphorically adrift in his own ego. “Yes…I see him turning the lightsaber to strike true”.

Rey heard Kylo Ren’s black leather gloves creak as his grip tightened on the saber.

“And now…foolish child. He ignites it…And kills his true enemy!” Snoke delighted as his eyes opened to witness the violence.

Snoke’s eyes opened wide at the sudden violent energy that tore through him both figuratively and literally. While he had expected to see his apprentice lay waste to the final vestige of light, his equal…their enemy. He was instead greeted by a flash of light just out of sight, and the rapidly fading shadows of figures ahead.

Ben cursed the stiff leather of his gloves as they creaked in the quiet of the throne room. He tightened his grip upon his own saber to mask the maneuver he made with his free hand behind his own back.

Each moment he spent staring deeply into Rey’s hazel eyes. Her pain and uncertainty wounded him but he focused on the consolation that if he failed, she would surely be the last thing he would see. The thought fed an anger and desperation that Snoke would sense as Kylo Ren. He need only hold on awhile longer, need only turn a bit further, need only spill a little more blood. And then…

With a flick of his wrist Ben derailed the ramblings of Snoke. Clear bright blue light burst forth and through the center of the Supreme Leader as the Legacy saber to Snoke’s side ignited. Two fingers called forth the weapon drawing it forward through Snoke’s torso and into the grip of Rey.

Rey could feel a silent sigh of relief ripple through the Force as she rose, her eyes trained on Ben. A strange hunger filled his eyes and she shuddered from the energy that charged the space between them. Rey thought back to that night aboard his ship; their kiss.

The bisected upper half of Snoke slumped forward and onto the stone floor with a lifeless thump.

Three pairs of bright red soldiers took formation around them. Ben worked his jaw and breathed heavily as he tried to communicate some foreign feeling to Rey through their bond and his gaze.

Ben’s weapon crackled to life and cast his features in a morbid red glow that complimented the radiance of Rey’s blue saber.

MINE

The thought rang clear through the mess of excitement, anger, fear, and adrenaline in both their minds as they pressed their backs together and readied their weapons.

A strange sorrow seemed to flicker and undermine the intensity of the passion and urgency Ben radiated a moment before.

Ben regretted that channeling Kylo Ren again would poison the bond between he and Rey. Confuse her further and violently drag to light the truth he had seen on Ahch-To. But if they were to survive Ben and Rey would both need Ren’s training to succeed, and he would gladly spend the the rest of his days learning to fix broken things, like their souls, then be cut down now for fear of losing her.

Rey couldn’t help the fire that grew from deep in her belly to every fiber of her being. Something within her, and Ben, turned savage. Challenging the world, demanding power, calling for blood. The
fight for their lives, the future, for balance, or so Rey thought, ready to begin.

Rey had never danced. Not really. Not the way lovers do. Hearts racing, breath heaving, bodies meeting in an unspoken ballet of movement. Yet somehow in the most unlikely of places she felt as though Ben was taking her hand and sweeping her through the throne room. A flurry of fabric, fire, carnage, and flesh laid to ruin in their wake.

**RED**

Time and again they charged, parried, spun, grunted, slashed, roared, stabbed, and sliced their way back to each other. Rey reached round and grabbed Ben’s thigh and leaned back anchoring herself as she reared back to kick another guard in the chest.

Teeth bared, breath batted, clinging to one another before parting to defend the future they imagined…together. Not realizing at the same time how very far apart.

Just as Ben had thought, the Praetorian guard were unprepared to face a pair that fought in tandem as they did, if not better. Where the soldiers relied upon technique and training, Ben and Rey were able to disrupt using instinct and unity.

The fight was quick, but well matched, and every tiny victory… every inch of ground yielded cost blood and sweat. Across the room Rey could see Ben look up from under his wild hair a feral look in his eyes as he took on three guards at once.

Death and destruction slowly but surely overwhelmed the space around them, burning, breaking, and decaying as survival balanced on the edge of a laser blade.

A crushing blow disoriented Ben as a guard landed a strike to his skull. As he spun he reached blindly for his enemy’s weapon thanking the maker when he managed to hold the staff of the guard’s blade and keep it from crushing his windpipe.

He wasn’t sure if blood, sweat, or tears stung his eyes as he glimpsed Rey struggling with the biggest guard across the room. His own soldier heaved back on his staff trying to dislodge Ben’s grip.

As Rey noticed the silence in the room she looked to Ben for an instant giving her opponent a window to strike and wound her. The thin laser of the guard’s blade grazed her upper arm searing the flesh instantly. Ben winced and she recoiled before attacking with renewed vigor.

Soon Rey found herself in a stalemate like Ben’s, locked arm in arm with the Praetorian guard she fought. Struggling to hold on awhile longer, fighting the fatigue that seared her muscles, Rey looked over into Ben’s eyes.

**RED**

Desperate, angry, afraid.

**BOOM**

Another bright red blast shot from The Supremacy and struck a Resistance shuttle. The flash only enhanced the fiery tableau around them and shook something within Rey.

Rage consumed her fear and Rey let go of her saber.

The heavy metal hilt seemed to take so long to fall…down, down, down… to where her other hand waited free from the staff that ensnared her.
“NO!” she screamed.

Without hesitation Rey activated the blade, tearing her eyes from Ben, and slashing through the air savagely decapitating the guard in an instant.

“BEN!” Rey shouted hoarsely as she threw her weapon to him.

Abandoning his attempts to hold off the soldier Ben caught the saber. Trusting in Rey’s faith that he could still wield it he ignited the blade. Holding Rey’s gaze

Ben panted wildly as the light burst forth and through the eye of the final Praetorian guard.

He swallowed hard taking in Rey’s glow after battle. As he rose he let his hungry eyes drift to the throne where half of Snoke still rested. Blasts sounded in the distance and red light blinked wildly as blasts fired from The Supremacy.

A shower of fire, sparks, and wreckage rained down around them both. A crown of devastation on both their heads.

‘It’s just us now’ he thought.

The moment Leia reached the loading dock she realized she had allowed her grief to blind her. Slowly and tenderly she reached for the slender hands of her dear friend, Amilyn.

“All aboard that’s going aboard!” Leia joked pulling on the silver bracer that decorated the vice admiral’s wrist. The same bracer that matched the silver halo perched high atop her statuesque frame in a tuft of lavender hair.

A wave of sadness washed over Leia as her efforts met resistance.

“Too many losses” Leia tried to reason.

“For the transports to escape…someone has to stay behind to pilot the cruiser…” Amilyn offered.

“I can’t take anymore” Leia whispered.

“Sure you can” Holdo assured her, tears brimming her sapphire eyes. “You taught me how”.

“May the Force be…”

“May the Force be…” both women began.

“You go on” Leia relented with a lump in her throat “I’ve already said it enough”.

“May the Force be with you, always” Amilyn wished clasping Leia’s hands tight, pressing all of her hopes, dreams, love and loss along to the last person she would ever touch.

“Sir we ran a de-cloaking scan, their cruiser just broke the atmosphere and 30 more Resistance transports have just launched from Crait’s surface with it. It will take a while longer before they will all be in the air” a First Order officer reported.
“Good, very good.” Armitage Hux grinned as The Resistance fled the frying pan right into a roaring fire. “Focus all fire on the shuttles. They’re clearly banking on speed, but they have neither enough fuel nor time to outrun our cannons and our TIE fighters…Kill them all”.

Nyx pursed her lips in concern as the tiny transports navigated their way towards The Supremacy. Painfully she recalled long ago how Ben, the others, and herself had chartered a similar path. She did not dislike the woman she had become, but she couldn’t help but wonder if she would dislike her role in the galaxy less had she made different choices.

“BEN!”

Rey called his name and Ben turned reluctantly from the throne towards her expectant face. Eyes wide and full of hope.

“Ben, the fleet!” She urged pointing towards the Oculus. “Order them to stop firing. There is still time to save the fleet.”

A loaded pause turned Rey’s head from the battle and towards him.

“Ben?” she asked.

He thought he could turn fast enough to spare him the sight, but alas he lingered long enough to witness the moment light left Rey’s eyes and shadow consumed her radiant spirit.

“It’s time to let old things die” he reasoned softly bracing himself as he turned again to walk towards her.

Snoke was dead. The torment Ben had known from infancy, the turmoil that challenged the harmony Rey offered him, was finally gone. But in its stead was a vacuous chasm that demanded more. More for the pain he endured, more for the youth he lost, more for the sacrifice he made and the blood he spilled. Why abandon the power fate offered them, when it was so hard fought? ‘MORE’ he thought hungrily as he stared at Rey.

Ben thought deeply about his next words, and the proposal he made.

“Snoke…Skywalker…The Sith, The Jedi, The Rebels… let it all die” he implored.

“Rey…” Ben appealed as tears formed in her eyes. “I want you to join me”.

Ben stepped closer hoping he could will her to his side.

“We can rule together and bring a new order to the galaxy” he continued.

He knew the decision might be hard, but couldn’t fathom the pain her hazel eyes expressed in response to his offer.

“Don’t do this, Ben…Please don’t go this way” she begged as a fresh tear rolled over her flushed cheek.

Ben had never lost his temper around Rey, but struggled to control himself as her rejection settled in.

“No, NO! You’re still holding on! LET GO!” Ben erupted.

Part of him wasn’t sure if he was so emphatic because he was trying to convince himself of his
words or Rey. Wounded and afraid he desperately reached for the only weapon he could wield against her; truth.

“Do you want to know the truth about your parents? Or have you always known?” he asked venomously.

Sensing Rey’s discomfort he pushed forward with everything he had.

“They were filthy junk traders…who sold you off for drinking money” he declared coldly.

RED.NO.DON’T LEAVE.FIRE.FEAR.PLEASE.BOOM

A small girl huddled in the corner of a fallen AT-AT crying herself to sleep, cold and alone in the bitter chill of the desert night. A burnt out spark plug grating her soft skin as she etched a tally against the wall beside her. Blood stained her small fingers where her flesh had broken. A deep, jagged, mark carved into the steel…and her soul that night…the first of many. But a callous would form and each mark would get easier, each night a little less long, until she stopped regretting and started waiting.

“You’ve just hidden it away; you know the truth!” Ben continued unrelenting.

Something within Rey moved to the surface, a specter that took shape like the shadows in Ahch-To’s mirrored cave, but try as she might she could not give voice to the ghosts that haunted her.

“I know the truth!” he declared urgently. “I’ve known since Star-Killer…since…” he trailed off.

Rey’s eyes met Ben’s. His dark brown eyes drowned in the special kind of sorrow that comes from unshed tears.

“The moment, the very moment I…” lost for words Ben called for his saber from where he had been disarmed across the throne room. Without breaking his gaze from Rey’s he gestured subtly, gripped the hilt anxiously, and swallowed hard. “That moment…the monster…my father…you lived it. Just as I lived yours. And for an instant I was blinded, not just by my fear…but by your pain” at this he slung the weapon back into the holster at his waist.

A broken sob escaped Rey. She shut her eyes to the ruin around them only to face the gloom of shadows and red lights flashing behind her eyes. Her brow contorted as she silently plead for Ben to stop.

“I had believed a lie so long, I had been betrayed too often, I wanted nothing…nothing more than to trust what the Force was telling me…and then…the Force showed me” Ben’s breaths were shallow and slow; labored in a way that shared his anguish.

“I felt it…I felt it…and I knew…it is you” Ben confessed as his full lips began to tremble.

“Say it” he whispered.

Rey opened her mouth soundlessly and struggled not to weep and wail until her throat was raw.
“…They’re dead” she managed to exhale audibly.

Ben nodded vigorously urging her on. “They were nobody. You come from nothing…you’re nothing” he stated as a matter of fact.

“But not to me…
…Let it die…Let go…You need to let go…or neither of us ever will…Join me…please” he begged hoarsely.

“Don’t do this” she desperately prayed.

“SAY IT!” he commanded.

Rey faltered, his words reminding her of another heated exchange, another night…light-years away from this…the edge of space…aboard his ship…

‘I am sorry for your suffering…but I will never apologize for what I had to do or having the strength to do it’
Ben had said…could he understand?

Plutt was pleased when she found her way back to Niima outpost.

“A desert mutt like you will do very well, strays like you always manage to find their way back…even when no one wants them to” the junk lord observed cruelly as he deactivated the mag-lock on a dilapidated shuttle idling in front of them.

“Enjoy the ride you kriffing booze hounds…AS-IS means AS-IS” Plutt snorted satisfied with the trade he’d made.

“No…NO!” Rey cried out into the sky nearly choking on the noxious exhaust trailing after her parent’s ship. “PLEASE! COME BACK! COME BACK!”.

The commotion irked Plutt and he pulled the young girl behind him as he dragged her back to his trailer, keen to get her acquainted with the scavenger way.

Though small, Rey stalled the hefty trader in his tracks as she howled into the sky.

“NO! COME BACK! PLEASE!” she screamed extending her hands…and something else out towards the shuttle.

ALONE.PAIN.RED.FEAR.REJECTION.AGONY. ANGER. RED. RAGE. POWER

“NOOOOOOOO!” Rey shrieked as a white hot energy crackled through her veins.

A red flash seemed to fracture the world, and a crimson wound bloomed in the heavens the instant the ship exploded.

BOOM

“I killed them” Rey said.
A hush becalmed them. The burning vestiges of Snoke’s billowing drapes stilled stranding them in the middle of their catharsis.

The Force shifted…a portent to an oncoming maelstrom.

Ben’s eyes never left Rey’s.

‘I am sorry for your suffering…but I will never apologize for what I had to do or having the strength to do it…I can’t be the one to walk away again Rey, ever…even if it means our doom’.

She could hear his words again as his gaze devoured her; honest and undone…Consuming her in fire, devotion, hunger, and that furtive energy that eluded her somewhere deep even beyond the release she had just found.

The path that lie ahead, the man that stood before her…Ben, could only lead to ruin…destruction; doom indeed.

And yet.

His hand remained outstretched, beckoning her forth. To something else, something new…Power.

And there it was…He would accept her. Offer her the galaxy. Equals. Side by side…So long as the sacrifice wouldn’t be his. So long as he didn’t risk his soul again. So long as he could offer her his power instead of his heart. He had come so far, but refused to take the last step.

Leia’s kind eyes, Luke’s grumpy smirk, Finn’s blinding smile, BB’s churlish ways, Chewie’s compassion…Han… flashed before her eyes. An urge so sudden and powerful she reached out to call the Legacy saber.

BETRAYAL.

The instinct tainted the air between them; sharp and acidic.

The weapon stilled between Rey and Ben. Both fighting for control…of their lives, of their future, of their fate.

Struggling to understand each other, themselves…their place in all this.

BOOM

Chapter End Notes

The title of this chapter was inspired by the song "Not Ready to Say Goodbye" (Leah Nobel)

"Not Ready to Say Goodbye"

I feel everything and nothing
At the same time
I'm weightless
All that I love in a moment is gone
I'm breaking
Oh, heaven knows I need this
Oh, wake me up I'm dreaming
Losing it all in the blink of an eye
I'm not ready to say goodbye
I'm not ready to say goodbye

I'm just a shell of myself
And I've never felt so empty
Everything's spinning out of control
And I can't breathe

Oh, heaven knows I need this
Oh, wake me up I'm dreaming
Losing it all in the blink of eye
I'm not ready to say goodbye
I'm not ready to say goodbye

I just want a little more time
Little more time
Little more time

I just want a little more time
Little more time
Little more time

Oh, heaven knows I need this
Oh, wake me up I'm dreaming
Losing it all in the blink of eye
I'm not ready to say goodbye

Oh, heaven knows I need this
Oh, wake me up I'm dreaming
Losing it all in the blink of eye
I'm not ready to say goodbye
I'm not ready to say goodbye

**Highly recommend "Flames" by Tedy and "The War" by SYML as required listening also!!**

Other songs that inspired the different scenes, perspectives, and thoughts are on my spotify under Chapter 50 some include: "Revolution" by UNSECRET ft.Ruelle, "Westworld main theme" by Brooklyn Duo, "Run" (by Snow Patrol and the instrumental cover by Eklipse), "Flames" by Tedy, "Almost Lover" by A Fine Frenzy,
A line in the stars

Chapter Summary

*I need to update my tags! I can't promise that smut will make it into this piece after all. I've kept things fairly PG13 overall...but if you folks really want it I can make it happen in Ep. IX :D (9/17)

Hey there!

Short and sweet...I think I will go back to updating more frequently with small scenes/chapters rather than trying to plan out and find time to write longer chapters...yeah?

It's been so quiet, but never fear...I'm still here! Any thoughts on chapter 50? I didn't hear from that many folks...Thank you to those who did say hello!!

**As always let me know your favorite bits! What are you hoping to see? Say hello!

I worry if I don't hear from you guys. I've been taking risks with my story and changing things up again. I don't think comments will change the vision I have for my story, but if anyone is ever displeased or confused about a direction I take I'd love to talk through my concepts!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The empty halls of the cruiser Ninka thrummed as Amilyn Holdo made her way back to the bridge. The sounds reminded her of sad music playing from another room. A slow distant symphony calling to the melancholy in her heart.

Her jewelry jingled gently as she rested her arms against the console, like a conductor calling for attention before the final movement.

Gracefully she directed the ship towards The Supremacy.

The massive vessel drifted past the star dappled sky towards destruction, and all the while Amilyn clung to hope knowing, like the rising sun, she'd have to make it through the night. They all would.

‘Flyboy will live to see the sun shine again…Live and learn’ she thought as she smirked to herself.

In position Amilyn stared ahead out the massive view port; the horizon obstructed by the dreadnaught. Staring into the stark ashen would be eyes of her prey, she thought of how her people on Gatalenta exclusively hunted and never raised livestock for slaughter. How the peaceful folk compromised their beliefs so that they earned the flesh they took, how they stared into the eyes of their kill each and every time...how they used no weapon or snare...but drained the life, the light, from a creature’s eyes with the power of their own hands. How they carried out the executions of unforgivable crimes the same way. Her people knew the value of life…and the high price of death. But did she?
Such people…so far away…from politics…from war…from her heart. And while the Resistance and the First Order volleyed control back and forth…comparing resources, conquests, and body counts…Gatalenta carried on. Some would say unaware…blissfully ignorant…cowards…while Amilyn finally understood…it was they who pressed on all too aware of the consequences…all too familiar with the effort, and at times the frightening ease, with which honor transformed to horror. But for now, and for Vice Admiral Amilyn Holdo, forever…there would only ever be this moment. This moment in the darkness of night to kill or be killed. To survive to see the sun shine again or submit to the strangling grip of the First Order. An instant…to strike out…to challenge…to fight for a place in the galaxy or relent to the beast which threatened it.

The Vice-Admiral took in a shaking breath as she imagined herself home. Body and soul flung far from Gatalenta, but her heart ached for the homely red capes of her world. Even if once, she would take life with honor…with consequence…only once. "I just wanted to believe in something beautiful" Holdo sighs as she broadcasts one last message to Resistance frequencies “May the Force be with you, Godspeed Rebels”.

She would never see the sun rise again…but Amilyn Holdo believed the long night was finally ending when she engaged the warp drive…set a course for the horizon…and punched it.

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

RED

Nyx fought hard against the battered fatigue her body felt from being thrown across the bridge.

Sirens shrieked and eerie crimson lights pulsed with alarm. The glow camouflaged a good deal of the blood but couldn’t conceal the disturbing positions the broken crew. Consoles crushed some officers while a few pieces of the Supremacy’s structure impaled others. Hux lay motionless and unconscious beside her. He had taken the brunt of the blow when they were hit and struck the back of his head against the panel lining the wall. Nyx knew the damage that rendered him prone wouldn’t be permanent but briefly fidgeted over his temples sensing his strong and steady life signs.

The carnival of carnage was nothing compared to the gaping hole that tore through the entire length of the ship nearly bisecting the Supremacy. The wreckage that drifted gently in space was still streaked with the light and vapor of a fresh warp drive particle trail.

The massive void cut through the vessel, disabling it of course and killing dozens, but also illustrating a turning point in the war. A proverbial line drawn in the sand instead slashed across the stars.

RED

Nyx panted as she dragged herself to her feet as blood pulsed from her split brow. Drawn to another rift calling her from across the ship. A room on fire. Where falling stars alight and burn bright against a glassy black sky. Where two shadows reach for one another; Silhouettes against the flecked wreckage of eternity, the stuff of stars pitched across the cosmos. Ancient rubble turned to a galaxy. Two forms cut from the chaos, pure and absolute, lay in contrast to the fresh destruction surrounding them. Light shifts and a flaming red ribbon descends between them. Figures of fate, forces of destiny, a line of fire, and an empty throne. Two halves; and one soul stirs.

RED

Nyx runs.
For this chapter I listened a lot to a nice piano composition piece called "Everyday" by Carly Comando. It is a wonderful song to write to. It builds up a lot of energy and tension without being too busy or moody. It has a balance that toes the line between action and melancholy which this chapter does quite a bit. Give it a listen :)

As always you can find my playlists on Spotify under Nikki Rao Reylo Writing Soundtrack is my main list but I have also started a separate Episode IX playlist as well !!

Visit me on Tumblr too: NikkiNotions
A Rush of Blood to the Head

Chapter Summary

Thank you for your patience. I really want to make more time for my writing. It makes me so happy! I've had a lot of unhappiness lately. Mostly at work. But I have a lot of great things to look forward to in 2019. And I'm thinking maybe a fresh start should be one of them. We shall see!

Anyways here is Chapter 52! We are so close to the end folks and our journey into Ep IX.
This chapter sees moments from Poe, Luke, Rey/Ben!

My tense is all over in this chapter...but its part of my style! Right? eh...I can't help it sometimes!

Thank you all for your support and for reading. Kudos and comments are everything! I love to know who is out there!

Check out my spotify playlists for this story, chapter. 50, and episode ix under Nikki Rao ;)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Poe awoke on the shuttle with an unusual sense of calm after his strange reverie.

Unusual considering the position he and The Resistance were in. Fleeing Crait, fish in a barrel, as the First Order waited in orbit to shoot them down. Unusual considering, he had attempted a mutiny. Unusual because the world outside his window was again on fire. Unusual because the only love or life he had left was seated before him hurtling towards destruction; together.

Leia and Finn met Poe with gentle eyes as he joined them at the bench beside the view port. A firm hand steadied the pilot as he processed the gruesome tableau before him. The Ninka was gliding out in front of the fleet. A massive silver shield using its failing deflectors to draw and absorb the fire of The Supremacy.

Poe’s eyes searched rapidly across the expanse. Hoping…pleading…that back up had arrived.

When The Ninka halted her movement across the stars, and a dozen other shuttles had clustered shoulder to shoulder with their own the plan hit Poe like a ton of soul crushing bricks.

“She can’t-!” Poe began before a blinding streak rent the sky and The Supremacy in two.

Too late the pilot had looked away. His eyes tearing from more than the bright light that had been The Ninka jumping to light speed and crashing through Snoke’s ship.

A soft hand gripped his chin and lifted his gaze. Leia, who had every right to chide Poe for his arrogance…his pride…his lack of faith, looked into his dark brown eyes with empathy and love.
“The long night is ending Poe” She said hardly above a whisper. “Now do you see?”

Finn gripped his shoulders firmly from behind, offering support as a tear spilled down Poe’s cheek.

“I see” Poe breathed in reverence.

Cradled between the two, just beyond the edge of annihilation, Poe accepted the painful truth of what it now meant to live, to lead, through the long night, and survive until the promise of hope returned with the dawn.

On the salt dusted flats of Crait Luke’s curiosity drew him to the blood red crystal unearthed by his tired steps. Bowed low he brushed his fingers along the uncharacteristically crimson surface. A lifetime ago Luke had visited Crait as part of his work with the Rebellion against the Empire and knew the world to be one unending mass of snowy crystalline salt, rich with deposits of clear pure Kyber crystal below the surface.

Luke finally allowed The Force to flow through him again. To reconnect with the world as it now was, instead of what it once had been. His eyes darted to The Supremacy in the sky, fixed upon the bloody tears that reigned down below it. Escape shuttles that were blasted from the heavens and streaked from the sky as they reentered the atmosphere as falling stars. Beautiful wreckage, red, and burning.

Skywalker gasped as he looked on. His fingers digging deeper into the ruddy crimson deposits below the planet’s salt. BEN. He thought horrifically. The Jedi Master suddenly reconciled the difference he saw in Crait as clearly as the difference he saw within his own nephew. He realized with anguish the amount of pain, fear, and rage it would take to imbue and entire planet with this much dark sider energy.

“HEY!...HEY! TIME TO GO!” A Resistance pilot urged from the remaining ships readying to make their mad dash in hopes of escape.

Instead Luke remained crouched with his hand in contact with the broken earth. Wishing he could reach across time and space to his nephew all those years ago, broken, scared, suffering, and bleeding into this planet.

With his metal hand he signaled them to go.

“Ben” Luke whispered to the sky as a clear tear traced his jaw.

BOOM

A gentle breeze rustled Luke’s hair as the force of a devastating impact swept across the sky and affected the atmosphere. A pure blinding light flashed in the sky for a moment illuminating the gentle sunset of Crait. The Ninka was gone and The Supremacy was splintered…Broken.

Luke did not see his tears fall to the ground as he waited in silence for his fate to arrive. He did not see as each tear dropped to the salt how they cleared a scarlet spot as though he truly wept blood.

Rey wakes slowly. Regaining her other senses before she is willing to open her eyes.

She hears chaos. Muffled shouts from distant corridors. Metal groaning as it weakens in the flames of
the throne room. She smells the acrid smoke that accompanies the burning drapes and wreckage. She can taste the distinct and mordant tang of flesh smoldering around her as some Praetorian guards lie alight from the fire. Rey feels the ache of her bones. Her body protesting against the unnatural strain Snoke had put her through, the battle that followed, and the desperate struggle between her and Ben.

Ben.

Rey opens her eyes and sees him unmoving. Laid directly across from her, his dark hair spilling gently over his brow into his face. Her arm moves out of some instinct. Determined to brush the waves back. As though she is waking from a twisted nightmare and maybe he is just right there… Sleeping alongside her. Far across on the other side of a very large, very hard bed of black stone.

She stares longer than she should. Willing him to wake. Pleading him. Their stone alter shudders as a support beam crashes to the floor.

Rey collects the two halves of the lightsaber as she crawls on hands and knees to Ben.

Her bruised and bloodied hands frame his face, nervous to touch him and at the same time afraid she might not.

Over Ben’s slumped shoulder she sees the assault on the passing shuttles has stopped. The Supremacy and its crew devastated by the impact of something massive. Small flits of light still join the small fleet of Resistance refugees fleeing from Crait.

Ben’s saber rests at his hip and Rey’s blood chills. He looks so young as he lays unconscious before her, and she can see even clearer than the memories he shared with her, the choice…no…the arrogance that cost so many lives. Luke drawing his weapon in the night. The vanity that in a moment stole away the soul of the boy she loved.

Rey thinks back to another night, back on Ben’s command ship and his desperate words ‘I can’t be the one to walk away again Rey, ever…even if it means our doom’.

She knows. It has to be her. She needs to walk away or he will keep them together even if it means tearing them apart.

He had pleaded and shouted at her to ‘let go’…but she understands at the same time he was trying frantically to convince himself to do the same.

But he couldn’t let go. While Rey wonders if he ever will…she knows she must tear them apart, because it will be the only chance they have at ever being together.

She should leave. An entry pad beeps and hums, the interior panel sputtering sparks as someone tries to access the throne room. She needs to leave.

But she also needs to speak with Ben again, she needs so badly to explain. To tell him. If this is it. She needs more time.

Rey thinks with bitter heartbreak about Ben’s other words and how they still ring true as she uses them now.

“I am sorry for your suffering” she whispers over him.

“But I will never apologize for what I have to do…or having the strength to do it”. A tear falls from Rey landing at the corner of Ben’s lips. Firelight shimmers against the drop and she forgets her fear.
“And I won’t apologize for this” she smiles to herself remembering his lips that night as she leans forward and kisses away the pain she nearly leaves behind.

**BOOM**

The doors to the throne room open violently with a cascade of sparks and a plume of smoke that further obstructs the visibility within the inferno.

Through the dense cloud of smoke and ash a ghost from the past steps forward as burning embers flit around her heart shaped face.

Nyx Kryze trains her mismatched eyes on an impossible girl…now an improbable woman.

“Rey?”

Chapter End Notes

A Rush of Blood to the Head by Coldplay was an inspiration for this chapter. There were quite a few songs you will see on my playlist that also relate to the scenes in this chapter but "A Rush of Blood to the Head" seemed particularly appropriate because of the melancholy and passion that radiates from it. It is a sad slow song and a powerful song of raw emotion at the same time.

"Honey, all the movements you're starting to make
See me crumble and fall on my face
And I know the mistakes that I made
See it all disappear without a trace
And they call as they beckon you on
They say start as you mean to go on
As you mean to go on, as you mean to go on

So meet me by the bridge, meet me by the lane
When am I gonna see that pretty face again
Meet me on the road, meet me where I said
Blame it all upon
A rush of blood to the head"

I thought these words applied nicely to the scene with Rey at the end especially.

A Rush of Blood to the Head lyrics...

He said I'm gonna buy this place and burn it down
I'm gonna put it six feet underground
He said I'm gonna buy this place and watch it fall
Stand here beside me baby, in the crumbling walls
Oh, I'm gonna buy this place and start a fire
Stand here until I fill all your heart's desires
Because I'm gonna buy this place and see it burn
Do back the things it did to you in return

Ah, ah, ah, ah
He said I'm gonna buy a gun and start a war
If you can tell me something worth fighting for
Oh, and I'm gonna buy this place, that's what I said
Blame it upon a rush of blood to the head

Honey, all the movements you're starting to make
See me crumble and fall on my face
And I know the mistakes that I made
See it all disappear without a trace
And they call as they beckon you on
They said start as you mean to go on
Start as you mean to go on

He said I'm gonna buy this place and see it go
Stand here beside my baby, watch the orange glow
Some'll laugh and some just sit and cry
You just sit down there and you wonder why
So I'm gonna buy a gun and start a war
If you can tell me something worth fighting for
And I'm gonna buy this place, that's what I said
Blame it upon a rush of blood to the head
Oh, to the head

Honey, all the movements you're starting to make
See me crumble and fall on my face
And I know the mistakes that I made
See it all disappear without a trace
And they call as they beckon you on
They say start as you mean to go on
As you mean to go on, as you mean to go on

So meet me by the bridge, meet me by the lane
When am I gonna see that pretty face again
Meet me on the road, meet me where I said
Blame it all upon
A rush of blood to the head
Another little update! Gosh, I was so happy to see people still reading and hear from some of you, that I couldn't help but come home and whip up some more!

I've lost 4 subscribers since I updated chapters 52 and 53 (Please give feedback on what I'm missing or can improve on before you depart) :(  

Thank you all for reading and for your lovely comments!  

I love hearing from everyone! Hopefully I can post another scene or two over the next few days!!

Come say hello on Tumblr: NikkiNotions or check out my Spotify playlists (Reylo writing soundtrack, chapter 50, adn ep IX etc) under Nikki Rao :)

For a moment it seems like the rain of fire stops falling, like the embers hang in the air, and the world has stopped burning. For a moment they are children, and just like so many other moments a lifetime ago, the innocence of a moment ends too quickly.

Understanding overwhelms Rey and she feels fresh tears burning at the corners of her eyes. Nyx breaks the stillness as she crosses the chamber approaching Ben and Rey as one would a frightened animal. Afraid that any movement too sudden might disturb the specter before her, and Rey may vanish like another billow of smoke in the hazy throne room.

Without words Nyx opens her arms and Rey entangles herself within them in an instant. Surveying the carnage and feeling through the distress of Rey’s thoughts Nyx can grasp what has happened. But fumbling through the Force Nyx feels another presence, alert, angry, and coming too somewhere across what is left of The Supremacy; Hux.

Nyx can’t remember the last time she embraced someone. Most likely Rey was the last person, and it makes her sad that she can’t remember so many of their last moments. The last time she read her a bedtime story, the last time they had a meal together, the last time they all laid under the stars and she sang her to sleep. It’s so hard to remember the last time you do anything, when you don’t know the end is coming.

Nyx allows herself a moment. Just one. To remember this. To hold Rey, now the same height as her. To rock her left and right in her arms and hum gently. Nyx steals just one more moment that ends to quickly to remember this time may be the last. This time may be the end.

Ben will live. He will be sore, like Rey, but Nyx assures her she will look after him, and he after her just as they have been all these years.
“Come with me” Rey naively begs “Please”.

It breaks Nyx’s heart to hear the same desperation in her voice she could hear all those years ago as they left Rey on Jakku. The plea that broke through the fog of Nyx’s pain, as she lay near death in the back of the ship, and haunted her still.

“And who would look after him?” Nyx asked wryly gesturing to Ben’s prone form, still unconscious.

“He made his choice” Rey countered bitterly as she looked back to him.

“And so have you” Nyx offered as she used her mechanical hand to tear into the panel of a nearby escape shuttle. “But that doesn’t mean there aren’t more choices ahead yet to be made”.

Nyx plucked at the innards of the control panel with gusto as she continued “You never liked Shah-tezh” she chuckled thinking about the ancient pass-time from their youth on Ahch-To.

“You always wanted to snatch your Imperator off the board as soon as one of us got too close…Well we’ve all become pieces in a very long, very elaborate game Rey. It doesn’t matter how or when it all started. The game is in play and we are all on the board. And much as I’d love to collect our pieces together and carry on…that’s not how the game ends…that’s not how you win”.

Rey considered this and stood in silence as Nyx pulled wires and several data chips from inside the panel. Before she could decide whether this was good advice, or just a load of Bantha dung the doorway to the shuttle opened.

"Funny how they make it so hard to get into this kriffing throne room, but so easy to get out" Nyx chuckles pleased with her handiwork.

As Rey stepped inside and Nyx acquainted her with the nav-system she stared at the divided corpse of what was Supreme Leader Snoke.

“Nyx? I never liked Shah-tezh…but if the Imperator is taken…The game is over” Rey said quietly.

As Nyx secured two restraints over Rey’s shoulders and primed the engines she sighed deeply.

“So Rey wants to play after all” Nyx mumbled mostly to herself before Rey could have sworn she felt a kiss ghost the crown of her head.

“Rule number one Rey. Know your pieces, know your players” Nyx said as she sealed the door to the escape shuttle.

“Snoke was no Imperator!” Nyx shouts over the hiss of stabilizers as the ship detaches from the wreckage of *The Supremacy* and hurtles into the darkness.

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*Shah-tezh*

Is an abstract strategy game that is similar to Chess and inspired other fandom games such as Moebius and Dejarik. Shah-tezh is a bit more ancient. It has appearances in
"Darth Vader Annual 2: Technological Terror" and "Aftermath: Empire's End". Wookieepedia has it listed as canon. I included it instead of Dejarik because it resembled Chess the most. As opposed to Dejarik which is a bit more fun and engaging. It made more sense that young Rey would be a bit bored with Shah-tezh, and taking the Imperator piece is a bit like "check mate" so I went with this game :)

HOPE YOU ENJOYED!!

HAPPY NEW YEAR YOU LOVELY FOLKS! IT'S 2019 THE YEAR OF EP IX!!!!
Between Two Points

Chapter Summary

Hey there

It's been awhile...Sadly my struggles have continued at work. But there has been a semi-happy ending. Friday, April 5th was my last day after nearly 10 years with the company. All together 8 of us were let go from our positions and offered severance. I have a few opportunities in the works, and one in particular that I am very excited about and hope works out! I will know soon and will update.

By the way my team had a party for me on my last day...They played the Star Wars opening theme when I walked in and made a home made Darth Vader cake...I wish I knew how to embed photos for you all!

As you can imagine, this has had me in a funk...This and trying to work my butt off before this development. Honestly based off of the current climate at the company and management this is for the best. And since the trailer for EPISODE IX dropped today I am so inspired!

Here is a mini chapter I whipped up to bridge to the next chapters. I will be working away this weekend to wrap up my episode VIII and promptly start on my vision of Episode IX

As always thank you for your support

MTFBWY
Nikki

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sirens are blaring, sparks are flying, and while the officers of The Supremacy assess damages and fatalities, Armitage Hux thirsts for blood.

Even without a status report he knows that The Ninka, and the Resistance fool who crashed it into them, has crippled the First Order’s offensive upon Crait and the Rebel scum. Victory had been in their cross hairs and now they drifted broken and utterly disarmed. White hot fury courses through the General at their sudden impotence. As much as it pains him, he knows they need a plan B. They need to react with immediate, violent, and deadly force.

“Where is Ren!!” Hux spits at the commanding officer who isn’t being dragged from the bridge to the medical bay. “And where is Kryze?” he adds trying not to whip his coiffed head too quickly across the space in search of his second.

Nyx, not for the first time, had to think on her feet. Ben remained motionless, but she could tell it
wouldn’t be much longer before he came to. Hux would undoubtedly be looking for her and Kylo, and even though the late Supreme Leader was the last person Hux wanted to see now he would have no choice but to search the throne room when they weren’t found elsewhere on the ship.

Kylo Ren was lying unconscious, the nearest escape shuttle was gone, and the Supreme Leader was a corpse left in two neat pieces. Snoke’s remains; a rather ironic metaphor for the conflict that tore through hearts and minds across the galaxy, dividing and mutilating communities, families, and The Force itself.

She decided her best chance was to feign ignorance, pretend Rey overtook her because of her injuries, and follow Ben’s lead. Quick as a flash and without a moment to spare Nyx lowered herself to the rubble ridden floor in front of the escape shuttle bay as Hux strode through the doorway.

Peeking through her lashes Nyx watched cautiously from the shadows as emotions flitted across Armitage’s face. Horror, confusion, panic. As the General’s gaze settled on Ben a twisted expression reached all the way to the depths of his cold blue eyes. *Excitement.*

Like a mirage across the heat of the room, Hux’s movements seemed to ripple and blur as he pulled something from his side. A blaster.

A crazed sneer overtook the General as he poised the weapon to fire. In the instant it took Nyx to cough, stir, and alert him to her presence and hopefully distract him…Ben mercifully managed to wake. With a shudder and groan pulling himself to his feet.

For a very large man Kylo was quick on his feet, and in the blink of an eye, the only evidence of his ordeal was the sweat on his brow and the ash on his uniform.

Nyx could see the muscles in Ben’s neck strain as he swallowed hard, his dark eyes sweeping over the ruins of the throne room. As the intensity of Kylo’s gaze whipped to Hux she managed to broadcast a thought across the Force despite her inconsistent abilities…*SAFE.*

Ben’s shoulders lowered in response. But where rage and panic waned a sudden sadness surged. But there was hardly a moment of melancholy before Ben’s hackles raised when Hux touched a nerve.

“What happened?!...Explain yourself Ren!” Hux barked.

“The girl murdered Snoke” Ben replied flatly. “But I know where she’s going” he offered with a glint in his eye toward the Occulus. “Get all our forces to that Resistance base. Let’s finish this”.

“Finish this? Where is the bleeding sand rat? You’re laying about and our Supreme leader is dead! You presume to command *my* army! Our Supreme leader is dead…We have no ruler! If that bitch has escaped again so help mmm…ughkkk!”. Hux’s tirade was cut short as Kylo crushed his windpipe.

If Nyx thought she saw a spark in Kylo’s eyes at the prospect of chasing Rey back to his side across the surface of Crait there were flames blazing as Ben circled Hux; wild, anxious, and desperate.

“The Supreme leader is *dead*” Kylo bellowed darkly adjusting his grip on the General’s throat so Hux could respond accordingly with a labored gasp.

“Grrkk...Long live the Supreme leader”.
A moment approached…Between dusk and dawn. Night was only just falling upon Crait as it descended around the galaxy. A long dark expanse between dark and light. Between two worlds. Between the Force. Between two points.

Ben was divided between the past, present, and future. He walked with purpose to his command shuttle, but his emotions were raw. As if Snoke had muted a multitude of memories and emotions that with his death suddenly returned to light. He thought he would feel different, but he took his seat as conflicted as ever. History warred with possibility. The man people thought he was, and who he knew himself to be. Doubt corrupting it all.

Hux struggled between remaining in the shadows and stepping forward into the fiery chaos he knew he could command. The power he had and the throne he could usurp.

Nyx tensed. Loyalty versus belonging. Caught between the interests of a man who made her a monster, and the man who loved her for it.

Rey hurtled toward the surface of Crait in the escape shuttle deployed from the Supremacy. A falling star, banished from the sky, without a home in the heavens or earth. Breaking the atmosphere, the turbulence of the ship helped muffle and absorb the sobs that racked her body. Her heart ached with a renewed vigor. Beyond the longing and loneliness of Jakku and into new depths Ben’s truths revealed to her. The truth of her parents, her power, her feelings…his choice. Captive between her own heart and soul.

Luke had spent too long staring off at the horizon. Too long dreaming of far off places and fates in the sunset. Between who he is and who he wanted to be. Too long being certain of the absolute power of the light. He had endured burdens of loss and betrayal, but life had always been kind and generous in the end. He had always known love and been loved in return, but the Force saw fit to deal cruel lessons in humility and pride over time. Lessons that cost the galaxy dearly and Luke heeded now above all else. Lessons that mercilessly opened his eyes to a truth and pain; a balance…that until Rey arrived, Luke was content to hide from in shame. A balance that until Master Yoda visited, he could not understand. A balance that until Ben Solo’s ship touched down on Crait, had remained between two points.

Chapter End Notes

Let me know your thoughts on anything…including the teaser from today…I have so many feelings and theories!
See You Around, Kid

Chapter Summary

Hello again!

With the help of a fabulous discord group I have been back into the swing of things! Writing and creating!

OH and wonderful news: I got the job I was going after! The best revenge for being wronged is getting a generous severance package AND nabbing a new job that has a $15k pay rise annually!

THE SOUNDTRACK FOR THIS CHAPTER:

Yes this chapter has a soundtrack/inspiration song! This time it is "Dad" by Tyler Bates for the "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol.2" soundtrack

If you have seen the movie...you know THE scene this takes place during. And you may agree that the music helped support the director's mission to punch a hole through our chests to extract our still beating hearts...I listened to it over and over as I wrote this chapter because of its emotional significance in terms of epic sacrifice and melancholy music style.

You can watch "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol.2" on Netflix now (I think I enjoyed it even more than the first!)

And catch my playlists on Spotify (Nikki Rao) "Reylo writing soundtrack" and "EP IX playlist" are some favs

Let me know what ya think!

MTFBWY
Nikki

The First Order arrived on Crait with a show of brute force. Reinforced AT-ATs dug into the crystalline surface making the world bleed as Kylo’s ship maintained a menacing position above the scene.

Kylo scanned the horizon but saw no traces of a recently landed escape shuttle. The small vessel from The Supremacy should have automatically aimed for a safe stretch of land near other structures or organisms. Since the First Order base was destroyed and abandoned across the flats this would be the only other location.

Panic shot along Kylo’s spine. The shuttle would have been navigating a treacherous path between The Supremacy and Crait. Either side may have seen it as a target, albeit incredibly small and difficult to strike.

Allowing his consciousness to run along the Force like the blind sense braille, Kylo was able to make out Rey’s presence on the other side of the Resistance bunker. There she was, a curious rough patch in the Force, frustrated as she struggled to override safety protocols and open the shuttle hatch.
Kylo huffed, amused at his good fortune. Even if Rey managed to prize herself from the escape pod it had landed on the opposite side of the bunker which had only one entrance or exit. If he couldn’t come to her before disposing of Luke, she would have no choice but to come to him or wander the bright and barren salt flats of Crait without provisions. And he knew his scavenger would make the choice to survive.

On the surface of Crait the setting Sun washed the snowy scene in warm watercolors. As easily as orange and red beams bled into one another, Luke could feel the pain of his nephew, as fresh as that night so long ago. The intensity of Ben’s sorrow, confusion, and hurt left Skywalker feeling similarly wounded. ‘A legend made mortal by his blinding hubris’ Luke thought of himself wryly. Time had allowed the damage to fester, but now it was time to heal.

The last of the Resistance fleeing Crait thanked the maker for Luke as he stepped closer, pulling Kylo’s focus from their shuttles, and waited for the next move.

Raven hair fell forward wildly as Kylo glared at his uncle through the view port. He swallowed hard, a cold sweat breaking along his brow. Luke was the very image of the man that haunted him from his youth. His hair and beard were trimmed. Suddenly he was so unlike the apathetic aged mess of overgrown grey tresses withering away on the far-flung island that he had faced. Suddenly he was calm, composed, threatening; a legend once again.

Old fears were quickly overwhelmed by the familiar comfort of rage and anger. Kylo felt consumed by it as though the Kyber crystal of the planet he had weaponized with his own pain and fury were being used now to influence him. Ire not only for Luke Skywalker, but for Rey; For choosing the Resistance, the liars and scoundrels. For choosing to keep holding onto her past and rejecting his offer. For discarding the trust, he placed in her with his deepest pain, and choosing him.

“General Hux. Advance. Fire on that man. No quarter… no prisoners” Kylo managed in a tone even enough to surprise even himself.

Aligning all forces, they waited for their new Supreme Leader’s final command. Ben’s chest rose and fell, as breathless as he was finding his uncle over him that night; lightsaber ignited, poised and ready.

Luke looked mournfully up at his nephew’s command shuttle. Past the dark tempered dura-glass into the heart he knew ached there. Jedi master or not he didn’t know how to move forward here and now, only the cost he would pay in the end.

“FIRE!” Kylo shouted as he rose from his seat to witness his wrath finally realized. Determined to watch his makeshift firing squad anonymously dispense of the last Jedi. To hope one shot out of hundreds would lay waste to the man who cost him everything.

A cascade of excessive firepower rained down upon Luke Skywalker, red, angry, and deadly. A beautiful barrage of lethal illumination and power. The very ground shook with the tremendous onslaught of ammunition and blaster energy.

“More!” Kylo ordered hungrily with his eyes transfixed to the unnatural glow of the display.

First Order officers and Hux shifted nervously as they indulged the impulsive whim of their new seemingly unhinged leader. The blitz continued.

“MORE!” Kylo howled with deranged passion. His face turning red with the exertion of his fervent orders.
Hux himself began to flush while he calculated how much ammunition they were tearing through to please Ren’s pedantic feud with his uncle.

“That’s enough” Hux nearly whispered.

The heavy fire continued.

“That’s enough!” Hux ordered again reigning in the emotional madness Ren was determined to infect his army with.

Officers and Kylo Ren alike seemed winded as they sat back in their chairs and recovered from the rush.

“Do you think you got him?” the General sneered sarcastically looking down upon Ren back in his command chair, a vulnerable mess.

Presuming that the prodigal son was done with his tantrum Hux readied to move on. “Now, if we’re ready to get moving we can finish this”.

All the talk of finishing things brought Kylo back to the present. Out of the dark depths of his mind, out of his seat to look at what should be the crater where Luke Skywalker used to be.

“Bring me down to him” Kylo ordered in a hollow voice.

“Sir?” a nearby officer ventured fearfully as they looked between the troubled Supreme leader and General Hux.

The crystalline dust was still settling but there stood the Jedi Master unscathed, brushing off his shoulders as his immutable gaze bore through the ship again.

“Keep the door covered and don’t advance until I say” Kylo continued seemingly in a trance.

“Supreme leader!” Hux interjected hotly. “Don’t get distracted, our goal…” Hux began chiding cruelly as much to his crew as to Ren himself.

Before the statement could be completed the flame haired militant was hurled against the wall of the command ship suddenly and violently, rendering him unconscious.

“Right away, sir!” the nearest crewman shouted springing into action.

As Kylo Ren walked off the shadowy ramp of his command ship into the jewel toned dusk of Crait he focused on the satisfying crunch of pulverized salt beneath his heavy boots, if only to keep his emotions from carrying him away. He needed painfully sharp clarity. A blur of feelings and sentiment would not do if he intended to kill the last Jedi.

Thick black locks of his hair cut across his vision, stirred by the crisp clear air of the barren world. The place he created where he sowed pain and Snoke harvested death.

Kylo poised himself several paces from his uncle and for a moment thought of soft fragrant plots of soil back on Ahch-To. Days spent, before the arrival of other younglings like Nyx, tending to hearty root vegetables which could thrive in the rocky soil and cool damp climate. Rey digging her tiny hands and feet in the earth turning up as many prizes as she could. Giggling as she towed them behind her in a sack bigger than her. Until laughter faded and Ben would wrap her and their crop up
in a bundle to carry home to their huts.

Tears threatened to choke Kylo as emotion and longing climbed up through his chest into his throat. Blinking away such folly he concentrated on the twisted fruits of his agony and labor resting beneath Crait’s surface. As if resonating with the energy he buried in the ground, Kylo could feel flashes of fresh misery anew.

Standing before Luke as he had so many times in his life, he loathed the trust he and so many others placed in the Jedi. Abandonment, fear, confusion, doubt, anger, despair, betrayal…so many feelings and memories threatened to devour him. Clinging to pain and anger to stay afloat in the maelstrom Kylo found words.

“Did you come back to say you forgive me?” He spit roughly. “To save my soul?” he added with haughty derision.


Immediately it pained Kylo to see that Luke seemed unmoved by his appearance or words. Instead, as ever, he remained a placid unfeeling hermit. Content to while away his days in apathy and superiority unless it is to strike down the irredeemable evil that is his only nephew.

Kylo thought back to all the lessons. The readings, the practice, and discipline. All the countless ways he proved himself capable, if not advanced, in every field. His theory, his practicals, his penmanship. Only to see and feel his uncle’s wary gaze at every turn; Cautious, calculating, and certain. Despite words or deeds, Luke saw the man in Ben’s mind as a malevolence rooted inextricably to his nephew’s own heart. And Skywalker had resolved to cut it out. Saber in hand.

“I failed you, Ben”. Luke’s words pulled Kylo from his past as if an invisible strike had winded him. “I’m sorry” he continued.

“I’m sure you are!” Kylo spat insulted by his uncle’s sudden contrition. He couldn’t help but think Luke was sorry for landing himself cornered by the First Order. At the mercy of his greatest mistake.

“The Resistance is dead. The war is over…” Kylo thought out loud reminding Luke of just how sorry he should be. “And when I kill you…I will have killed the last Jedi” he hissed with venom dripping on the final word.

“Amazing” Luke offered with unnerving levity. “Every word of what you just said…was wrong”.

Kylo needed to resist his urge to lunge at his arrogant uncle before he continued.

“The Rebellion is reborn today. The war…is just beginning. And I will not be the last Jedi”.

“I’ll destroy her…and you…and all of it!” Kylo countered as he positively pulsed with rage.

“No” Luke declared. “Strike me down in anger and I’ll always be with you. Just like your father”.

“No!” Kylo bellowed. Wounded at the mention of Han Solo.

“NO!” Kylo thundered louder as he struck his right boot to the ground, simultaneously igniting his light-saber.

‘You don’t get to just walk away…to leave it like this’ Kylo thought to himself as he charged toward Luke. The storm inside him, the feeling and emotion, was whipped into a frenzy. Now that he had acted there was no way to anchor himself to a single thought, Kylo was driven solely by sensation
His black boots slid across the white salt revealing a bloody path in his wake. He missed. Luke turned, and bile rose in Kylo’s throat as he noticed the blue beam of the saber.

A feral howl tore from Kylo’s chest seeing Luke adjust his grip around the weapon. Desperately he lunged at Luke in quick violent succession. Missing again and again. Swinging fiercely as they made pass after pass circling one another. He fumed knowing Rey had pilfered the light-saber of his grandfather once The Supremacy was hit and had run back to Luke with it. Run back so that Luke could strike him down with the weapon that should rightfully be his. Another betrayal.

Luke took no pleasure dipping and dodging Ben’s blows. But he knew for his nephew’s sake he needed to maintain the charade just awhile longer. Too hold on. If Ben couldn’t accept his apology, he needed him to understand. Needed to prove his regret. Needed to say goodbye.

In the past Luke would have thought indulging this behavior unhealthy and prone to breed dark sider energy within Ben. But now he understood the depth of emotion Ben possessed. The connection and sensitivity beyond any of his own abilities. Luke tearfully recognized the pieces of the soul, of the universe…of his own nephew; that he foolishly tried to condemn. Ben needed to process his anger and pain; Obstacles, without which there could be no resolution or balance. What joy could he ever hope to possess if Ben never unburdened himself from his sorrows.

Kylo’s rage seemed unflagging, but Luke knew his time was nearly up.

Deeper shades of plum and cherry washed over the tableau. Lowering them gently into the darkness of night. Luke smirked at himself. Ben was brutal but was getting sloppy. Sliding wildly along the salt as he charged time and again. His dark hair whipping around as his solemn face twisted in concentration.

Luke couldn’t help but imagine his nephew as a youth again. Long gangly limbs, a mop of unruly locks, and a thirst to prove himself. How many times had he watched Ben exhaust himself over saber forms? Meditate until he was stiff? Study until he made himself sick? Same as ever he watched as Ben urgently attempted to validate himself. The only difference now was Luke’s own sight, made clearer by time and mistakes.

Luke Skywalker stood his ground as Kylo Ren rushed toward him for what would be the final time. He thought of the young man’s first steps and the path that led Ben to this moment. He thought of the future he could have, and the strides Ben took now, unknowingly, toward that hope.

Kylo slashed powerfully as he slid past Luke. He panted and hesitated before turning towards his uncle, knowing such a blow would have landed true. Would have cut deep. Would kill.

Where Kylo expected to see his uncle laid prone he found Luke as composed as ever. Intact, unharmed, and standing tall; waiting. His saber extinguished.

Luke smirked gently but in his soft blue eyes Kylo spotted unshed tears. The Force told him they were both joyful and solemn, strangely content, and his heart told him they would be Luke’s last.

Kylo reached out further into the Force sensing a range of emotions his uncle had suddenly revealed to him. Realization dawned on Kylo as he felt a sudden warmth burn through his chest, spreading and stinging as feeling threatened to choke him once more. So desperately he wanted to speak, to shout, to scream…something meaningful, hurtful, or cruel. Kylo wanted his final words to wound Luke if only because he had been deprived of killing him. His Jedi master uncle had used all his power, his very life, to fuel this deceptive charade. A Force projection across the stars.
Kylo scolded his own eager blindness. He should have known. He should have doubted the man who stepped out of time to make him face his own demons just as they were all those years ago. The furrows and folds of age that a trim could not unmake. The exact face that haunted his sleep; the betrayal that lived in his heart. He should have known the noble Luke Skywalker would honor his oath to live out his days and die on that island.

Kylo continued to stare incredulously. Mere seconds passed but he felt as though he worked his jaw for hours on the edge of these final moments. Angry, grateful, afraid; lost.

‘The fool!’ Kylo thought to himself bitterly as he felt Luke’s presence in The Force waiver. ‘All this to distract me? To save them?’ he wondered as his glance flitted to the last shuttles breaking atmosphere to escape. ‘Did he think Rey needed protection from me?!’ he deduced in fury. But Kylo’s rage ebbed as quickly as it had risen as he reached an impossible conclusion. ‘Did he do this…to say goodbye?’.

Twilight’s radiance suited the occasion. A diurnal contest of light and shadow now come to an end. Luke could sense the same natural conflict within Ben and trusted his hope in him as he would the sun to rise tomorrow.

“See you around, kid” Luke offered regarding his nephew as he faded with the last beams of the day into the long inevitable embrace of night.

“NO!” Kylo managed too late calling out to him as he receded into the dying light, a specter returned to The Force. His uncle…Luke Skywalker… the legend, was gone.

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