No Rest For The Wicked

by Avdal

Summary

No one said being a Jedi was going to be easy…

The sneak attack had come out of nowhere. Kylo had boarded her ship and the battle that followed should have sealed both of their fates.

Except that it hadn’t, and now they’re both stranded. Trapped on a strange and remote alien world with only each other to depend on. Good thing they didn’t just have sex only an hour before, effectively ruining both their chances at behaving like reasonable and rational force-wielding adults…
Caught in an Undertow

Chapter Notes

This is based right after my 1-shot The Space in Between which was written for a compilation project. While not completely necessary, I do recommend reading it first since it’s only one long (long) chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was disturbing how paper thin the walls of the escape pod actually were.

Rey’s lightsaber had made short work of them, splitting a hole in the wall of whatever place was now up. How strange to think that something that thin was the only thing that had kept her and Kylo from becoming vaporized on their way down.

She doesn’t remember the actual crash. At some point when they had breached the planet’s atmosphere, hurtling at an uncountable rate through space and then air, she must have blacked out. Probably from the difference in pressure, or maybe because Kylo was hugging her tighter than a wookie to his chest and damn near smothering her as he was doing it.

Rey had be wearing a safety harness. Kylo hadn’t. He was also still unconscious when she crawls out of the jagged gap she’d torn in the side of their tin-can emergency pod.

And, because her whole day hadn’t been going terribly enough, they had landed buried about halfway in muck. Wet, sloppy, sinking, stinking muck. Sinking slowly, but sinking nonetheless.

This planet has a breathable atmosphere, at least. That part was a miracle. There had been no way to check before the crash. Rey had been all alone in the Falcon before her kriffing bondmate had ambushed her. One thing had lead to another and then Kylo, the idiot of intergalactic proportions that he was, had destroyed her damned ship. His dad’s damned ship. Blew out the electricals and the engine and left it as just a floating husk ambling through space.

Things had happened after that, but she’s not talking about those. Not at all.

Both their ships had been, for all purposes, effectively destroyed. That’s the important takeaway. Hence, the need for the life pod. Singular pod. They’d had to share. And that might have been the
second worst part of all of this because now he’s unconscious in a broken metal box that’s ever so slowly sinking below the surface of whatever godsforesaken mire they’ve crashed into.

“Kylo, I’m leaving you here.”

Rey doesn’t know why she bothers telling him. He can’t hear her, but he’ll need to wake up and help himself pretty soon. Even though the ground is almost thick enough for her to stand on, it immediately starts to shift under her, making her boots sink and tumbling her down to her knees.

She’s never been in a place like this and she hates it already. The weight of her own feet in the filth is as heavy as the burden on the other side of her mind.

“This is it, Kylo. Lights out. You’ve gotten us stuck here on a kripping jungle. I aint dragging your heavy ass out. That’s all on you.”

It’s evening. Or maybe dawn. Or maybe the planet is just dim. But the sky is red and pink and striated and she’s absolutely going to let him drown in the strong smelling silt-water because all of this, all of this, is absolutely his fault.

As Rey slogs to what looks like a shoreline, or at least a solid edge to the sinking bog, she can feel him pulling at her. Not him exactly, because she’s quite confident that he’s still completely unconscious, but their bond itself. Tugging at her a trying to will her to go back and attend to her other half.

Yeah, no dice, Bond. It’s your fault as much as it is laser brain over there.

She thinks that the grass, or grass-like lifeform, that covers the jungle floor is purple. It looks glossy black in the fading light. Guess it must have really been evening after all. When she activates her lightsaber and holds it closer for the illumination, the blades of the plant quiver and flatten. Either reacting to the concentrated force of the saber itself or the heat it emanates.

Interesting. It’s an odd reaction. Most plants don’t respond to the energy of a kyber crystal at all.

But Rey can worry about all that in the morning. If she survives until morning. She had made it through the crash largely uninjured with Kylo taking by far the worst of the impact. He’s hurting badly. A sharp, stabbing pain blooming like a phantom along her right temple. That’s all him.
She’s fine, but whatever damage he’s taken on is begin broadcast into and that’s exactly the last thing she needs. No part of him should ever touch her, not even from a long distance.

Oh. Right. There’s that element as well. If he dies, what will happen to her?

They are bonded more closely now than ever before. Something had happened between them up there, when they were stranded together in space and waiting for their clocks to countdown. She had allowed herself to make a horrible mistake and now it’s preventing her from running away. Each step she takes further from her other half in need makes her legs feel like lead weights. Even breathing becomes a challenge as she drags her way through the underbrush, the weight of guilt and destiny quickly crushing her resolve to just get the hell away from the creeper that ruined her whole entire life...

Rey comes to rest against a tree, leaning on it for much needed support then suddenly pulling away as something in its bark stings her hand.

Poe had once told her that everything in a jungle is out to get her. Maybe he was right. He was definitely right that she should have never taken this mission solo. A support squad and a couple dozen blasters would have changed things.

“I’m not going back for you.”

He’s still unconscious. His presence in her mind is muted. Muddled. It’s been at least ten minutes. He should have woken up by now.

With a grunt, Rey pushes back up off her knees that she’d been resting her hands against. It’s growing dimmer by the second. Darkness seems to come easily to this planet, and she’ll save the metaphor of that for dawn.

One step. Two. She never makes it to three.

_It thought it was the only way we could be together._

She’d hated him so much at that moment, when he’d said that to her. That whole twisted ambush of his had ended exactly the way he wanted it to, and she’d fallen for it every step of the way. He’d taken so much from her, and then he’d had to take more.
And, if she’s not mistaken, her feet are wet. Not her real feet, because her boots had mostly dried by the time it had taken her to get from there to here, but *his* are. Which means that the pod has sunk down far enough that the escape slash she’d cut out is starting to go under the surface.

“Wake up, you kriiffing idiot. Wake the fuck up.”

It’s easy for her to throw the words into his mind. To shove her anger and righteousness into his thick skull and demand he come back to reality and self-rescue.

Nerves fire in his head to her command. Pain blossoms through her temple, shooting heat across her face and sending her crashing to her knees. The grass, that strange mobile plant, pulls away from her touch.

And Kylo can’t do it. He can’t seem to make himself wake up. He must be much more severely hurt that she’d realized. It comes as a true surprise. She’s not used to seeing him at a physical disadvantage.

Granted, she hadn’t actually bothered to examine him when she’d come to herself. Had simply shoved his massive, unmoving bulk off of her with the Force and focused on getting the hell out of there and away from him as quickly as she could.

“Get up,” Rey growls the words, both in her head and on her lips. Tangles her fingers against the flinching grass and tries to throw some real power into their connection. “Wake up. Right *now*. I’m ordering you, you-”

You what? You monster? He often responds to that.

“You’re a monster, Kylo. You’re far too wicked to die an easy death. It’s going to be by my blade and my blade alone, so wake. The hell. UP.”

Her fingers twitch. His fingers twitch. She folds over on herself and rests her head on her knees. Focuses on focusing.

His eyes open. It’s dark. Their shared mind is reeling. He’s confused and doesn’t get it at first.
And he reaches out for her, pulling at her, and Rey automatically starts to crawl back to him before catching herself.

He’s wet up to his knees. The water is seeping in slowly, and it reeks to high hell. The sharp smell of it alone makes him blink and shake his head.

Oh yes, he is pretty injured. The wound on his head from when he presumably had slammed into something upon impact, and there’s something wrong with his shoulder as well.

“You have to get up, Kylo,” her mental voice is as deadpan as her feelings for him at that moment. “Look up over your head. That’s how you get out.”

Her jaw jerks up. She’s not sure if she’s doing that or he is. He must have a concussion because the motion makes them both nauseous.

“Damnit, focus Kylo. Get yourself out. Crawl up through that hole over your head.” And mind the sharp edges, wouldn’t want to cut yourself. “You’re in an escape pod and it’s sinking. You need to get out of there.”

Where are you?

The transmitted dampness keeps rising. If he doesn’t get his act together soon, he’s going to have the tension of the muck to deal with.

“Don’t talk to me, Kylo. You don’t get to talk to me. I’m nowhere. Now get the fuck out of that pod so I can kill you.”

Just feeling him awake through their bond again makes her so angry. And worried and confused and a million other things she hasn’t had time to process let alone understand yet. But it’s the anger that both comes the easiest to her and she’s betting will be the most effective for him.

She can see Kylo blinking up at the night sky. It’s the last edges of twilight now, and everything is dim.
When he rises, shaky and unsteady on his legs, he’s tall enough that he can almost reach the hole as it is. This annoys Rey further because she had been too short and had to climb up the walls and clamber on the navigation panels to get out.

“Hurry up,” she hisses.

Maintaining this detailed a connection with him should have been an extreme challenge. It isn’t. That’s something new between them and she really doesn’t like it.

*Where are you?*

Rather than answer again, she starts to pull back. To distance her awareness from his. He yanks at her abruptly, tugging on the ties that bound them to keep their minds tightly fused.

And he keeps doing it. Pulling and pulling and pulling. It almost feels as if he’s trying to physically drag her back to him, the pull is so strong.

“Kylo! What are you-”

His side of their connection suddenly stops. Grows dark. Poof. Just like that, he’s gone.

Rey blinks. Stares at a facefull of trembling grassblades. Her mind is her own again.

Hesitantly she gives their cord a yank. He’s alive. But he’s also fallen unconscious once more.

She frowns, heaving herself up onto her hands and knees. She feels soaked and stiff. The idiot really is going to drown if he doesn’t-

He’s much more hurt than she’d come to realize. That’s why he’d passed out again. That’s why he’d been reaching for her so desperately. Why their bond had been acting so resolute.

He needed her help but he’d been too… Well, he was Kylo Ren, after all. It’s not like he’s going to ask for help. Not from her and not from anyone.
“I hate you. I honestly hate you, you monster.”

It’s hard for her to stand up. The water was getting deeper around him. Pretty soon it will be up to his neck.

Rey had promised him that she’d kill him if they survived their crash landing. She meant every word of it. But it can’t happen like this.

* *

As Kylo grows weaker, so does Rey.

By the time she makes it back to the clearing with the crash site, it’s full blown night and she feels like she just did a half marathon through thick fog. She’s soaked and pissed off and everything about everything is such a nightmare that it’s hard to take.

Her bondmate’s lifeforce glows brightly though their connection, but it is dimming. It makes her wonder what he would have done if she wasn’t here. Would this have been it for the great Kylo Ren? Drowning a fool’s death on some backwater piece of nowhere?

She highly doubts it. That simply doesn’t sound right.

But, of course, if she wasn’t here, neither would he have been. And if he had, he would have used the safety restraints in the escape pod on himself and not be tossed around like the useless black ball of pure evil that he is upon the crash landing.

If Rey was any less frazzled, she might have been able to focus the Force enough to raise the pod out of the wetlands it was now nearly buried in. But she’s not and she’s so damn weary and in pain that it’s ironically easier to trudge through the quicksand muck and go over there herself.

She slices the top hole in the pod open wider with her lightsaber and uses it to illuminate the insides. Intergalactic dipshit is sprawled in a heap, swamp water halfway up his chest and rising. And the side of his head gleams like black liquid vinyl under the blue glow of her makeshift light. Perhaps some of his uselessness was due to blood loss rather than a full-on concussion?
In the grand scheme of things, that doesn’t really matter. She has to get him out of here somehow.

Their bond tries to lend a hand. Whatever part of his addled brain is still firing must know that she’s trying to help him. His body is a dead weight as she drops down inside next to him and wraps her arms around his torso. Just a few hours ago they were-


One-third physical strength and two-thirds Force. That’s how she manages to lift him up, drag him along with her as she climbs up and out. It takes a massive effort, and she can’t help but flinch as the jagged edges of the hole tear at his clothes and her own skin stings in sympathetically.

Scavenge something useful before you go. You have nothing and you may need it.

The voice of her former self isn’t wrong. Gods know how she’s going to make it off planet. Wiring some sort of comm array seems like the obvious not to mention only choice.

“Oops, sorry.”

Kylo makes a morbidly satisfying ‘smuck’ noise as she dumps his limp body into the mire. He landed face up, at least.

The basic navigation panel is all she has to work with. She slices it wide, taking as big a chunk of the housing and wiring as she can. It’s an ungainly piece, probably weighing a good ten kilos or maybe more. And she has no tools. This is not going to be fun.

Still better than dragging Kylo’s tremendous bulk through muggy quicksand, though. The idiot who crashed them here and now he doesn’t even have the decency to wake up from his life-threatening injuries and crawl to safety.

In Rey’s book, that’s just plain selfish. He’s a bad man and bad things deserve to happen to him. Pity she has to be dragged along with him for the ride.
The jungle is hot and damp but Rey’s hand still shakes when she holds a blaster to Kylo’s skull.

She doesn’t have to shoot him. He’ll die on his own, bleeding out like he is now. But she wants to do it. Wants to shoot his lying, duplicitous, conniving brain and make the universe a better place.

“Boom.”

She presses the trigger.

Click click click.

It’s empty. She’d taken the charge out of it hours before when she was cleaning it since she’s learned her lesson about not randomly shooting holes in things. And it’s ironic that then he’d attacked her ship and she’d forgotten all about it. If she’d had the power supply in it…

Everything would have gone exactly the same. Blaster fire is just an annoying mosquito to a skilled Force user. But maybe she could have used it come daylight when she no doubt brilliantly an expertly turns her hunk of computer debris into a means of rescue.

Click. Click click click.


She’d been doing this for, oh, probably a solid ten minutes. Long enough to feel her own soul get pulled down as Kylo’s spirals slowly. He’s not dying quickly. He couldn’t even do that much for her.

Instead he’s bleeding from a massive head wound and all she can do is press his cowl tightly against it since she has no medkit.

“Did you hear me before, Kylo?” she shakes his body with her knee, trying to bounce his weight
which she’s resting on her lap. “Did you hear me? I said I hate you. I hate what you did to me. I hate it so much.”

Her words ring hollow. She hates herself for allowing herself to get into this situation at all. Hates herself for all of it.

They’d very recently shared something that should have been, in nearly any other circumstance, an extremely special and touching moment in any young woman’s life. And then he’d ruined it by being Kylo Ren, the man who ruins everything he touches.

The man who’s currently bleeding out in her arms and there’s nothing she can do about it except stroke his forehead and wait.

“And you’re going to leave me here all alone to fix this, aren’t you?”

Does he also hate swamps as much as she’s discovered she does? Would he have been a help or a hindrance?

He would have been company. Rey never used to long for company until she suddenly had it in excess. Turns out she’d been missing on a lot.

“Kylo?”

He can’t hear her. She can hear him less and less as well. It makes her eyes sting and her throat constrict until she has to put the blaster down to wipe her nose on her sleeve.

Why is this so fucking sad? She’s getting what she wanted. What she had said it to in him a thousand and one times and meant it in as many ways.

Except back on the ship she hadn’t hated him, at least for a few minutes during their time together. She can still feel the weight of his lips on hers if she closes her eyes and concentrates. He’d been so desperate and needing. Pleading. Soft. Kind. Ben. So different from the man she’s come to know.

It wasn’t fair. Why couldn’t she have had that version of him all the time? Was it really imminent,
inevitable death that was needed to draw it out of him?

She wipes her first tear off his cheek from where it had fallen. Before it could slide down his profile and mingle with the traces of blood caught by the collar of his robe.

He can’t hear her. So… she should probably say something poignant, shouldn’t she?

A deep breath in. A shaky breath out.

Their bond lies in tatters. Stronger than ever before, but also fraying. Decomposing into nothingness.

Oh. So that’s what’s going to happen?

It scares her and profoundly upsets whatever part of his mind is clinging to fading his own awareness. She could try to smooth that over, at least. Since she can’t fix what’s killing him, she can at least soothe them both while she waits.

Rey closes her eyes and wills him closer to her. She can’t dip into his head. Breaching the mind of someone unconscious is so far beyond the boundaries of her side of the Force that she wouldn’t even know where to begin.

But she reaches for their bond. Draws it around her and visualizes wrapping it close to herself like a funeral shroud. She’ll probably die along with him. She doesn’t feel like she’s dying, but it makes sense. They are bonded, after all.

And maybe it’s better because otherwise she’s all alone again. And Rey is so very, very tired of being alone.

The Force surges in her, swirling around her tangled emotions. Hate and… and something that is its opposite. They are both very powerful entities. Only when she accepts them do the feelings inside her begin to change.

For a moment, just a fleeting second, she can feel him again. That same broken presence who
ruined her.

It’s gone in an instant, but Rey knows what she needs to do. Master Luke had told her of Force Healing, but their time together had been so short. She knew only of its existence and how it was pure and of the light. Nothing about how to implement it.

Pure and of the light.

What is that? Well, that’s… that would be love. And if she can’t bring herself up to the lofty moral high ground of love, maybe purging herself of its dark opposite will work to?

“I don’t hate you Kylo.”

She whispers the words against his chilled forehead.

It doesn’t work. He slips further from her grasp.

Their bond likes it when they’re soft with each other. It’s the most powerful thing they have between them, and she can’t do this without it.

*I don’t hate you, Kylo. I hate the things you do, not the person behind them.*

She kisses his temple when she pushes the words into the numb space on his side.

Who is going to inherit his lightsaber? What’s going to happen to it?

The random thought pops into her head and she pushes it away. That godsdamn saber of his… kriff, it’s a symbol of everything that’s wrong with him. Wrong with the whole universe.

Rey concentrates harder. Has to because he’s getting further and further away. Their bond used to lead her straight to him, and now it just leads her to a dim space. A dark corner that is rapidly growing.
Her tears start to flow freely and she has to fight to keep calm. Panicking is not the answer. Fear is not the answer. The only answer is-

“Fuck it Kylo, I forgive you, okay? I forgive you for being such a intergalactic fuckup that you made a moment like this even happen.”

Her words are muffled by the shoulder she buries her face against as she starts to sob. This shouldn’t be happening. None of this should have happened.

And I forgive you for that, too. For… what happened up there. But I won’t forgive you if you leave me. I’ll never forgive you for that.

Their bond nudge at her. Prompts her to pick her head up and look down at him with bleary eyes. Mercifully it’s the dark of night now. She wouldn’t want to see him like this otherwise.

Her hand finds it way under his cowl. Lightly skims the massive wound reaching from his temple to nearly the back of his skull. It’s even indented like the nav terminal in her backpack, and just how sick is that?

Touching it makes her own head burn. Throb painfully with fresh heat.

Rey blinks, heart fluttering at the realization.

It hadn’t been doing that before. Before he’d been cool. Clammy and chilled.

Her breathing falters for a second. It’s working. It’s actually working. Before he had been cold nothingness, and now he’s in pain and she’s in pain. As twisted as this is, this is progress.

She closes her eyes again. Visualizes skin knitting over. Flesh rejoining with flesh. Whatever is wrong with him becoming un-wrong. It’s an incomplete thought, but she throws her intention behind it.
Their bond rolls in a wave. Ebbs back into her mind and brings a very sharp flood of fresh pain in its wake.

Back there on the ship, they’d had a moment like this. Not an agonizing moment teetering between life and death, but a moment where she had felt so connected to him. So unguarded and yet protected at the same time.

It had been… the opposite of hate. So that’s what Rey thinks about now. Thinks about that flickering second when they had both been at utter peace with each other.

The skin under her hand is hot. It was cold before. Rey doesn’t let herself get distracted.

“Kylo-”

Their bond shimmers and they both work together to pull him forward to hear her.

“Kylo… I don’t hate you. All you need to do is change. And not die. That’s all I’m asking from you.”

Yes. Very much yes. He’s getting stronger. Feeling his damaged skin pulling smooth under her touch is very odd. Master Luke would be so fucking proud of her right now. She’s saving his nephew. Saving his nephew so she can kill him later on when they’re on an even playing field. Or maybe Master Luke will come down as a Force Ghost and do the deed himself.

Don’t think about him. I hate him.

Kylo’s weak and faltering voice in her head comes as such a welcome relief that Rey bursts out laughing. Laughing as she is crying and it makes her whole body shake and Kylo gasp as the movement under him sends new pain lancing through him.

Pain is good. Pain is proof that you’re alive.

Pain is… Lightsider, your true colors are showing.
Rey drops her hand from his burning skin with a huff. Well that’s done, then. If he’s healed enough to deliberately piss her off, that means that he’s probably going to live. What a pity.

“Rey...” the words are a tortured choke. She shakes her head, lifting him offer her with the Force.

“Gotta go, Kylo. It’s been swell but the swelling’s gone down. Got places to be and all that.”

He reaches for her with their connection. She smacks him away, still too pissed off to let him get long-distance handsy.

“Yeah Kylo,” her toe nudges his shoulder and he grunts, “I don’t hate you. All you have to do is change one hundred percent about everything about yourself and become a new and better person. That’s not too much to ask. You go ahead and think about that while I get out of here.”

He tries to whisper her name again but shuts up when she balls his cowl underneath his now unblemished head. It lulls him, soothing him into a fitful rest of recovery.

Rey unclips his lightsaber from his belt and picks up his hand. Wraps his palm around the hilt so it’s handy just in case any big jungle baddies try to sniff out the newcomer for their next meal.

Then Rey turns into the night, walking away from her sworn enemy with a clean conscience and a determination to her pace.

Chapter End Notes

Gotten bored with my other WIPs and I’ve been itching to try something new. I’ve got a fully complete shiney new action-packed outline for this fic so yeah, let’s do this.
*cracks knuckles*
Chapter Summary

Where a desert girl has to learn the ways of the jungle and her nerf-herder, laser brained bondmate waits patiently and peacefully for his beloved to forgive him for stealing her V-card and come back.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kylo drifts in and out of consciousness.

Rey can feel him constantly even as she’s running away and the physical distance between the two of them grows. Sometimes he pulls at their bond in a fever, making her stumble and long to turn back and go to him. Sometimes he’s more lucid and watches her placidly, seeking out the comfort of her mind but never saying a word.

Whatever “healing” she did to him has taken its toll on both of them. While her bondmate remains slumped on the ground, hurt and confused, Rey has a hard time staying on her feet. She stumbles and wavers and has to stop and rest far more than a young Jedi in the peak of her physical fitness should have to.

And she has absolutely no idea where she’s going. No sort of guidance at all other than for a general notion to get as far away from him as fast as she can. Which turns out to be hardly fast at all since it’s so dark now that she can barely see except for what the short glow of her saber can show to her.

A few more steps, just a few, and the ground seems to sway and roll beneath her feet, sickness rolling off of her in waves. Kylo is struggling to sit up. Progress for him is weakness for her and that’s never been more true than it is now.

It had taken a lot to save that laser-brained fool’s life. Rey has no doubt that she’ll come to regret that decision very soon.

Letting him live was the wrong choice. She may be bonded to him, but she has something far greater that now defines her life: a duty to the Resistance. To her friends and new family who have given up so much and who in the hell was she to betray them like that and save her other half? She
should have killed him. Should have let him die even if that meant her own death because the galaxy is about so much more than only the desires of one single person.

Killing him would have been the right thing to do. And she didn’t do it. Someday very soon, she’ll have to come to terms with that.

Until then, it’s just one foot in front of the other. A slow, meandering lurch as she strives to get away from the root of all her evils while she still can.

Further complicating things is that there’s also something very off about this planet that they’re now on. Everything seems to react to her. Plants recoil as she moves past them, grass blades shrink and quiver when her lightsaber lantern draws too near. Even the inanimate things like the rocky bed of gravel and boulders she finally comes to rest upon when two of the moons are high in the sky seem to radiate an opposing force in effort to repel her.

So you can feel it too?

Kylo has tried to talk to her off and on as she trudged away from him. He had been surprisingly calm about their shared change in fortune. It made her highly suspicious.

But Rey is so tired. Her head is so heavy on her knees when she slumps down and rests it against them. She just can’t with him right now.

“We’re not on speaking terms, Kylo. Go away.”

A spike of concern ripples over to her and she has to squeeze her eyes shut to fight back the surge of nausea it creates. He must be able to sense that she’s not well.

Where do you think you’re running to, little scavenger? Do you know some secret to this planet that you’re not sharing?

Rey scoffs and shakes her head. Maybe he can feel that as her answer and maybe he can’t. Either way she meant it when she said she wasn’t going to talk to him.
Sluggishness finds her next. Dull or aching pains that prick at her nerves.

The lughead is trying to stand up, she realizes dimly. He’s trying but is still far too weak and failing every time until he eventually gives up. She can see him there clearly in her mind. Sitting right where she left him, staring up at the endless sea of unknown stars in the sky.

The stars look exactly the same when she forces her own head up. She hadn’t gotten very far away.

Rey pulls her wrappings tighter around herself, shivering from the dampness in the air and strangeness of her fortunes rather than from any real sort of chill. Since she has nothing else, she uses the computer panel – the one she cleaved from their escape pod before it sank into the mire – as a pillow. It’s no more comfortable than the rock she’d been using before.

Somewhere in the far and near distance, her bondmate rubs the side of his head with a frown.

Neither of them get even a moment of sleep that night.

* *

Before Kylo Ren had crashed into her ship and destroyed the engine and took her virginity and ruined her life, Rey had been flying near to this planet for a reason. It wasn’t purely sheer luck that they’d crashed here.

Okay, it had been sheer luck that they’d made it to the surface. That part shouldn’t have happened. But the Resistance had been investigating this planet as a possible site for a base. Rey isn’t sure how they first zeroed in on it, but now that she’s just discovered a long, long dead body in Rebellion gear it makes sense.

The corpse is mostly a skeleton by now, and an incomplete one at that. Its decomposition has no doubt been aided rapidly by the humid and hot environment and the spongy wet ground that had come to be… to be his final resting place.

“Corporal Delckis.”
Rey flips the remains of Corporal Delckis over with the Force since she doesn’t want to touch him. She’d said he was *mostly* a skeleton, but there’s still… stuff on his bones. To give no mention to the smell. It’s pretty hard to take.

She has no idea how long he’s been out here. Decades at least, given her best guesstimation of the timeline.

Far more disturbing then some random corpse being out here is that he’s *incomplete*. There’s only his torso and head here, leading her to wonder if her concerns of big jungle beasts was actually well founded. Or perhaps all that remains are simply what was left after an unsuccessful parachuting or escape pod debacle? Not everyone could be as lucky as she and Kylo were to survive an emergency crash landing through the atmosphere.

Either way, she doesn’t want to linger. See if poor Mr. Delckis has anything she needs and then skedaddle the hell out of here.

Attached to the rotten fabric of his belt is a little leather pouch. Probably a small pocketknife or something of about that size. She summons that over to her with a frown and a mouthed ‘sorry’.

The scavenger in her is also telling her that… that his helmet might be useful. She has no way of collecting water should she find any and…

Brain juices. Oh gods no. He’s been dead a long time, but not *that* long and-

*What’s wrong? What’s happening to you?*

Oh kriff, trust her kriffing bondmate to butt in as she was struggling with a tough decision.

It’s dawn now and, when she closes her eyes, he’s still where she left him on the edge of the mire. Except now he’s sitting crossed legged and in the meditation stance. That must have been why he could connect with her so easily.

To be spiteful, Rey shoves at him the visuals of what she’s seeing. He recoils immediately, flinching into the periphery of her mind. Then he gags, twisting over onto his hands and knees, as she throws the smell at him too just for extra pettiness.
What in all the hells?

Rey shrugs, keeping her sensory assault up for a few moments longer before taking it away.

“Apparently I’m not the first freedom fighter to make my way here. This planet had showed up in our records and… and here we are.”

A pause as Kylo recovers his composure. He pulls her closer to him through their bond, and now Rey can see the deep-set frown etched onto his features.

Is there a base here, then? Yet another old, abandoned relic we can take cover in?

Not that she’s aware of, and Rey has no idea where this ‘we’ business is coming from.

“I was thinking about using his helmet as a cooking pot.”

She hadn’t been thinking about it with any sincerity, but the comical waves of sheer horror and aghast-ment that the spoiled prick she’s bonded to make the notion almost worth it.

Or not really, but it was still fun to rile him up.

Rey stands up, still wavering slightly in the aftereffects of giving away so much of herself to save Kylo last night.

The sky is brighter now. Before it was hazy and foggy and dim, but now the low-lying clouds have begun to dissipate as dawn progresses into the dazzling vibrancy of early morning.

It feels like it’s going to be a very hot day. Heat she can handle. Heat and humidity and rotting corpse stench? Oh no thank you, definitely time to go now.

Some sort of symbolic gesture seems appropriate. Religious beliefs run thin in the Resistance and
she assumes it did in the original Rebellion as well, so Rey settles on clasping her hands together in front of herself and dipping her head respectfully.

“May the Force be with you.”

Her other half frowns, irritated by her choice of words and drawing her own face into a scowl as well. She promptly shoves him out of her head before he can catch any of the tangle of feelings the memory wells up inside her.

“Spoiled prick,” she mutters.

Then she picks her head up, rolls her shoulders, and leaves the dismal gravesite as quick as she can.

* 

Do you really think you can ignore me? After what we shared?

Her bondma- Kylo Ren’s - persistent interruptions were seriously getting on her nerves. It’s mid-morning now and she had been attempting to somehow jerry-rig a usable something out of the pile of nothing that was the severed computer terminal. Kylo’s constant need for attention was making this a most tedious task.

Still, he doesn’t like being ignored, so that’s exactly what she going to try to do. Even though she has a sinking feeling her quest is in vain since she can’t think of any sort of power source for her impromptu device. If it had a power source, maybe it would work. It looks like something that should work. But as it is now, she can’t even test it properly. So that sucks.

Rey... you know that I’ll find you. I always do.

Her hackles rise and her fingers tremble, drawing out a muttered curse from under her breath. It’s true. That’s the part that stings the most. No matter where they are or on whose side they are on, she and Kylo always seem to find their way back to each other.

Of course. We are bonded, after all.
“Kriff off.”

Rey picks at the circuit in her hands, carefully unscrewing the connector to one of the severed lines and rerouting the wire next to it. There had been one single, solitary piece of luck on her side these last twenty-four hours and that had been that the leather pouch on the corpse’s belt had actually been a multi-tool. Not an omni-tool, that would have been far too useful to be allowed by the cruel whims of Mistress Fate, but rather its old fashioned DIY cousin. It provided most of the small screwdrivers and other pieces that she would need to complete her task if it wasn’t for that glaring omission of the lack of power.

Tell me where you are, Rey. You're close. I can feel you.

Her hand slips in annoyance, causing the tool to slip and severe the delicate connection she had been trying to attach.

“Godsdamnit Kylo! Would you just go away and leave me in peace?!”

It’s a rhetorical question and they both know it. Kylo wouldn’t be Kylo if he wasn’t annoying the living crap out of her 24/7.

And he doesn’t immediately answer back this time. Instead, he simply lurks. Hovers like a gloating demon or a specter of high hopes and deep promise. This is much worse. Now he’s simply observing her and she can hardly stand it.

“Say something, you kriffing lughead...”

Rey mutters the words under her breath, going back to tinkering with her doomed signal transmitter.

I thought you wanted me to shut up?

“Do both.”
The only power source they had was currently gods-know how many meters under muck. It was unlikely to have kept any charge overnight, and even lower odds for it not shortcircuiting when Rey cut out the panel with her saber. If she had been thinking clearly at that moment…

Well, she hadn’t been thinking clearly. Kylo had been dying and taking his sweet time about it. She’d just taken what she thought she needed and then hurried back to him. Yet another thing he’s ruined by existing.

_Ouch._

“No no no Kylo, you don’t get to do that. You don’t get to pretend that you have feelings.”

Their bond has become so much stronger over this last day since they had… gotten closer. Enough so that she can clearly feel the hurt emanating off of his side of her mind. The reasons behind this new level of connection are excruciatingly obvious but Rey will be damned if she acknowledges them now. Or ever.

It’s only a matter of a few more seconds before Kylo speaks again.

_If I were there, I could help you._

She scoffs. Doesn’t even bother trying to hide her scorn for his suggestion from him.

“Oh yeah? Like you helped on the Falcon? Tell you what, Kylo. You come and find me. If not when you do, we’re going to have another go of it. We’re going to fight properly, and this time I promise that I’m going to break you down so fast the fall through the atmosphere will seem like nothing.”

With that threat, Rey’s concentration is officially shot. She tosses down the multitool aside with a muttered curse, but catches her temper and carefully wraps it up with the computer terminal in what had been her outer tunic. With her arms exposed like this, she’s doubtlessly going to burn up in this sun but whatever, that’s just something else she can blame on _him_ too.

Kylo doesn’t answer, but even across this growing distance she can feel him shake his head.
Rey spends the rest of the morning hacking her way through this strange jungle with a very half-baked notion of somehow turning the Kyber crystal in her blade into a power source. The computer-turned-nav device needed energy. Her blade was made of energy. It could… work? All further details pending.

Kylo had pulled back out of their connection after her rejection of him. There was a part of him, not a small part either, that was so desperate for love. For her love. And she’d given it to him or nearly, back up there miles above her head when their bodies had expressed things she couldn’t even begin to wrap her mind around.

The way he wants her now has very little to do with sexuality. Or maybe not very little, but they still went well and deep beyond that. His feelings were hurt, obviously. And yes, she will reluctantly admit that he has feelings. Far too many of them, in fact. He may have called her a bad Jedi but he’s an even worse darksider, truly.

In times like this she actually feels sorry for him. She does. But that doesn’t mean that she can give into him.

It doesn’t matter how much she wants to. It doesn’t matter how much it’s simply the only sensible thing to do. Yes, they are bonded, after all. And they’re also stuck on this planet together. It would only make strategic survival sense for them to team up and put their heads together.

Except Rey had the sinking feeling it wouldn’t only be their heads they’d end up interlocking. Hence her need to cover as much ground away from him as she possibly can.

Rescue will happen. It has to. Self-rescue or somehow otherwise. Her other half simply can’t be around when it does.

By the time she reaches the crest of the grassy hill she’d been jogging up, Rey’s skin is burning from intensity of the sun beating down upon her. She squints, pressing a flattened palm above her eyes to shield them as she looks around. This is the first spot of higher ground she’s come across, but it still doesn’t let her see much.
The landscape is a brilliant kaleidoscope of colors. Mostly deep greens and purples like the leaves of the higher trees. In contrast, the lower levels of the jungle were filled with bright pops of python yellow or electric blue. Orange flowers. Red rocks. A gluttonous overindulgence of colors. Rey had never seen anything like this place. Never even *imagined* it.

It was beautiful. In a psychotropic, otherworldly sort of way. Everything was alive and moving and vibrant. Even the sky would shift in color, varying between blue and pink and orange like it was always the very beginning of sunset even if the sun was at its apex above her head right now.

Alright, so it was pretty. Rey was enjoying this brief moment of reprieve. The first real chance to catch her breath. But where to go now?

Absolutely impossible to say. Behind her was Kylo, so obviously she couldn’t go back that way. Ahead, following the direction of the sun across the sky, was the notion of a hill or mountain. She couldn’t quite see it through the heavy canopy, but the landscape was definitely rising in that direction.

Just as she’s about to push on, fighting her own weariness and mixed feeling, power suddenly rolls through her. It’s echoing loudly off Kylo’s side of the bond and that can only mean that he’s doing something. Using the Force and using it strongly.

Rey sighs. Kylo Ren doing something is the worst. Nothing ever good comes from that.

She sinks down, kneeling on her heels and resting her legs. Again the grass shrinks from her, shying away from her fingertips and palms and anywhere that her bare skin touches it. This world may be beautiful, but it’s also very strange and somewhat unsettling.

The feeling of power inside her grows. Focuses and intensifies.

“Kylo?” she asks to no one. “What in all the hells are you doing?”

The mental image of him that she gets when she closes her eyes is muddled. It was much clearer earlier and she frowns before lifting her fingers off the grass and it immediately sharpens. Interesting...

When she sees him, Kylo still looks pale and weak, but he’s standing up and reaching out. He’s
still by the edge of the swamp where she’d left him, and he’s reaching and frowning. He must have been waiting there, regaining his strength from his brush with death to do… whatever it is he’s trying to do now.

“Kylo?”

His eyes narrow. A snarl starts to slowly form on his upper lip.

“What are you-”

Be quiet.

Rey sucks a sharp breath in through her nose. Oh, so that’s how it’s going to be, is it? Well, in that case, he can just-

Help me lift it.

His mental voice is tight with inner tension. He’s really putting the effort of the Force into whatever it is that he’s doing. It’s a struggle for him. Much more than he thinks it should be. Either he’s still weak or it’s that thing going on with this whole planet. The sheer exertion of his will reminds her of when she was running away from him on Crait.

It feels exactly like that, actually. And that's when she realizes what’s he’s trying to do. The same thing, more or less, that she had done to save her friends back on the brutal planet of salt and death.

“You want to lift the pod out of the bog? Why? It’s useless to us now.”

Her voice breaks his focus and the Force snaps, making them both physically recoil. Rey opens and closes her palm several times to take the sting out of it.

Then Kylo rolls his shoulders and her own moves in synchronization until she catches herself.

Because, my darling last Jedi, the pod has a power cell on it. You said that you needed one. I’m
trying to be helpful.

He reaches out again and Rey closes her eyes, taking a slightly wider stance for stability as she mirrors his movement with her own arm.

“I never told you that.”

You thought it. You’d also thought about using your own lightsaber to power your crude attempt at a signal. Rey… that was a very stupid idea.

Her nose scrunches up in her displeasure and Rey’s pretty sure she’s actually bearing her teeth.

“Kriff off. I don’t see you doing any better. Actually, I don’t see you doing any-”

I was recovering. And waiting for you to come to your senses and come back to me.

Rey shakes her head. The man is an idiot, if she hasn’t already established that aspect of her opinion about him.

“Then you’re going to be waiting a while.”

*it*

It was mid afternoon by the time Rey came to a clearing filled with animal bones.

Big animal bones, actually. Some nearly as long as she is tall. Most were bleached clean by the sun, but there were a few that were more recent.

Rey had heard about some large animals, usually mammals, all going to the same place when it came their time to die. In principle it made sense, but this place was downright eerie. The energy resonating inside this glade was off. Off as in negative. Off as in dark.
Dark, but also light. Somehow it’s both. The powerful, vibrant energy of both life and death swirling together.

What the hell is this place? Master Luke had told her that some planets had species that were highly force-receptive. His own master Yoda had lived on such a place. A place where your own powers could be used against you if you weren’t careful.

Rey frowns and presses her palm against one of the bones, listening if it has anything it wants to tell her. It’s icy to her tough, stinging her skin with its cold despite it having baked all day under the sun. She yanks it away and her palm had started to crack, skin tinged with a faint green hue that only slowly returns back to its normal shade.

“Kylo?”

She whispers his name. He’s the darksider. He should be able to tell her why these bones are radiating life force even though they’re long, long dead.

Kylo doesn’t answer. He’s still having his little tantrum and giving her exactly what she wanted. Gone away and left her alone.

How ironic that now that she could actually have a use for the unbearable wreck that was her bondmate’s poor company, he’s the one giving her the silent treatment for a change.

And that’s when Rey realizes it. There’s no Kylo. No angry hiss from his side of the bond, only silence. Nothing but silence. From him and now from anywhere around her. The jungle is quiet and completely still. It should be full of movement and strange sounds and the constant thrum of the Force as it reflects back at her.

Rey reaches out. Tries to push and scan the area immediately around her. Her powers immediately get shoved back at her like they were on an elastic band.

She’s being dampened. Something is restricting her access to the Force completely.

She… needs to get out of here. Whatever this place is, it doesn’t want her here.
Rey turns and hurries backwards, working her way to the edge of the bizarre graveyard as quickly and silently as she can.

*

Well, there was good news and bad news.

The good news is that, once Rey had gotten a good rushed distance away from whatever the hell that monolithic place was back there, she had started to feel normal again. That strange feeling of rippling energy had subsided, and along with it much of her anxiety.

What does she really have to be afraid of, anyhow? She’s a Jedi, at least for all extents and purposes. The last one of her kind. Something too rare to die and too powerful to be afraid of a little bad jujuju.

The other good news was that she had found a few pieces of debris. Not debris that her, from their, escape pod may have lost during it’s terminal landing, but things that are much older. Scraps of metal and various bits and bobs. If she were to guess, most likely they came from the ship of poor Corporal Delckis. He really must have crash landed here after all, and that would explain the lack of completion to his corpse.

The bad news? Oh yes, of course there was bad news.

Kylo was back. Back in her head at least.

He’d been giving her the cold shoulder until that whole business with the bone pile. Then he must have felt the disturbance in her because he reluctantly, emphasis on reluctantly, had asked if she was okay once she’d gotten a safe distance out of there.

“You’re a miserable pest, you know that right?”

Rey kicks at a small piece of rusted metal that might have once been some sort of coupler. That one does her no good, but she did find a small flat sheet of outer housing that she can bend with the Force into some form of bowl or container. While not ideal, it was infinitely than the earlier choice of ‘rusted helmet with a touch of rotten brain soup’ canteen.
You want this power cell Rey? Come and get it.

Rey rolls her eyes, annoyed as much at herself as she is of him. After all this time, he really shouldn’t be able to get under her skin anymore.

So you’re planning on stealing it from me? Or did you think I wouldn’t notice that errant thought when we were linked together?

Linked together huh? That was the other bad thing. Try as hard as she might, Rey couldn’t quite seem to get her mind out of the gutter. It was as if at long last doing the do had awoken her inner giggly adolescent girl as s upposed to whatever “woman” she was finally supposed to be.

You know that you’re never going to get this away from me. You might have to pry it from my cold, dead hands but then, of course, your sweet little heart couldn’t bear to be without me and you’d have to resurrect me all over again, wouldn’t you?

“Kriff you’re an asshole.”

Rey means it so much. Maybe she didn’t mean all that heartfelt sentiment about killing him and sending him to an eternity of suffering while she lounges around eating the grapes of wrath and spite or whatnot. She’d told him something like that as they were leaving the Falcon in the escape pod. Maybe she’d meant that, maybe not. But this she really means.

She tries her best to ignore him, though. His kind feeds off negativity. Starve him of her attention and maybe he’ll wither up and become an easier target.

And then the Force swells in her again. Fills her senses like it had before when Kylo was trying to lift up the pod.

“Oh gods Kylo, what are you...”

Her voice fades out on itself. Wait. This… this is different. It’s not the same sort of energy she’d felt from him before. She knows her bondmate’s Force signature better than anyone else’s. Better than her Master’s, even. But she’s never felt him like this.
Rey freezes mid-step, all the tiny hairs on her skin standing straight up. This is raw power that she’s feeling, but it’s very strange. She doesn’t like it. Something is inherently wrong about it.

...Rey?

The sensation continues to buffet her, slamming against her like raging water. She can barely hear Kylo’s voice in her head over the roar of it.

This is the same feeling that she’d had before, when she’d touched that bone. Her hand throbs, The hand that she’d touched it with.

She looks down at her palm. It’s cold to her touch. Ice cold and faintly glowing green.

Rey? What’s going on? What’s happening?

Her heart is racing, that’s what’s happening. And her connection to Kylo is fading, cracking in and out like static.

“Kylo?” she whispers back.

He’s there but he’s blocked. This really isn’t him. Something else is-

A loud snap comes from behind her. Far louder than anything the birds or lizards could make.

Her lightsaber is in her hand and activated in less than a breath, but she doesn’t turn around. She’s being watched . She can feel it. Kylo can feel it. His panic spikes, taking her pulse along with it.

The energy moves closer, stalking her. Now it, whatever this thing is, is aware that she’s aware. It knows that she’s ready and willing to cut it down if it has to.

The knowledge that a powerful force user is ready to stand and fight is more than enough to scare
away most any sentient creature.

Not this one. It moves closer, nearly silently. If it weren’t for the occasional snap of a twig, Rey wouldn’t know that it was there at all.

Slowly, carefully, and deliberately, she turns around. Makes the movement slow and graceful. She needs to show that she’s not afraid. That she’s powerful and capable and this thing needs to rethink what it’s doing and leave. Save its own skin before she cleaves it off of it.

And then she sees it. It’s a creature. A big, big creature.

Some sort of feline, most likely, and absolutely huge. Bones nearly as big as she is high. All teeth and claws and not even a trace of fear as it regards her with slitted eyes.

And it has some sort of Force ability or at least an inherence. The fur or hide of it may be black, but it almost glows, shimmering with a radiant green power.

Rey’s palm throbs but she doesn’t take her eyes off the beast. This was the hand that she’d touched onto the bone in the field. Somehow this thing must have been tracking her through that.

“Kylo?” she whispers.

Beastie twitches its nose to the sound of her voice, smelling her and then its ears raise up in interest. Guess she smells good. Fucking hell…

“Kylo, I think I’m in trouble,” she takes a slow step back. Don’t show fear. She’s afraid, but she can’t show it. “I think this… thing has been following me. Kylo? Are you there?”

His side of their bond is pure noise. That same dissonant disturbance that she’d felt from the grass or the trees or the other living things on this world, but now amplified exponentially.

So this whole planet really is out to get her.

“Stop,” she tells the… the big fucking monstrous jungle cat when its limbs tighten and it cocks its
head, tail beginning to twitch from side to side. “Stop. You will turn around and not come back here again.”

Mind tricks often work well on animals. Not on this one.

Jungle Kitty growls, the fur on its arching back rising as she tries to probe its consciousness. It’s not afraid of her. Not even a little.

“Kylo?”

He’s hours away. Would be hours away if he knew where to find her. That leaves her with only one option. She squares her stance, holding up her lightsaber in readiness.

Jungle Kitty doesn’t like that. Not at all.

The second her saber is drawn up, her hand throbs with a new level of pain. Rey gasps, taking her eyes off Kitty for a fraction of a second to see what’s happening to her palm.

It’s a second too late. Jungle Kitty howls, the sheer noise of it deafening as it reverberates across every tree and rock around them. And then it pounces, moving far faster than its massive bulk should allow, and Rey hardly has time to leap back and block its attack.

Chapter End Notes

What? We can’t have an alien jungle fic without big jungle critters and psychedelic colors and force power hijinks can we? You want some action and drama in a fic, send in the man with a gun bursting onto the scene. Or a Jungle Kitty with a Force hate on, in this case.

But damnit, now this means I have to write a fight scene next chapter. FML.

Next chapter: Rey and Fluffytoes go at it, Kylo hauls ass to rescue his girl, and I your humble author begin to have grave doubts about my ‘absolutely not gonna be over 50k words for the whole story’ promise to myself.
Get the Hell Out of Dodge

Chapter Summary

Where Rey doesn't make a new friend, but she does get invited for dinner.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

A profound and primal reaction would strike anyone who found themselves in Rey’s current situation.

Here she was, alone on a strange and alien world, facing down a very large and very curious apex predator. She may have been a Jedi, at least by default, but she wasn’t cocky enough to not be afraid of what might be about to happen.

The jungle cat was just so big. Even her great Master Luke would have been nervous upon confrontation with this massive beastie. Or he might have tried to milk it. That was also a possibility.

Regardless, when the alien feline leaped forward, careening through the air straight for her, Rey had to fight to silence her mind. Had to control her nerves and survival instincts that were telling her to stop, drop, and then run like hell.

No, instead she wills her psyche to go blank and allows the Force to guide her. The force will never fail her, not if she has faith in it. She could almost do this with her eyes closed. This was nothing at all.

And she barely misses the extended claws that would have torn open her neck and possibly beheaded her.

It had been so close. She’d barely dodged. Could feel the movement through the air so close to her skin.

Rey spins in a pirouette, swinging her saber and timing it for the perfect killing blow just as the beast lands on its feet in the spot she had been occupying only a heartbeat before.
Her blade ricochets. Bounces right off the creature’s hide and nearly falls out of Rey’s hand from the sharp reverberations of the hard impact.

And the beast isn’t even really hurt. Rey stares at it dumbfounded. There is a cut on the cat’s shoulder but it’s a small one. Very small. Growing smaller and smaller until it’s gone.

A bright green glow surrounds the spot of the wound and the skin and fur grows back in seconds. That… that had been the Force at work. Rey could feel it to be true. But it’s nothing like any form of the Force that she’s ever encountered. Neither light nor dark and healing is certainly a possibility, but not like this.

Beastie looks back it her. Its tail lashes quickly from side to side. Then it lunges again, swiping for her in a breakneck arch.

This time she has no room to dodge, but she can bring her saber up to block it. The power of the cat’s movements nearly knocks her blade right out of her hand, but she holds on tight to the hilt and parries the creature's attack with a blazingly fast swipe of her own.

This time the beast gives a great howl and leaps back.

She had hurt it. Hurt it badly. Two of its toes are laying severed on the ground.

The cat recoils its wounded paw, holding it tightly again its own chest as that green light surrounds it. Rey’s can’t stop her gasp of shock as the creature regenerates itself right before her eyes. The toes grow back, deadly and sharp clawed as ever.

Rey steps back, never taking her eyes off the unreal sight.

The cat growls, flattening its ears and hissing low.

“Stay back,” she warns, holding her lightsaber across her body in a position that’s as equal parts defensive as it is assertive.
The growls turn into a roar. Slitted eyes track each movement of her feet as she rounds her enemy in a circle.

She needs to get out of here. Fighting in the close of quarters with something this huge is all but impossible.

Rey throws a shockwave of the Force against the animal, willing it to give up and retreat back to whatever jungle wallow it crawled out of. The beast stumbles and glares at her, the fur on its massive back rising and making it look even bigger than it already is. It shakes its head, clearing away the fog of her mental blow, and blinks twice.

Then it licks its lips and Rey turns on her heels and runs.

Branches snap and scratch against her face and arms as Rey bolts through the jungle. She doesn’t look back to know that it’s still there and still chasing her. The tremors in the ground behind her tell her all she needs to know.

Twice the beast lunges at her, closing the distance with its much longer strides. Twice the Force saves Rey, guiding her to exactly which way to dodge and roll to avoid an otherwise fatal blow.

She keeps her lightsaber activated even though its almost as much of a liability as an asset when she’s running and tumbling through rough terrain like this. The familiar weight of it in her hand provides a false sense of security and helps with evading the worst of the underbrush, but the creature truly seems to hate it. It almost feels like the animal is targeting the blade more than it is her, but she’s absolutely not about to discard it now.

Another twist in the gravelly ravine she’d been fleeing down, choosing the path of least resistance, and she suddenly comes face to face with her nemesis again.

The creature must have somehow gotten ahead of her, and it hunkers low to the ground, tail lashing wildly to each side. Rey holds the blade out in front of, ready to defend herself as she slowly and carefully backs away.

“I’m not about to become your next meal, furball. Get that idea out of your head and go find
someone else.”

Its ears twitch to the sound of her voice. As predatory as its acting, it also seems very curious. Clearly it has never seen a human or anything close to one before, or is it the Force within her that it can feel like she can within it?

“Stay back.”

Rey raises her free arm out, palm flat and pushing some intention of the Force into her words.

That was a mistake. As soon as she taps into her powers, muted though they are by the strange green energy that seems to radiate off of the beast, the animal transforms from curious to enraged. It bares its teeth and pounces, front paws extended as it leaps through the air.

Rey waits. Times her move to the very last millisecond. Then she brings the point of her lightsaber up, aiming it straight for the center of the beasts chest where its heart must be. Paranormal healing ability or not, this would surely be a fatal wound that would end their fight.

Until something massive collides with her from behind. The impact hits her flat in her back, shooting bolts of pain along her spine and slamming into her with enough force that she’s knocked off her feet. It sends her skidding face-first across the gravel and her lightsaber flies out of her hand before she can stop it.

The Force doesn’t give her a second to recover. It screams at her to roll and she does, hurling herself over to the side as the beast lands where she was a second before.

When she looks up, there are two of them. Two. The curious one was new and slightly smaller than the first.

The first which growls, the noise echoing through the trees and rocks surrounding them. Rey scrambles up to her feet, ignoring the searing pain of her aching back from where she had apparently been head-butted.

A whine echoes. The second beast flattens its ears, hunkering low in a posture that’s both aggressive and defensive. The first cat puffs up, circling around the periphery but ignoring her for now.
They’re about to fight over which one of them gets to eat her.

*Right.* Time to go.

Rey raises her hands up, pulling the Force into her to push them both away if necessary. Both cats turn to her, glaring at her and growling. The bigger takes a step forward and the smaller hisses and darts in front of it, blocking the path to its intended meal.

A standoff faces between them. Tails lash and eyes flicker between each other and her.

Rey strides backwards, never taking her eyes off them and relying on her muted connection to the Force to keep her from tripping over anything that she can’t see. Whatever thing- whatever *dampening* effect she’s feeling when she’s around these monsters- is setting her nerves on edge even more than they would normally be. It’s like she’s missing one of her senses and, if it comes down to it, she might not be able to hold them both back with either her abilities or her blade.

Her boot snaps against a twig, the sound of it barely audible over the constant growls and whines and warning of the two beasts to each other. Still, the smaller one looks over at her, and the larger immediately pounces. It swipes forward, claws catching on the other’s hind leg and making it erupt into a litany of howls.

So they can hurt each other, then. That means that fighting back is possible, she just doesn’t know how.

But they are distracted, and this is as good an opportunity as Rey is likely to have.

Rey pulls all of the Force into that she can then throws it at them, crying out loud from the effort. Both cats reel back, stunned for a second.

A second is all that she needs. Rey summons her lightsaber back into her hand from where it had been flung. And then she runs as fast as she possibly can, dimly noting that the direction she picked will eventually lead her back to Kylo.
Rey ran with a purpose.

She was covering old terrain now, backtracking on the steps that she’d taken to get here in the first place. The cats had chased her for a long while, but they had spent as much time tussling with each other as they had trying to close off Rey’s head start.

The unpleasant appearance of the second beast onto the scene had brought up a very concerning litany of questions: how many of them are there here on this planet? Has Kylo encountered them as well? What in the hells are they eating?

Rey hasn’t seen any other big game. Granted it’s only her second day, but other than the odd little flying or crawling jungle critters, the largest thing she’d seen had been a long, long dead human.

It was an unsettling thought. Hopefully these were the last of their kind and there wasn’t something far worse still waiting to be discovered.

By the time she reaches the debris swath she’d found before, her mind is beginning to clear of the fog that it had fallen under. Whatever strange dimming effect the creatures had on her abilities is fading, albeit very slowly. It seems like they may have stopped following her, or at least momentarily. Perhaps she’s reached the end of their territory, or maybe they’ve simply gone after someone who would put up less of a fight back.

Her palm also no longer burns with that cold, ice-like sensation of numbness that it had when the cats were close. With any luck, whatever negative energy she’d absorbed from casually and foolishly touching that sacred bone was also beginning to fade.

Now that the coast seems temporarily clear, Rey allows herself a pause to collect her breath and regain her bearings. Logic… logic would believe, that since there was a dead human body in a flight suit and pieces of fuselage from a crashed ship, therefore there should be the remains of said ship somewhere nearby. Perhaps it would have a piece or part that she could use, and perhaps not, but it was worth investigating just in case.

Rey?

Kylo’s voice scratches into her mind like static and her shoulders slump. Of course. They had become separated by the beast’s interference and he sounds upset, his voice tight with tension just
from saying the simplicity of her name.

_Kylo, I-

_What the hell happened to you?! I thought you’d died!

He screams the voice into her mind and she flinches as the echoes of it ring painfully inside her head. His tone is genuinely panicked and it makes her hesitate to shut him out of her mind completely. She’s not used to hearing him sound like that.

Still, she chooses her words carefully. Not wanting to give anything away that might compromise her location to the person least deserving of knowing it.

_Kylo, I was attacked. There are these… giant creature things. I don’t know what they are, but they ambushed me. You need to watch out for them. And don’t touch anything._

Silence falls between them. Rey suddenly realizes that she’s fallen to her knees, clutching the ground underneath her and panting open-mouthed. But this isn’t her, all of it is projected through from _him_.

_Kylo? What’s wrong?_

She can see him when she closes her eyes. He’s red faced and looks furious. And very sweaty. He’d been running blindly, trying to catch up to her. Shouldn’t it have been obvious that she was still alive? She can feel _him_ always. That constant drag on her soul that’s both a maddening outcast and an unwelcome reassuring weight.

Except she couldn’t feel him before, when the creatures were around. Their energy had blocked her from all but the most primitive layers of the Force. Most likely all he could feel was how afraid she’d been, and then she’d disappeared from him completely.
Kylo... I’m fine. I don’t know what happened but-

I hate you, you filthy little Scavenger. You have no idea what…

He doesn’t finish the sentence, but she can feel how empty his words are. He’s not even trying to convince himself of them.

A beat passes. Rey listens to the sounds of the jungle around her. Everything is quiet and calm and still, exactly the opposite of the restrained chaos going on in the other side of her head.

Where are you?

Kylo’s voice is tight. Does he really think that she’ll answer him?

Rey presses her lips together and shakes her head. She can’t tell him. She just can’t.

In the back of her mind Kylo begins to pick himself up off the ground. She does the same, noting from the slightly different angle how a dull piece of metal in the distance catches her eye.

The tug on her soul increases. Kylo yanks on their bond, causing her first step away from him to falter. He knows that she’s not going to tell him what he wants. Knows that she’s still running from him. So now he’s going to be the spiteful little shit that she’s so familiar with and make it as hard as possible on her.

And this time it takes so much more effort for him to shut him out of her head and go about her way.

Despite everything, or more likely because of everything, Rey can feel their connection all the time now.

She’s shut him out as best as she can, but it’s not nearly enough. Kylo is always there, dragging her
down with him. She knows exactly where he is right now. Up there on that grassy slope where she’d first stopped to catch her breath and reassess the situation.

Beyond that lies the bone yard, but she’s not going to warn him about that. Okay, maybe she will, but first things first. If she can feel him despite shutting him out, that means that he can feel her too. They are always balanced in everything they do, and Rey hasn’t even the ghost of a doubt that he’s tracking her as fast as she can flee from him.

At least she’d found what she was looking for. The trail of fuselage she been following had been badly overgrown and she knew that any components that she found would have long since stopped being functional. Nevertheless, when she blazes her way over to the ruins of what had once been the cockpit, there still might be a few useful components that she could add to her transmission array. Anything to boost its signal would help. Strips of metal. Long pieces of wiring she could make into an antenna. A power source.

The doors to the cockpit have been torn open in wide, jagged, and well rusted slashes that leave her with no doubt of exactly how the body of the pilot she’d found had come to be so incomplete. At least it saves her having another gristly confrontation with a corpse.

Rey clicks at the buttons of the terminal out of blind optimism. No power. Of course not.

There isn’t much here, either. Too many decades have gone by and the weathering of the jungle has left most of the ship as little more than a rusted hulk of decaying metal. The frame itself even cracks and crumbles against her hands as she tries to shift the remains of the pilot’s chair out of her way.

Rey swipes at her forehead, wiping away the persistent beads of sweat that seem to cling to her in this jungle. In its own way this is much worse than the desert. Jakku was infinitely hotter, but at least your sweat would dry off you. Here everything would cling, leaving her body threatening to overheat and reminding her that she hasn’t drank a single drop of water since she was still on the Falcon.

Maybe that’s why Kylo is in such a terrible mood. He’s ranting and raging on his side of their bond. Each step for him is becoming harder and harder and the kriffing idiot is simply going to make his dehydration that much worse unless he starts taking it easier on himself.

And he really is pushing himself too far. Part of her wants to snap at him to give up chasing her and look after himself for a few minutes. He’s already starting to fade. His presence lessening in her mind with each passing second.
Rey ignores him. He’s nothing more than an unwelcome distraction. She needs to find what she
needs and hurry on.

What’s next? Well, the inside of the cabin is a total bust. There’s still the engine compartment
which, in a short-range shuttle vessel like this, is located in the nose of the ship. The nose of the
ship which has been smashed shut and half buried under years of overgrowth.

Godsdamnit. Nothing can ever be easy here on this forsaken planet, can it? At least it’s not as
buried as their escape pod. She won’t need Kylo for this, not that she needs him for anything.

Rey steps out and rests her palm flat on the web of vines and foliage growing over the hull. She
visualizes them parting. Imagines them slithering aside peacefully so she won’t have to hack her
way through and possibly damage something that she needs.

Nothing. That strange energy of this planet resists her.

Rey digs deeper, pulling more of the Light into herself. It’s not an easy feat to open up to the Force
while simultaneously keeping her ink-dark other half firmly out of her head.

She almost has it, she can feel it. But it’s so much more of a struggle than it needs to be. This
should be easy. Move the grass, look in the compartment. Nothing to it.

Nothing to it and nothing happening.

Maybe… maybe she should ask Kylo for help? Not that she needs him, but to settle his debt to her.
She’d helped him lift their crashed pod, and now he owes her for the favor.

Kylo.

She says his name flatly.

Nothing. Silence.
Total silence, in fact. The only time he’s this quiet is when he’s unconscious.

Rey snorts. She’d thought about warning him not to get heat exhaustion, but he’s a big boy. He should have been able to figure that out for himself. And if not…

Well then, if Kylo has collapsed, it’s all his fault. Like everything else. She’s not going to go back for him. If he was too much of a fool to pace himself correctly then-

Then she can’t feel him at all. It’s like his side of the bond has completely disappeared. Exactly like it had done before.

Rey knows what this means. They’re coming for her. The beasties haven’t given up after all. Her palm begins to itch, that familiar sting of mixed energy pushing down at her connection to the Force.

This time Rey doesn’t hesitate. She bolts into a sprint, running through the jungle blindly, suddenly as worried about her other half as she is for her own skin.

Chapter End Notes

Trying to teach myself to write shorter chapters. It feels strange an unnatural. I don’t know if I like this, but hopefully it’ll help me keep a more regular update schedule.

Next chapter:

Kylo pines for Rey, Rey pines for Kylo but doesn’t admit it to herself, and Jungle Kitty opens its mouth and optimistically waits for one of them to just stumble inside.
Chapter Summary

Where Rey experiences the Trial/Fail cycle before her mind wanders to places forbidden by her sacred role, Kylo maybe, possibly, perhaps means well but he’s sure got a poor way of showing it, and Jungle Kitty gets a new nickname.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Rey had instantly given up on trying to get any salvage off the crashed ship.

Instead, she had immediately bolted. Took off running to try and get as much distance between herself and the beasties as she could. She didn’t bother trying to hide her tracks, instead hacking and slashing and levitating needed to cover ground in the opposite direction.

For the better part of an hour they chased her until one of them had mysteriously turned back though the other still pursued her relentlessly. Rey was nearing the point of exhaustion by the time that she found the cave. It little more than a crevice in a rocky cliff and she immediately crawled inside it.

Then she’d collapsed onto her hands and knees, muscles shaking with overuse, and listened as the beast prowled around outside. She didn’t see it, but she could hear its unhappy whining at being denied the meal it had fought so hard for. Logs snapped and rocks shook as it tried to claw at the rocky wall that separated them, seeking out any way inside. As exhausted and dehydrated as Rey was, she couldn’t have offered much of a challenge if it came down to close quarters combat.

Every flicker of a shadow outside would draw her attention. The creature was too large to enter through the same opening Rey had slipped into, but it was out there, watching and waiting. She couldn’t let her guard down for even a second.

Not a second? No, far more than that. Seconds passed into minutes. Time seemed to crawl to a stop as that evil little ball of fur and chaotic energy did its rounds. Rey’s muscles began to cramp from the defensive stance she was locked in, but she couldn’t risk letting her guard down.

A sudden howl, loud and shocking in its intensity, comes from outside. It echoes along the stone walls of the cave, sending a primal chill of terror straight through Rey’s soul.
Then the beast leaves, stomping through the underbrush away from her until nothing but a foul stench is left behind.

Stench? Oh… how wonderful. Jungle Kitty literally pissed all over the outside of the cave in retaliation for being denied its feast.

The smell is acrid and horrible, choking and burning is Rey's lungs until she has no choice but to scramble to untie the bundle of the computer terminal and wrap it’s sling around her nose and mouth like a mask.

At least her access to the Force is returning to her, incrementally seeping back in as a final confirmation that the beast has given up.

Given up for now, no doubt, but Rey will take what she can get.

Breathing a sigh of relief, and then meditatively regretting it when her impromptu gas mask proves only halfway effective, Rey finally stands up and stretches the kinks out of her back. She checks the inside of the cave but there’s little of interest in here. If it hadn’t been for the reeking smell, she might have used it as a shelter for the night. As it is now, however, Rey waits the very longest that she can stand before she hesitantly crawls back out, listening carefully with both her ears and steadily returning connection to the Force.

No jungle piss kitties. They’ll be back, that she doesn’t doubt.

Until then, though, she needs to find a safer and less aromatic place to spend the rest of the afternoon tinkering with the navigation panel.

The next hour is spent in increasing frustration and ebbing daylight as Rey tries and fails to build her emergency signal. The idea of drop kicking her now lightly smoking computer terminal and maybe throwing in a few slices of her blade through it for good measure is not small in its current appeal.
All the careful rerouting of wires and recalibration of inputs will mean less than nothing if she can’t get the kyber crystal in her lightsaber to stop shorting it out every time Rey tries to turn it on. She has tried everything that she can think of, including using the durasteel handle of her blade itself as a sort of buffer between the raw and uncountable energy of the crystal and the delicate electronic components it seems determined to eradicate.

As Rey works, it becomes impossible for her to think of anything but her feelings for Kylo. Fixing up things that are broken comes naturally to her. It’s what she done all her life and there is a part of her that desperately wants to fix him as well.

Regretfully she has to admit that having Kylo around would be useful right now. Not for his company, certainly not. Even in those rare moments that he isn’t deliberately antagonizing her Rey would be hard pressed to say for sure if she actually likes him. But now… now she kind of does need him.

And then there’s Kylo. Thoughts of him flow unbidden. She wants to hate him. She should hate. But if she did, she wouldn’t have been able to heal him. She wouldn’t have let him…

Rey’s fingers tremble slightly as she fights back the wave of memories. She sets the multitool down and closes her eyes, willing her mind to block out the tactile recollections. Instead of their intimacy, she concentrates on how viciously they’d fought each other. How angry she had been and how determined to hurt him for putting them both in this situation.

It had been the least Jedi like moment of her recent life. And then what had happened next had been even worse.

Rey opens her eyes and shakes her head, hurrying to get back to work. The daylight is fading in increments, and it brings with it a sense of urgency.

What is Kylo doing now? Is he trying to adapt his own device? Is he thinking about her?

No. She’s not going down this road. He doesn’t matter. He took something from her that is lost forever. She should be furious. And she is. Except…

Except that it hadn’t been all bad. Not even half bad. If Rey were to strategically edit the beginning and ending to their lovemaking, mentally blurring out all the rough and ugly edges, it was… It was what? Pleasurable? Yes, for the most part. He had certainly tried to ensure that it had been for her,
or at least as much as possible given the circumstances.

She hadn’t been opposed to the act itself, but dear gods if she’s known that they would live afterwards... Kylo hadn’t known that. He’d genuinely thought that they were going to die. In a very real way, he had nearly killed her. That truth alone should be enough to sever any feelings of l- of sentimentality.

And yet it didn’t. Her emotions for her other half burn in a murky haze, never letting her give up or forget. Kylo is her other half. For a moment in time they were a union. Now part of her will never stop wanting him. Not now that she knows what it’s like for them to be together. How perfectly they had fit in both mind and body.

Especially in body. Rey can feel her face heat up in the cooling air. \textit{That} can never happen again, no matter how much she might be tempted.

And Kylo smirks, the smug image of him flickering through their bond after such a long period of silence.

Rey’s eyes pop open immediately. She hadn’t realized she’d closed them, so deeply lost in her memories. One of her hands had been crawling its way up her inner thigh and she gawks at it in horror before slamming it into the ground next to her. The other hand had been lightly stroking her own neck. The sweet touch of a gentle lover.

\textit{You sick monster!}

She shrieks it at their bond, face burning with a fury now. Kylo doesn’t even flinch. She can see him now, but he’s surrounded by static. All the energy of the planet interfering with her having a clear view. She must have been giving \textit{him} quite the show, though. His side of their connection is uncharacteristically light and almost jubilant.

\textit{Take that gloating smile off your face you... you... you Bantha pooodoo!}

He doesn’t. If anything his smile grows and she can see him extending his hand, using the Force and fine tuning it into a precise needle.

Oh? So he thinks he can use his powers against her through their own damn connection? Not a
Rey slams her side of their bond shut, gritting her teeth as she leaps to her feet. She throws the multi tool against the useless comm panel and wraps it up tight in its bundle.

Then it’s off into the jungle she goes, keeping her mind locked up as tightly from Kylo as she knows how to make it.

Rey doesn’t need him. Rey doesn’t need anyone. All that she does need, in fact, is a few capacitors to restrain the power of her lightsaber. That old ship she’d come across earlier should have exactly that. Then she’s going to find some place to hide and get to work. Kylo is going to be on his own.

She gets back to the crashed old Rebellion ship just as the last edges of the sun are cresting on the horizon.

Rey had been entertaining some notion of sleeping in the remains of the cabin for the night. It would be a somewhat morbid option, but it had been so long abandoned and she was so low on other options that it seemed an acceptable compromise.

Of course, that was before she arrived to the scene and found the ship looted.

Looted.

Looted as in deliberately hacked, slashed, and raided. The capacitors, the transistors, even the bulk of the wiring from the engine compartment are all gone. Everything she had needed is no longer there. And the edges of the rusted metal are seared open in jagged lines that are undeniably familiar to Rey in their origin.

“Kylo Ren! I know you can hear me!” She screams the words into the dim, cooling air, drawing out her own blade an activating it. “Show yourself so I can strike you down and take back what you stole from me!”
Her voice echoes through the trees and bounces back across the ruined walls of the hull. For a few seconds the jungle is silent, fallen quiet in shock to her vocal outburst.

Then he calls to her, his voice smug and thick in her mind.

_You can’t lose what you never had, Rey, you know that as well as I do. Or do Scavengers no longer believe in ‘finders keepers’?_

Kriff he’s an ass. She’s always known that but she doesn’t tell him nearly often enough.

“Kriff you’re an ass!” Rey activates her lightsaber, swinging it in a slow accusatory arch as she points it at every shadow around her.

_Language, Rey. You’re a Jedi now. The last of your kind. You can’t get angry at me for this._

“I’m angry at you for everything you- you-”

_Ass?_

“Yes, you ass! Every last part of this is your fault!”


_Fair enough._

And just like that, he pops out of her head, leaving his side of their bond a silent wall. Rey feels her blood boil hotter, her grip on her lightsaber tightening until the handle begins to creak. She pulls the Force inside herself, scanning around for her bondmate’s disagreeably dark presence. She senses the green energy that saturates the planet, the swell of life, and yes, there he is. Somewhere very nearby. He’s _amused_. So fucking amused at her anger.

So that’s what _that_ was about earlier, eh? When he was smirking like a tooka cat and she’d
thought it was about her… inappropriate thoughts. No, that had to have been when he was stealing what she needed from her own damn haul and-

“Boo.”

Kylo manifests so close behind her that she can feel his breath tickle the sweaty skin of her neck. Rey doesn’t hesitate, doesn’t wait. She gives her sharpest, angriest scream and spins around, hunkering low and stabbing her blade backwards to where his abdomen would be.

Of course he dodges out of the way. Just like she avoided the swipes of the jungle cats, Kylo sweeps aside, stepping out of the range of her vivisection.

“Careful, sweetheart, you wouldn’t want to nick the power cell would you?”

Rey rears back, baring her teeth as a growl begins to form in her throat. Until she realizes how little he’s wearing. Just his pants and a black tank top, which for Kylo’s standards is practically naked. A large object is wrapped up in his cloak and tied to his back from across his chest.

Even in the failing light Rey can see his face transform from smug to downright entitled.

“Something distracting you, darling?”

“Call me that again. I dare you.”

“Darling? Sweetheart? Beloved?” Rey’s eyes narrow as he cocks his head to the side, seemingly thinking about something else. “I supposed I could go for ‘lover’, if you prefer, but-”

Rey howls and lunges forward, hurling herself at him with her lightsaber leading her arc. He deflects her with his own, managing to not only push her away but avoid scratching her with those ridiculous crossguards of his corrupted blade.

Then Kylo sighs and sweeps his hair back, stepping away far enough to be beyond her convenient range of attack.
“Rey, come on, I was only having fun.”

“I hate you! I hate you with every fiber of my soul!”

“Yes, I believe we established that before we breached atmosphere. But thank you for reminding me again after so long.”

“Kriff you’re an-”

“That too.” He silences her repetitive insult with a wave of his hand that momentarily clicks her jaw shut until she regains control of herself.

Kylo holds up his free hand with his palm outreached in an obviously placating gesture.

“Rey, please. I only want to talk to you. We’re stronger together. I’d thought… you disappeared from me for most of the day. You were just gone. I don’t know what happened, but I’d thought the worst.”

There is a ring of genuine truth and sincerity to his voice that makes Rey pause in the retort building on her tongue. Earlier, he had sounded genuinely panicked. Even now relief is washing across their bond into her in almost tangible waves. She can relate to that, at least on a certain twisted level. When he’d been dying in her arms, it had been almost too much to bear.

“Yeah Kylo, well… I was being chased through the jungle by a piss cat and it’s bigger cousin. I kinda had a lot of my hands and didn’t have time to coddle your ego.”

She crosses her arms tightly around herself, squaring her jaw and glaring at the darkening wall of jungle around them. Her tainted palm practically itches at the memory of the tag and seek playtime that had dominated her afternoon.

“A piss ca- No, nevermind that Rey. I don’t- You can tell me later. We need to find a place to sleep tonight first.”
Rey’s upper lip curls up into a snarl and she shakes her head, taking a step back from.

“There is no we Kylo. You go your way and I go mine. It’ll double the odds of one of us making it off this glowing cesspit, in the very least.”

Rey can hear him sigh and he steps forward. She takes another step back, but he has her cornered on the edge of the remnants of the shuttle and there’s no way to dodge him without an embarrassing loss of position.

Then she feels him nudge at her mind, trying to suss out her current emotional state. She growls, shoving him out and glaring into his dark eyes.

“Stay out of my head. And my life.”

“No.”

“Yes.”

“Let us negotiate, Rey. We both have two things the other wants, and all of them are useless without the other sharing.”

Rey eyes the heavy cloth draped parcel on his back. If she was quick enough, she might be able to slice it off of him and then run away with it.

Kylo clears his throat, raising a skeptical eyebrow at her.

“You know that I can hear that, right?”

“Oh kriff off. I hope you get eaten by a kriffing piss cat, Kylo. I mean that. I really, really do. Now stay out of my head.”

It’s obnoxious how easily he can slip inside her when they’re this close. This is exactly why keeping a distance between them is paramount. Perhaps even more so then getting the power cell
“Rey… be reasonable. We are wasting too much time arguing.”

“Two things? What are the two things? If we’re going to ‘negotiate’, then it has to be fair or nothing else.” Rey puts a deliberately sarcastic emphasis to her air quotes around the word to make all the more clear her contempt for his idea.

“My power cell and the capacitors and other bits I’ve taken in exchange for your computer panel and ‘incredible’ talents.”

Oh that riles her up, the way that he mocks her with the exact same ridiculing tone of voice as she had to him. Rey can feel the hairs on the back of her neck stand up just like they did with the jungle beast when it was about to pounce.

“No. No deal. I want an advantage. Think of it as an apology gift for me having to put up with you for even a moment longer.”

To her surprise, Kylo nods and steps back. He swings the parcel off his back and begins to unwrap it, clicking his tongue twice in warning when Rey starts to tense with the urge to grab and dash.

“In addition to the afore mentioned, my darling, I have the perfect amplifier. Should you actually manage to get a signal made, this curiosity will help to extend its range exponentially.”

A bad feeling begins to form in Rey’s gut. She has a hunch she’s about to really not like what-

“Oh dear gods, what is that?!”

Kylo blinks up at her, a slight frown of surprise to her sudden outcry.

“It’s… it’s a bone. I found a whole field of them. They were radiating a very odd form of the Force that I believe we can-”
“Oh dear gods no! We’ve got to get rid of it immediately!” Rey leaps forward, intent on hurling the cursed relic into the far unknown before she catches herself. She can’t touch it. Last time she touched it-

Kylo immediately snatches his bundle away, bone of malice and all.

“Rey, I told you that-”

“Did you touch it? Did you? Please tell me that you used your gloves!”

This is bad! This is so bad! The air is feeling heavy, her connection to the Force beginning to waver, or is that all in her mind?

Kylo’s face starts to adopt a look of growing incredulity. She can hear faint glimmers of words like ‘crazy, hysterical woman’ ebbing from his mind and she snaps, lunging again for the tainted parcel.

He dodges, swinging it back behind him. Rey catches a glimpse of the scorched severed edge of the bone and she gasps, her hand flying over her mouth before she can stop it.

“You used your lightsaber on it?! What the hell were you thinking?!”

Kylo tips his head and looks down at the bone. Back up at her. Repeats the set of movements.

“Rey, perhaps you should-”

“They’re going to come after you, you- you- you karking, frazzled, lunatic, nutjob! We need to get the hells out of here right now!”

With perfect timing, Rey’s hand begins to tingle and throb. This time she’s sure it’s not a mirage of the mind. The Force is leaving her in a flood, leaving behind a disorientating sense of weightlessness.
Whatever Kylo was about to say fades as he feels it to. He stares dumbly at her for a moment before gesturing at her right side.

“Your hand, Rey… it’s glowing.”

Of course it is. Her palm is starting to burn, that eerie green light once more covering her skin.

But that literally pales in comparison to the growing brilliant fluorescence of the bone sticking out of Kylo’s sling. She gapes at it, pointing mutely. Even from here she can feel the power, that sickly sweet energy. It both calls to her and repels her, seeming to grow stronger with each passing second.

Dear gods, this kripping idiot bondmate of hers may have honestly brought he whole piss cat army down upon them!

To her horror, Kylo simply pulls the bone out and examines it, turning it over in his hands. In his bare hands. All it had taken to contaminate her palm had been one single light press onto the surface, and now here he is, defiling it further by rapping his knuckles against the surface.

“How are you not effected by it?!?”

Adrenaline races through her veins as her legs get ready to run off again, with or without him.

“It’s doing something,” he answers, ignoring her and speaking far too calmly. “I can feel it, but I have no idea what- hey! Let go of that!”

Rey snatches it away from him, darting forward and dashing it out of his hands before he can stop her. She throws it as hard and as far as she can, using the last of her failing connection to the Force to send it well beyond their line of sight.

Something crashes in the near distance. Something big.

“Rey.”
There’s an edge to Kylo’s voice as he draws his saber and ignites it. In any other time she would be thoroughly annoyed with how he tries to shove her behind him. Gallantly chauvinistic even when he’s rolling in the depths of fault.

The noise comes again, closer and louder. Then again. There’s two of them. No, there’s three. Perhaps even more.

Rey doesn’t wait to find out. She grabs Kylo’s other wrist and yanks, spinning him back to face her.

“Kylo,” she has to shout over the rising roar suddenly surrounding them, “we need to run.”

She spares no emphasis on the final word and this time Kylo doesn’t resist. They both turn in unison, fleeing hand in hand into the jungle just as the army of beasts crash down upon where they had been standing only moments before.

Chapter End Notes

Only about 500 words over my chapter limit! For me this is real progress.

Next chapter:

Our dynamic duo have to work together to survive, thrive, and escape. What could possibly go wrong?
Also: Sexual tension: 6.69. And rising.
Chapter Summary

Where our dynamic duo fight some kitties, fight each other, and Kylo gets his wish and makes Rey wet.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

There were four of them this time and they were much faster than Kylo and Rey. This was a problem.

Kylo had dragged her, yanking on her arm when she struggled to keep up with his longer strides and holding her close as they bolted through the thick undergrowth. They only made it a few hundred feet before the first beast leaped in front of them, blocking off the clearest path.

“Kylo, we can’t fight them. They can heal. We need to get out of—”

A crash from behind them interrupts her and another jungle cat makes its presence known with an eerily low hiss of a growl. She doesn’t see the other two, but she can sense them. They’re crouching somewhere nearby, unseen and waiting for their chance to pounce.

“We stand and fight, Rey,” Kylo announces grandly, drawing and igniting his lightsaber.

She risks taking her eyes off their assailants for a moment to glare up at him, but now isn't the time to argue about him telling her what to do.

Rey readies her own blade and she and Kylo immediately move back to back against each other, both of them facing down a different beast. The tigers, the piss cats, the jungle beastsies, whatever you want to call them hunker low, tails lashing in unison. A chill runs down Rey’s back when she realizes what they’re doing.

“They’re working together, Kylo. Distracting us so the other two can attack.”
Smart kitties. Smart, dangerous kitties.

Quicker than she was ready for it, a flying boulder of fur flashes through the air, slamming into Kylo and knocking him to the ground. The beast snaps, trying to sever its stunned opponents neck with a single bite but Rey’s blade is faster. She slashes at its face, aiming straight for the eyes.

The creature leaps back with a bone-rattling howl, blood pouring forth from the blinding wound but already that green energy is surrounding it, blanketing the beasts face like a mask as it trashes in pain.

With a low growl the fourth and final beast prowls out of its dark hiding place. He leaps to his feet, sweeping his blade in a brilliant arch of crimson. The creature dodges but falls back, its ears flattening to its head. The other two join in, circling and snapping, but waiting until the third recovers enough to return to the fight.

“They think they have us now.”

Kylo grips Rey’s hand as he says it and she squeezes back, feeling exactly the same thing that he is: rage and victory. It’s not their own emotions, though, but rather the primitive impulses of the animal minds echoing through the Force back into them.

Both sides circle each other like opposing gears in a watch, Kylo and Rey stepping one way and the cats shifting but never straying in the opposite.

“Which one do we take?”

Which one is the weakest spot? The big one, the angry hurt one, the little pissy one, or the unknown? There were four to choose from, but odds were high they would only get one shot at this.

“The one you hurt,” Rey answers, narrowing her eyes at their target.

The beast cocks its head, an angry slash decorating its face but healing with each passing second.
Kylo grips her hand more firmly, and she can feel him synchronizing his mind with her own so they can move as one.

*Good choice.*

They charge forward, moving as one and racing towards the creature with their blades at the ready.

The beast strikes first, countering them with a series of lightning-fast lunges and swipes of its paws. Kylo counters just as fast, his saber blazing through the air quicker than Rey can follow and drawing blood that she knows will only be spilled for a few moments.

Behind her is noise and she closes her eyes, letting the Force guide her as spins, ducking low and blindly stabbing outward. She lands a solid blow, sinking her blade deep into the chest of whichever cat she’d struck. Then she pushes back, sending a concentrated wave of the force that flings the beast back a few good feet into the grass.

The cat lays there, staring at her with glassy eyes. For a moment Rey thinks that she may have finally killed it, but then that green energy begins to emanate, encircling the front of its chest and buying them but a precious few seconds.

Kylo himself has made similar progress. His own beast has recoiled, curling up on itself and limping back into the forest, a severed limb laying on the ground by Kylo’s feet.

“They’re healing.”

Kylo’s voice is strained, his chest heaving breathlessly from either exertion or the shock.

“I *told* you,” Rey hisses, stepping in tandem with him as they edge towards the side of the small clearing that had become their sparring ground.

Her eyes search the shadows for the other two beasts, but she doesn’t see them. Perhaps they are stalking them, actively planning their next pounce, or they’re waiting to see what the fate of their injured friends will be.
Either way, neither she nor Kylo stick around to see for themselves. They run again, darting into the trees and not bothering to cover their tracks as the flee.

Cold!

It’s the first thing Rey can think of as the black waters of the river consume her. They had been chased relentlessly, three of the cats pursuing them without reprieve until finally she and Kylo been cornered by the edge of a low cliff.

Jump or fight and die. That had been their only two options, and yet Rey had still hesitated. She was a desert girl, her kind didn’t belong in the water.

Predictably Kylo had taken the choice out of her hands. He’d wrapped his arms around her and jumped, sending them both plunging into the icy depths below.

The shock of being submerged hits her harder than the impact itself, the cold shocking her lungs and knocking the air out of her with so great a force that she immediately panics. All she can think of is getting out of here, clawing and flailing and throwing her limbs through the inky wet darkness.

Rocks pound against her as her body gets thrown around, bruising and hurting and making her cry out only to be rewarded with a lungful of blackness. Kylo has his arms locked tightly around her waist but even with their combined efforts they aren’t strong enough to fight the powerful current. Every time they almost reaches the surface they get pulled under again and again.

Primal fear sets in quickly as her lungs fill up, and for a second Rey wonders if she genuinely isn’t about to die. The last Jedi drowning on an alien world, locked in an embrace with her mortal enemy, their bodies never to be found.

Then cold air hits her face, albeit only for a second. Kylo squeezes her even harder and she can sense him struggle, trying to use the Force to pull them toward the river banks.
Her lungs are burning, filling, and the worst part is that she can’t stop herself. The more water she breathes in, the more her terror grows, spiraling out of control and snatching away all sense of reason. She needs to get out of here, she needs to find a way, she needs to breathe!

Then she finds her footing, or maybe it’s Kylo who does. Either way something changes, half her body keeps moving and half of it stops. For a moment she can touch solidness under her feet. They’ve reached the banks, but the current keeps trying to suck them both down again.

Kylo shouts at her, but Rey can’t stop coughing. She still feels like she’s drowning even when her fingers touch gravel. On hands and knees they crawl out of the water, Kylo dragging her more than she’s moving on her own.

Then they collapse, laying in still silence face down in the muck. Kylo is shaking above her, half his body weight on her and the pressure oddly helps her because it forces out a torrent of putrid water from her mouth and nose as her body tries to breathe again.

He rolls off, holding onto one of her shoulders to steady her as he pounds on her back with his other hand, forcing her body to begin hacking up everything that it had inhaled.

“I hate-” Rey’s throat and nose and eyes burn. Everything hurts. She’s from Jakku for kriffing hell, she was never meant to have survive this.

Kylo crouches over her, his hand hovering in and out of the periphery of her view. Sometimes having a bond is really unfortunate. She can hear all his self-doubt and all his longing all at the same time.

“I hate-” she tries again, clarity gradually coming back to her as she recovers.

“I know, Rey. I know. You hate me. Got it the first time. Or the next fifty or hundred after that.”

He hesitantly wraps his hand around her shoulder, steadying her as she heaves herself up to kneeling.

She coughs into her open fist a few more times, lungs burning and nasal passage on fire from the
near-drowning experience. Then she gives him a side-eye and he looks so sad and lost. _Literally_ like a lost puppy who’d been left out in the rain to get soaked through.

“I meant that I hate water,” she clarifies, giving in to his emotions just this once. “And you. But I really hate water. I never had to deal with shit like that back home.”

She regrets it as soon as she says it. That sharp wound of melancholy that Jakku once had been her home and now a part of her will always be there. Kylo presses his lips into a grim line but stays silent. He can sense it every bit as well as she can.

He strokes her shoulder, then, rubbing it softly.

“Are you okay? Nothing… broken or bent out of shape?”

Rey isn’t sure if he meant that last part as a play on words or not, but the corners of her mouth prick up the faintest amount anyhow. Kylo’s eyes drift down to them and he blinks before clearing his throat.

“I’ll live,” she answers after a few seconds of quiet. “You’d know if something was really wrong.”

He nods, still staring at her lips. His eyes are quite soft, however, when he lets go of her shoulder to tuck a messy, soggy lock of hair behind her ear.

“We should try to make a fire and dry you out. You’re going to get cold if you have to wear wet clothes all night.”

Rey accepts his offer of a hand up, and she rises uncertainly back to her feet. No. Nothing is broken. Bruised for sure, but she’ll live just like she said.

“It doesn’t get cold here. Cooler, but I’ll be alright.”

“For the kitties, then. Maybe a fire will keep them away.”
Something about hearing the Supreme Leader of the First Order use the word ‘kitties’ brings a smile to Rey’s lips, but she quickly squashes it before her dark knight can notice.

“Do you want to sleep here?” the man in question asks, looking over his shoulder at her as he scans the river banks. “How about over there by that fallen tree? It gives us some protection and we could put the fire in front of it to reflect back at us.”

We. Us. There’s a lot of assumption going on behind those words and Kylo seems to think he can get away with it without being called out.

“I... Kylo, we’re not staying together. You go your way and I go mine. That was the deal.”

Kylo doesn’t immediately respond, but his shoulders begins to tighten and his side of their bond snaps shut so abruptly Rey takes a step back.

Her hands fidget, playing with the straps of her makeshift backpack as her mind races over with every possible scenario and excuse.

She’s soaking wet. It’s night. They’re being chased.

Rey inhales deeply, holding it for a few seconds before letting it go in an audible sigh.

Kylo stays stalk still and she wishes she could see his face. Or maybe she doesn’t, because he’s either pouting or hurting and Rey isn’t sure that she could handle either one right now.

This is stupid. On top of everything else, she still has to deal with his moods. Life is so unfair.

“This is stupid. On top of everything else, she still has to deal with his moods. Life is so unfair.

“Tonight, Kylo,” Rey finally says, momentarily giving in. “Just for tonight. We’ll make a fire, try to dry out, and in the morning I’m leaving.”

His fingers twitch at his side, but he still refuses to look at her.

“You need my parts as well. You’ll need to stick around long enough to build the signal.”
True. Regrettably true. Or she could steal his stash in the middle of the night. Options.

“Those roots will do.”

He turns then, looking back at her again.

“The tree roots,” she clarifies. “They’ll have to do. You start gathering wood for a fire, I’ll start clearing us a spot. Deal?”

A little flicker of melancholic happiness shimmers through their connection. She should never have had sex with him. It made him absolutely unbearably clingy.

“Deal, Scavenger. And remember, if you run, I will find you.”

Rey rolls her eyes, stomping past him before heaving herself up the low wall of the embankment.

Yeah, that was the other reason she should never have given in. Because he’s a kripping asshole.

* 

“So what do you think it is? It’s the Force, right?”

Rey rubs at her contaminated palm. It itches and irritates, but at least it’s not glowing anymore.

Kylo watches her from his side of the fire. Which was actually her side of the fire since she had started with sitting opposite of him except he had kept finding excuses to get up and put another branch on or turn their wet belongings over to dry. And every time he did and sat back down, he seemed to end up a little bit closer to her.

He must think he’s being really smooth and she doesn’t notice. He isn’t and she does, but Rey’s going to allow this because, kripping it, it’s been too rough a day to keep fighting about petty shit like
“Definitely the Force, this whole planet practically radiates with it. And it’s not exactly the dark side of it either, but edging that way.”

Rey looks up at him in surprise. This planet had felt ominous but not exactly threatening, if that makes sense. Kylo taps his fingers against his knee, his gaze alternating from her hand to her face.

“I’ve heard of this ‘green energy’ before,” he continues. “Lu- Skywalker had once told us about his own master and how he had been trained on a swamp. He’d spoken about how sometimes the Force can become overgrown and bleed into a planet, saturating lifeforms that it normally wouldn’t.”

Master Luke had told her similar as well, but more of his story had been of the rigors he had faced himself as an apprentice. There had been a slight passive-aggressive note to the tale that she should be more grateful for her easy tutelage with him than she necessarily was at times.

“So… those cats and these plants and everything else. They’re not actually wielding the Force, they’re… covered in it?”

Kylo shrugs. His fingers twitch again, drawing her attention. Oh. He wants to hold her hand. Yeah, no.

“It’s a theory, at least.”

“So you’re not bothered by it because it’s dark, right? Or at least dark-ish?”

He looks down at his own hands, the ones he’d thoughtlessly used to desecrate the bone yard.

“Kinda itches, but… yeah, it’s a theory.”

Rey spreads her palm and brings it up to her face. Sniffs it. It stinks like pungent river water.
Kylo clears his throat, watching her with a raised eyebrow and a slight smile.

“You can’t *smell* the Force, Rey.”

“I know that.”

She pouts slightly, and Kylo reaches over, catching her hand and pulling it over towards him.

“Hey!”

She tries to pull it back but he holds it firmly, flipping it over and spreading her fingers flat.

“Shhh, I want to try something.”

Rey sighs, permitting this but not having to like it. He wraps his own palm over hers, sandwiching her hand between his.

“What are you-”

“Be quiet.”

Rude. Rey scowls, about to start a sharp retort but the words die when she feels something happening. Her skin begins to tingle, but it doesn’t hurt like it does when the jungle cats are near. No, this time it doesn’t hurt at all, but it does feel odd. Like an energy is being drawn out of her.

Rey closes her eyes, trying to catch the intention behind what he’s doing. The dark side of the Force greets her right back.

“Are you… are you *sucking* the poison out of me?”

“Yes.”
She blinks. It doesn’t seem to be bothering him at all, but she doesn’t like being this close to the
Dark. It doesn’t suit her.

“And you can do that? Just like that?”

“Yes.”

The whole process doesn’t take Kylo more than a few seconds, and Rey finds herself transfixed by
how he looks. His eyes are open but slitted, and his chin is dipped down. He’s concentrating, but
not enough to make him furrow his brow in the way that he does when something is a challenge.

He looks a decade younger like this. Maybe that’s just the firelight talking.

Then his eyes flicker up to meet her and he smiles lopsided.

“All done.”

Rey holds his gaze for a moment. His smile grows. She immediately tries to pull her hand away but
he holds onto it.

“Better?” he asks.

It is. Ever since touching that damned thing her hand had been low-key irritating her. Now it feels
completely normal. Smooth and warm and Kylo’s hands are calloused but still-

“Yeah, it’s better. Can I have my hand back now?”

For a second he looks like he’s debating her request, but he lets her go after a moment.

“You’re welcome,” he says, standing up.
With her kneeling like this he towers over her and Rey has to crane her neck to meet his face or she would have been literally eye-level with his midsection. Not that she’s thinking about that.

Kylo’s grin comes back, widening into a smirk that he absolutely had to have inherited from his father.

“You’re not a very good Lightsider, are you?”

And just like that he killed the moment. He’s very good at doing that.

“Don’t be an ass.”

Rey rocks back on her heels, making a show of wiping her palm off on her still slightly damp pants.

Kylo turns, taking a few steps over to their pile of firewood and Rey doesn’t have to see his face to know that damnable smirk of his never leaves his face.

*  

“Get out of my damn personal space.”

“You’re cold.”

“I’m not.”

“You’re shivering.”

“That,” Rey has to grit the words out from her increasingly tightly clenched teeth, “that is because you’re breathing down the back of my neck. I don’t like it. Go away.”
After their little hand holding moment of eye lusting or whatever the hell it was, Kylo had apparently decided to up his game. And, by that, Rey meant he’d decided to up his antagonism and actually had the nerve to plonk his butt down behind her after putting a log on the fire.

Rey had been able to ignore him for all of ten seconds before his arms had started to wrap around her. He’d done it silently, almost as stealthily as those damn jungle piss cats. Two leather wrapped appendages gently easing into view on each side of her peripheral vision. He’d put his shirt back on so he nearly blended in with the dark of the night, but the highly excited ‘can I or can’t I?’ echoing into her mind had rather given him away.

“Let me have this, Rey. Please. I almost died, remember?”

That was a low blow. Petty and one that would buy him nothing.

“Why did you almost die Kylo? Pick either time to talk about. Both are good ones.”

Rey shrugs her shoulders, bouncing them twice when the offending body parts refuse to take the hint.

“I didn’t sleep well last night. You can at least let me sit here in peace as an apology.”

Rey’s eyes bug at that and she starts to sputter, seizing Kylo’s hands and forcibly yanking them off of her.

“You didn’t sleep- how the bloody hell is that my fault?!! You didn’t sleep well because you had a concussion because you hit your head because you were an idiot. That was the chain of events, Kylo. Follow it to its origin and you’ll see squarely on whom the blame lies.”

Rey starts to come up to her feet only for Kylo to beat her to it. This time he has the audacity to hug her from behind, wrapping his arms around her and making her spine immediately turn ramrod straight.

“Kylo!”
He dodges her stomped foot. Her next outcry is stopped before it begins when he buries his face into her hair, rubbing his thumbs against her biceps in a bizarre effort to soothe her.

“You smell good,” he mumbles.

The fire flickers, jumping up unnaturally high as Rey’s connection to the Force spikes with her rising emotions.

“I bloody well doubt that.”

It’s the only answer she can give. Her hands latch onto his wrists, fingernails clawing into tough leather, but their Bond lurches, pleading with her not to shove him away.

“Okay. That was a lie. You smell like a mix of bantha wallow and festering river water. But you still smell nice underneath all of that. You smell like you.”

Rey closes her eyes and counts to ten. It wouldn’t do her any bit of good if she Force-hurls her idiotic bondmate into their bonfire. Actually, it would do her a whole galaxy of good, but their scavenged computer components are drying nearby and might get damaged by his flaming bulk.

“Let go of me.”

“Sit down.”

“I’ll sit down once you let go of me.”

Kylò seems to think about it for a moment. He sighs, the breath of it fanning against the suddenly ultra-sensitive exposed skin of her neck and chest.

His arms slide away and he steps back. Rey glares at him over her shoulder before stomping over to their firewood pile and putting the next piece on herself.

“Apologize.”
He hangs his head, his expression settling into something approaching contrite. Rey doesn’t buy it for a nanosecond.

“I’m sorry,” he says, a pout forming on his full lips. “It will never happen again.”

Not even for a nanosecond? No, now that one, that one Rey believes for far less.

* *

When Rey wakes up it’s the middle of the night and she’s warm.

She had fallen asleep cold. Curled tightly up against herself, hugging her knees tightly to her chest and shivering as the dampness kicked up from the nearby river sinks into her aching bones. Kylo had tried to wrap her up in his cowl but she’d rejected it out of both spite and as a slave to her routine of neither needing or wanting him. He had been quite put out when she’d pointed at a spot diametrically opposite of her across the fire and told him to ‘stay over there or else’.

Then she’s gone to bed shivering and miserable. Feeling as pissed at herself as she was for the day she had endured.

None of that was true anymore, though. Now she was warm and languid, laying stretched out on her side on top of Kylo’s cloak, his cowl covering her. No, covering them.

Somehow Kylo had fitted himself up close and snug behind her while she was sleeping and the kriffer didn’t only have the nerve to move into her space in the night but he was actually spooning her.

How the hell did this happen? Why didn’t she wake up? He must have been very stealthy about it. For such a big, big man, Kylo could be surprising agile when the situation required it. Or when he wanted something from her.

Rey growls, trying to shift away from him only to realize that he was holding her in place, his massive arm slung over her waist. He was so damn heavy that he didn’t even have to actively restrain her, simply slumping his weight around her was enough.
It would take monumental effort to wriggle away from him and Rey was feeling lazy and sleepy. And exhausted. It had been a hellish day. She needs to confront tomorrow well rested and with a clear head.

That’s reason enough to give in and tolerate her bondmate’s presence, right? Like, it would be stupid of her to get all revved up and wrestle away from him now when it’s still dark. She probably would get so pissed off that she wouldn’t be able to sleep again.

A good, sound battle strategy is required in this situation, and sometimes that strategy involves choosing your battles.

Tonight then, just for tonight, only for tonight… Rey will tolerate her idiot bondmate’s presence.

Tomorrow she’s leaving. Goodbye, Kylo. Rey’s gonna be going, going, gone…

That’s the plan at least. Somehow she doubts that he’s going to make it that easy on her.

Chapter End Notes

Son of a… I’m a THOUSAND words over my allotment this chapter! GAH! At least I’m updating on time.

For those new to my fics, I tend to write much longer than I probably should and that bit me in the ass a while ago with a story I ended up having to take down. This time I’m keeping a very, very firm hand on the reigns with this fic. I’m aiming to update every Friday or Saturday, though there may be some disruptions in February when I travel.

Yinnyhoo, next chapter:

Aw, Rey thinks she’s going to be able to give loverboy the brush-off. Bless her heart. She sure is going to want to, though, especially after the stunt her other half is about to pull. And our duo face a new challenge and get a much needed kick in the shins to get
them moving.
When Rey Realizes that it’s Only Been Three Days

Chapter Summary

Where Kylo has a pleasantly entertaining morning while his lady love longs to throttle him with her bare hands, jungle kitties are on the prowl, and certain preventative anti-theft protocols are enacted.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

She had been a fool to ever think that Kylo would behave himself.

The touches had started off innocently enough. Or as innocently as the Master of the Knights of Ren was capable of behaving. A passing of an errant hand sliding over the curve of her hip, unexpected and out of place enough to gently part the veil of sleep.

Somehow in the passage of the night she had turned over and was now facing Kylo. Her face was buried against the endless black expanse of his chest and his arm had drifted, still pinning her down but now with his hand spanning her hip. No, not spanning, groping. Sliding carefully but purposefully behind her to the small of her back.

Rey swallows, blinking to be sure that this is real but he’s so close and so big and the sky is still so dark. She can’t see anything, not even when her eyes widen when the offending hand shifts lower again, this time settling on a greedy handful of her ass.

“Kylo!” she hisses, pushing at him.

She might as well be pushing a boulder. He’s he doesn’t budge an inch, but she can hear his breathing subtly change. The rhythm of it picking up and each breath tickling her hair.

“Good morning,” is the murmured reply.

So the kriffer really is aware of what he’s doing? He’s intentionally molesting her, then?
“Get off of me.”

Rey pushes at his chest more firmly. Tries to roll out of his arms but all she succeeds is gaining herself an inch of space. She uses this to tilt her chin up and glare at him.

It’s becoming dawn very quickly, the sky brightening into sweetly pinkish glow. Pink with flares of iridescent purple. It gives Kylo’s skin an almost unnaturally pale hue, like he’s carved out of flawed marble.

“You look beautiful when you sleep.”

Rey’s face feels both hot and cold. When he smiles down at her he looks younger, sweeter. It’s very… confusing.

His smile grows wider then, and Rey frowns, realizing that he’s in her head. Of course he is, the man has absolutely no sense of boundaries or respect or-

“I can help you if you’re confused.”

The hand on her ass lets go and he catches her chin. The insult that had been building on her tongue is immediately silenced when he presses his lips to hers.

Part of her is shocked. A small part of her. A far greater side surges up, commanding her to close her eyes and just let this happen.

They fit so perfectly together. Every part where she bends he can tuck into. Even that strange, somewhat oversized nose of his aligns perfectly when her head is tilted to the side. And his lips are surprisingly smooth and soft. She remembers them being rougher before, back up on the ship.

Kylo moves to deepen the hiss, a low hum building in his throat and vibrating into her from where their chests are touching. It’s lovely. It really is. Before they didn’t have time for long and lingering kisses, and now Rey is starting to see the appeal of the act.

But she’s also starting to get cross. He didn’t ask her for approval. After that stunt he pulled up in
the sky, the one that in all rights should have killed her and perhaps that was halfway his intention anyhow. After that the only way he’s allowed to touch her again is with damn near written permission.

Rey pushes away, pulling her lips from his. As the dawn continues the sky has become darker, as if everything on this planet has to be a different version of itself. Now it’s turning into a deep and otherworldly swirl of purple and grey, like the center of a vortex.

“Rey.”

The way he says her name is too much. He’s too much. It’s the voice of obsession and longing and insanity.

Rey needs to put a stop to this. Soon.

“Don’t think that you can get away with this, Kylo. That’s not how things are going to work.”

She begins to squirm in his arms, pawing at his chest until his hands reluctantly loosen for her.

Irrationally, she immediately misses his warmth. It had been so safe in his arms. Or it had felt that way for a few precious seconds. In truth his embrace was far more dangerous than any crash landing or hungry cat could ever hope to be.

“How is it going to work, Rey? You tell me. It’s all up to you.”

Up to her? Hardly. Since when has Kylo ever given her a choice in anything?

And yet… Kylo is different now. He’s simply laying there peacefully, watching her with a content smile on his face.

Rey can’t help herself. Can’t even come close.

She kisses him again, leaning down and sinking one of her hands into his hair. It’s not her fault. He
just looked so… so much like someone else at that moment. Someone she wishes he would become and not this living infuriation that shadows her.

Truth be told, her experience with kissing begins and ends with Kylo. And she’s always been on the receiving side of the strange movement, so figuring out how to take the lead is a little sloppy at first. Kylo works with her eagerly, working his lips against her own and obediently pulling back when he starts to get too forward and she growls a warning into his mouth.

His hands are everywhere, though. Stroking her own hair or running along the line of her back as far as he can reach.

With a grunt, Rey slings her leg over him, straddling him and plonking her butt down on his stomach.

The muscles of his abs roll underneath her and Rey pulls away from his lips to see that he’s smiling again, amusement crinkling the corner of his eyes.

“What?” she snaps, noticing how swollen his lips are now. Gods, she did that, didn’t she?

“Thank you for putting me in my place, Rey,” his voice is so low that it could almost be only in her head. “I should piss you off more often. It’s a good look on you.”

Rey should slap him. Or in the very least unstraddle him. Leave him here and take off with all their stuff. All her stuff.

No. She does none of that. Instead, Rey kisses him again. This time with more force and purposeful dominance. Kylo puts up a fight, warring his tongue against her own.

She bites him and he still doesn’t back down, his hands drifting down. She likes it when he touches her waist, too. His grip is wide enough that he can nearly spans her, and there’s something quite flattering about how the smooth pads of his thumbs trace the outline of her abs. It’s like he’s memorizing her, feeling the strength of her muscles and he knows that she’s not weak, she could put an end to this at any time if she wanted to.

During their first time together, she remembered his hands being rough. Not now though. It’s stupid how good even these simple touches of his can make her feel. How warm she’s becoming
and they’re still fully dressed.

Rey pulls away again, resting one of her hands on his chest as he watches her, looking up at her with that look of endless, obsessive need.

“Rey?” he asks, and the scratchiness of his voice makes something in her lower body twitch.

She runs her hand down the center of his chest, his shirt parting open to her touch.

“Please kiss me.”

Her touch falters for a moment, her palm resting just above his diaphragm. Kylo isn't one to ask for something like that. Certainly not ask *nicely*. The air around them is heavy and dark. It’s still night. They still have time.

“Good boy,” Rey praises, deciding to reward his good behavior with another kiss.

Their passion quickly intensifies, building up and Rey begins to feel lightheaded from her growing arousal. But what the hell does she think she’s doing? This isn’t right. She hates him.

“So I have gathered,” he hums against her lips.

His hands on her tighten, and he lifts her up by a fraction, trying to flip her over so she’s underneath him. She immediately puts an end to that, overpowering him effortlessly. Then she starts to kiss down his chin, along the line of his neck. She had wanted to do that before. Wanted to do a lot of things to him, but there hadn’t been any time. They’d thought they were going to die. It had made for a hurried first encounter, not this steady and building exploration.

Rey bites down on his neck, savoring the groan the movement brings. The noise of it is very primal, reminding her of when he was inside of her and they were both too far past the point of no return to have any regrets at that moment.

The regrets had come after, though. Had hit her in full force and made her question everything she knew, starting with her own sanity.
If she keeps going now, she’ll regret this. That’s a fact.

Rey swallows and slows to a still. She needs to stop this now. She has to. She absolutely has to.

Rey wakes up.

Her eyes pop open, her whole body jerking awake.

Confusion laces through her thoughts, the foggy haze of sleep taking its own time to recede.

Relief follows immediately afterwards. It had been a dream. *Just a dream.*

Rey heaves herself up, propping herself on her elbows. She blinks, shaking her head and trying to catch her breath.

Kylo isn’t there. Or at least he’s not cuddled up next to her.

And it *is* dawn, for real this time. The sky is now a deep topaz color, a supernatural glowing green haze tinting its edges. There’s a pleasant breeze in the too warm air, and it tickles the exposed areas of her hypersensitive skin.

The mortification hits her next, slamming into her consciousness so hard that Rey actually gasps, shooting upright and looking around in a panic. Kylo isn’t here, but he’s nearby. She can feel him so clearly because their bond is open. Wide open and fully unguarded.

This can only… it would have been completely impossible for him *not* to have been privy to every moment and every movement of her dream.

He could have shut himself off from it. Could have woken her up. But, oh no, the karker didn’t do either of those. No, he had been watching and now he’s somewhere very close and amusement is radiating off of him.
I only took them because you gave me no choice, Rey. I was the one who wanted to share, you were going to be greedy.

What… what is the idiot even rambling on about? Share what? They don’t have anything other than the…

Other than the computer terminal and the scavenged repair parts which had been drying out by the fire but aren’t there anymore.

Rey emits a howl, leaping to her feet so fast that she momentarily gets tangled up in Kylo’s cloak which had been draped underneath her. She feels a flutter of confusion from his side of their connection, but then he swiftly shuts himself off from her when he discovers the nature of her emotions.

He took them! That krieffing, smug, conceited, hateful, souless, unbearable bondmate of hers stole their meager few belongings from her! Before she could do it to him!

She kicks the cloak away, sending it flying into the dusty muck near the edges of the river, and summons her lightsaber into her hand. At least Kylo had the common sense to leave her with that, or in the very near future his arm would have had something in common with his own uncle’s.

Then begins the search for her other half, following the pull of their connection which should lead her straight to him.

Finding Kylo is easy. He hadn’t gone very far at all.

Rey stomps her way up the scraggly hill where she can feel his presence. He knows she’s coming and he’s waiting, not even having the decency to feel contrite.

Actually, he doesn’t have any decency at all. Because, if he did, he wouldn’t be meditating in the sun. Without his shirt. Sitting there with his eyes closed. Shirtlessly being shirtless.
“Where the hell are your damn clothes?!”

Rey’s eyes dart around, looking anywhere but at him. Their belongings nowhere in sight. Where did he put them? Where would he have hidden them? Why the hell isn’t he wearing more?

*It’s hot.*

His words are artificially blasé in her mind. Rey knows that he wasn’t really in a meditation stance. Perhaps maybe he was earlier, when she was having her dream, but not-

Even the memory of her dream is enough to heat her face up. Rey glares at him, feeling her blood start to rage as she imagines that the corners of his mouth lifting.

And it *is* hot, actually. Even now in the early stretches of morning the air has an unpleasantly heavy heat to it.

Rey doesn’t like this planet. This planet is awful. Beautiful in its own strange way, but also utterly horrible. As horrible as the man sitting peacefully and shirtlessly before her, basking in the intense sun like he doesn’t have a care in the world.

“I hope you burn,” she spits, circling him but not seeing the stash of items.

“Did you sleep well?”

Rey falters, her eyes growing wide. Now Kylo isn’t even trying to hide his smug grin. She can even see a hint of teeth, he’s smiling so much.

“Did you do that, then?” she comes to stand right in front of him, blocking his appreciation of the sun with her own scowl. “Did you… put me in a Force sleep or something? Is that why I didn’t wake up when-”

“You’d know if I did, Rey. Don’t be stupid. I spent much of last night watching you shiver with your head propped up on a rock. You were so exhausted that you didn’t even move when I picked you up and brought you over to my bedroll. You were very lucky I was around to watch you, any
jungle creatures out and about would have had a fine meal of you.”

Rey’s hands begin to ball up into a fist as she listens to his diatribe. She’s a light sleeper. None of that can be true. Except, perhaps, the exhaustion and…

“Well I guess being chased all day by a pack of piss cats really takes it out of me.”

Kylo opens his eyes, his gaze dancing up and down her form.

“So it would appear.”

Rey shifts from one foot to the other, refusing to be intimidated. Her annoyance simmers steadily until she catches sight of the dark purple bruise that has blossomed across the side of his head and face. With everything that had happened, Rey hadn’t had the chance to notice it before.

“How is-”

Her voice cracks when Kylo begins to stand up and for a second all she can see is rippling muscles covered with a web of scars flexing in the light.

He looms above her now, and at least with their difference in heights she doesn’t have to be confronted with the proof of the deadly injury that would have taken him away from her.

“Rey?”

“How is all that?” she gestures by the side of her own head, fingers twitching through the air rapidly. “Did it heal alright?”

“You’re concerned? I’m touched.”

“Kriff off.”
He shrugs and rolls his neck. The neck that she had been running her teeth along in her dream. Rey wraps her arms around herself and digs her nails into her biceps.

“It’s fine, Rey. Painful, yes, but you did a good job. I owe you for that.”

“Fabulous. Now put some clothes on.”

Kylo cocks his head to the side. Rey feels her left eye start to twitch when he doesn’t immediately obey her.

Then he moves past her, brushing against her and making her step out of his way. She glares daggers at the back of his head as he walks to the edge of the small clearing. Kylo reaches behind a tree and pulls out their humble bundle of equipment from where he’d hidden them. They’re all wrapped up in his shirt so that’s two mysteries solved.

“Half of those are mine,” she calls out, watching him from a safe distance. “At least half. All of them should be, you owe me everything after I saved you.”

Rather than answer, Kylo shakes the bundle, uncaring as the delicate components clatter to the ground. Rey flinches, forcing herself to robotically walk over to him.

“Give me my half.”

In the very, very least he should apologize. He owes her that much.

“You were planning on stealing them from me.”

He says it very matter of factly, but there’s an edge of annoyance to his voice.

“Was I? That’s odd. I don’t remember that.”

“You said it three times, Rey.” Kylo fiddles with his shirt in his hands but, to her great annoyance, he doesn’t put it back on. “First by the wreck when we were reunited, then last night, then… then
during this morning.”

Rey falls silently, squatting down to pick up the computer terminal. She holds it next to her chest like a protective shield as she fights to get her nerves under control.

“So you were spying on me.”

“You were projecting.”

“I wasn’t!”

“You were.”

Kylo squats down, reaching out to pick up the scavenged capacitors from the dirt where he had so carelessly dropped them. Rey snatches them out of his hand but she has no place to carry them other than down the front of her shirt. She shoves them down there and silently dares Kylo to say a word about it.

He doesn’t, but he doesn’t stop looking, either.

“You never answered my question. The one from before.”

“Oh which in the hells one was that?”

Rey is so over this. So over him and this planet and the piss cats but especially him.

“Did you sleep well?”

Hers fingers tighten, squeezing into the plastic of the terminal frame. Gods, why does he have to be this way? Sometimes he’s someone she quite likes. Someone gentle and dark and deep. Other times he’s such a kriffing ass that she would rather taken on the whole planet and all it’s fanged denizens rather than put up with him for a moment more.
When he reaches out for her, Rey’s first instinct is to slap him away. Harshly. And she absolutely would have if it wasn’t for the unnatural green tinge that had suddenly flushed across his skin.

Rey’s eyes bug wide when she realizes it. Kylo is literally glowing. The exposed skin of his arms and chest has a greenish cast to the surface, but his hands look like he dipped them in psychedelic spaghetti.

“How the kriffing hell did you not feel that?” she asks, quickly rising up to her feet and taking a step backwards.

“Rey?”

Kylo looks up at her, a deep frown on his face that quickly melts into a question. She gestures to his arms and shock prickles at her skin, reflecting onto her from his side of their connection.

Then Rey reaches out with the Force. Or rather, she tries to. Already her connection to her powers is becoming muddled and that can only mean one thing.

“They have found us.”

The cats, those damned jungle cats are coming. Again!

“Why now?” Rey asks, her eyes darting around to every possible shadow or nook around them. There were too many to count. “Why not last night when they were much more vulnerable? How the hell do they keep finding us?”

“We have to get out of here.”

It’s Kylo’s turn to say it and she nods, bending down to help him scoop their belongings into his shirt like a makeshift duffle bag. They still have a little time, but not much. The cats are definitely coming, alerted by some unknown force, but they’re not here yet. She and her other half’s latest argument will have to wait for another time.
While Kylo quickly finishes tying everything up, Rey listens. Listens with both the Force and her own ears.

She hears nothing. The jungle is quiet. A jungle should never be this quiet.

Fine, they can argue later. For now, though, they just need to put aside their differences and get out of here while they still can.

Chapter End Notes

The funny thing is that our duo could really achieve true greatness if they would just get over themselves and work together. Odds aren’t looking too good of that happening any time soon…

Anyone want to make a guess how the kitties keep finding them? It’s not just by chance.

Next chapter:

Kylo fucks up real bad, Rey knows what she wants but refuses to give into it, and, damnit, jungle kitties just want a tasty snack. Or two tasty snacks. Is that so wrong?
Viridescence Part I

Chapter Summary

(reposted from my update last night since AO3 apparently ate this chapter when I first tried to update it)

Where Rey’s plans of MacGyver-ing a way off this rock hit an unexpected snag, Kylo is one smooth and wet operator, and our duo attempt to communicate with each other with words for a change.

Chapter Notes

I’m going to have to miss next week’s update, so here’s a double-sized chapter to make up for it. I hope you all like it!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kylo and Rey moved quickly throughout the morning, heading in no specific direction other than away from where they could sense the creatures lurking.

Very few words were spoken as they walked. Kylo tried a few times to engage her in conversation, but he stuck to safe topics like what she would need to be able to make a transmitter. In truth, Rey didn’t know. Theoretically building such a thing was possible, but the odds of it not only working but any signal it transmitted actually being received by someone was… very grim.

Still, they apparently had the rest of their lives here on this cursed planet to figure it out, so there was always that.

By the time noon came around at the sun was high in the sky it was simply too hot to continue. Kylo had insisted they stop for a while though Rey would have preferred to keep going and put more distance between them and the beasties. However, now seemed to be as good a time as any to try and get their transmitter ready so she reluctantly set up an impromptu workstation along a wide gravel stretch of the riverbank.

“Tell me if you need anything.”

Rey grunts in response, not bothering to look up at him.
They were both getting hungry and that made Rey angrier and more irritable than usual. Kylo going out of his way to be nice to her had only intensified her feelings of annoyance.

That, and the fact that he was once again running around without his shirt. This time under a guise of going wading in the river to see if he could try to catch some fish. He was currently waist deep, waiting as still as a statue with only the tips of his fingers manipulating the Force against whatever critter had caught his eye.

He was also very wet. Hair slicked and wet, muscles of his back glistening under the intense sunlight. Not that Rey was looking. Or at least she wasn’t looking where she should be.

“Oh godsdamnit!”

In her carelessness and wandering eye Rey keeps severing the same connector wire over and over again. She swears that she’s been working on the same section of the transmitter for nearly half an hour and, once again, that is all his fault. Maybe if he was actually good at hunting, she wouldn’t be so hungry right now. She’d be able to concentrate better. Maybe if he wasn’t so wet she wouldn’t have to keep stripping replacement wiring from their very limited supply.

A loud splash comes from the river and Rey sighs, slamming down her fist with the multitool against the ground as she glares at her bondmate. Her bondmate which has currently disappeared below the surface of the water.

If he’s just fallen in, she’s not going after him. Loverboy is on his own.

A few seconds go by and Rey’s eyes narrow. Nope. She’s not going to do it. Not going to do anything.

Then Kylo emerges, soaked from head to toe and triumphantly carrying a… a black something in his hands as he strides over to her.

“What in all the hells is that?”

“No idea. But it was moving so it must be edible.”
Rey scowls at the offending critter. It is a wide black tube that appears to have fins on one part and eyes on the other. The doomed creature looks up at her balefully before Kylo drops it on the ground and quickly dispatches it with a rock.

“You know that’s terrible logic, right?” Rey edges the transmitter components away from the man thoughtlessly dripping over them. “We have no idea what’s poisonous here. We should just… eat grass or something.”

“Grass could be poisonous, too.”

Kylo yanks the multitool out of Rey’s hands with the Force without asking and she has to fight the urge to throw a rock at him. He flips open the knife part of it and begins to prod at the black fish-like animal. Rey sighs and starts reorganizing their collection of parts, spreading them on in columns on Kylo’s now very dusty cowl.

“Sushi?”

A black fillet served on the point of the knife extends into her field of view.

“Gods, Kylo. It’s probably still warm.”

“Then you know it’s fresh. Here, try it, I’m sure it’s not so bad.”

Rey watches with a raised eyebrow as Kylo takes a bite of his own piece. He makes a show of chewing it for a few seconds before his face visibly pales and he straightens, walking stiffly in a circle.

“That good, huh?”

“Indeckscrapple.”

Rey thinks that he said ‘indescribable’, but it’s hard to tell with him chewing like his mouth is full of hot coals.
She picks up a piece for herself and sniffs it. Not too bad. It smells like river water, mostly. Her amusement increases as she’s treated to the show of her bondmate pacing and chewing, his hands clasped tightly behind his back and a sort of military precision to the stiffness of his legs. She takes a cautionary nibble, and-

Again… not so bad.

“It tastes like mud, Kylo. You’ll be fine. Stop being such a prima donna diva about everything.”

Said diva glares back, but he’s still working on his apparently unacceptable first piece so Rey cuts herself another slice and tries to chew it quickly with the minimum of actually tasting it.

“Come over here and help me,” she gestures at the exposed circuit board in front of her, “I need another set of hands.”

There are times that she and Kylo work very well together. Fighting a room full of Praetorian guards. Screwing on a dying starship. Defending themselves from a hungry gang of jungle cats. All of those cases involve them doing something with a minimum of talking.

Kylo has apparently figured out this phenomenon himself because he stays uncharacteristically quiet as he watches her work. He hands her parts when she tells him to, but otherwise is silent and simply observes as she manipulates the finite components into an object approaching a transmission device.

Every now and then Rey will look up, glance at him, but he’s always looking at her and not the progress she’s making.

“You’re going to get a sunburn if you don’t cover up.”

She snaps the last capacitor into place, tapping on each connector point with the edge of her multitool to make sure nothing is loose.

“How do you think they keep finding us?”
Rey blinks, looking up and not having realized he was standing so close to her. Truly Kylo has an amazing way of creeping unnoticed. For such a big man, it’s a remarkable talent.

“The kitties? Well, obviously they can track you. Because you’re the idiot who ruined their ancestral burial ground or whatever the hell that bone yard was back there.”

“But it doesn’t happen all the time. We were fine last night until the morning. We’re fine now.”

Rey sets down the transmitter and turns the power cell over in her hands. He has a point. If the cats seemed to know exactly where they were, why weren’t they attacking right now? Or before when they were sleeping and easy targets?

“I don’t- There’s so much going on here that doesn’t make sense, Kylo. Those cats. The green Force. Even that old rebellion fighter, what was he doing on this planet?”

Kylo flicks random shapes against the dirt with the tip of the multitool. Rey rolls her eyes and takes it away from him before he can gunk it up.

“Sometimes I think we were brought to this planet for a reason.”

No, Kylo. We were brought to this planet because you crashed us here.

Rey keeps that thought to herself, though. She has forever to lord it over him when he’s done something to piss her off. Far more important now is finding a way to get them off this world.

“You included me in that.”

Rey pauses, one end of the powercell hooked up but she’s hesitating on fully connecting it. If she’s done anything wrong, or one of the parts is too damaged and she didn’t realize it, this thing will literally explode in her face.

“Included you in what?” she finally ask, visually double checking every final detail.
“You said ‘getting us off this planet’. Us as in you and me.”

Oh gods the kriiffing asshole was in her head again.

Deep breaths Rey. Control yourself. Don’t smack this idiot upside the head with the delicate circuit board. That would be a poor choice.

She takes a few measured, deliberate seconds to calm and control herself. Then a few more after that when she can feel Kylo watching at her, his offensive presence nudging at their bond to make sure he has her attention.

“Well,” she says tightly, “it seems like we’re stuck together so we might as well work together. For now.”

Kylo’s arm creeps into view, fingers extending like he wants to hold her hand. She smacks it away, throwing a good sting into the flick of her wrist, and the limb retracts.

“We crossed a door back there when we were reunited by the crashed rebel ship.” There’s an almost grandiose tone to his voice, as if he’s letting her in on a detail that’s both very important and very obvious. “I thought about it then but didn’t say it. That point was the start of the next stage for us.”

What the… no. No matter. The man is mentally unwell. His words are nonsense. She needs to learn to not trouble herself with them.

“Kylo? Shut up please. And hold this up for me.” She grabs his hand and places it on the raised end of the power cell. “When I tell you to, go push it down into this bracket right here.”

She taps on the spot to show him then stands up, scurrying back a few feet while he stares at her with open confusion.

“Why are you all the way over there?”
“Oh no reason. Now do it.”

Kylo looks at her. Then back at the transmitter. Then back at her. Rey huffs, crossing her arms impatiently. The suspense is killing her with each passing second.

“Go on, then,” she prompts. “Go ahead. Make yourself useful.”

With a shrug, he drops the cell into the bracket. Rey cringes as it falls.

And nothing happens.

“Huh...”

She waits, hugging herself tighter and taking another step back. Kylo looks up at her, frowning when he notices how far away she’s gotten.

“It’s like the Millennium Falcon all over again,” she mutters.

Why didn’t it work? It has power. It should have done something big. She’d been bracing herself for something big.

“Rey?”

Reluctantly Rey stomps over, kneeling down next to the malfunctioning object.

“It has a light on,” Kylo points out, turning the transmitter over to its side.

It does, actually. All three signal lights are on. So... it’s working?

“Is it doing anything?” Kylo asks, catching her thoughts.
Tentatively she picks it up, still half expecting spontaneous detonation.

“Um… yes?”

Kylo exhales sharply and lunges for her, wrapping her in a tight hug before she can realize what he’s doing let alone stop him.

“That’s incredible, Rey! I didn’t think you’d have a chance in a million of figuring out how to make this work!”

Rude. Rey elbows him hard off of her, muttering under her breath for him to keep his hands to himself.

“It’s turning on, Kylo, but it’s not… it’s trying to send the distress message I wrote, but the signal isn’t getting through. Here, look here-” she points at one of the dials. The needle of it is floating just above the leftmost line. “That’s the projection distance. For this to clear the atmosphere it’s supposed to be at least in the middle. Or better all the way to the right.”

Kylo’s hand goes back to her shoulder, steering her so he can get a better look. She has to fight the temptation to kick his shin to make him back off creeping on her.

“I think maybe…” she trails off, pondering all possible reasons for the interference and what they can do about them. “Yesterday, I saw a mountain range in the distance. Not like huge peaks or anything, but they looked pretty high. All of this,” she waves her free hand around in a circle, gesturing at the world around them, “maybe that’s getting in the way? Like how the-”

“How the grass dulls our powers? Or how everything on this damn planet seems to feel strange?”

Rey narrows her eyes at the interruption, but yeah, that’s what she meant. There was also the fact that the Resistance had known of this planet, at least on some level. She hadn’t paid much attention during her mission briefing, but obviously the interest in this world dated back to the old Rebellion days.

“So what now?” Kylo asks.
She hands him the transmitter, mostly so that he has to let go of her to hold onto it, but also so she can take the powercell out just in case.

“So now? Now I guess we go up. Go climb some mountains. Maybe if we get high enough-”

“The signal will be able to push through the lower interference.”

“Stop interrupting me.”

Rey sends a push of irritation through their bond at him. She stoops down to wrap up the powercell and the remaining equipment in his cowl.

“Sorry.”

Kylo grabs the bundle from her before she can throw it over her shoulder to carry it on her own. Fine. Whatever. Choose your battles, Rey. It’s not like he’d know how to operate it even if he runs away with it when she’s not looking anyhow.

Rey sighs and dusts her hands off on her pants. First things first, before they set out, they need to establish some ground rules.

“Okay Kylo, if we’re going to be traveling together for any extended period of time-” her eyes narrow when his light up, “then you need to be clear about one thing: we will work together only to survive. You are nothing too me. I am nothing to you. We are simply two strangers who had the supreme misfortune to be stuck together on this damned jungle rock, got it?”

She had expected him to object or maybe look hurt or offended. Instead, he smiles. An odd sort of half-smile. She can’t tell if he looks amused at her words or happy that she’s officially announced their cooperation together. Either way, his expression right now annoys the living crap out of her.

“Kylo! Say you understand. Say we have a deal.”

He regards her for a moment. Again she’s reminded that he’s not wearing a shirt. That’s also highly, *highly* annoying.
“Fine, Rey. Deal.”

She scoffs. That was too easy. He’s not even trying to hide it. But there’s no point in trying to argue; the jungle kitties could come crashing in at any moment and they’ve got places to be.

“Great,” she bends down to pick up the fish-like thing and wrap in a large, glossy leaf. “Let’s get going. I think the mountain is-” She starts to gesture at a direction over her shoulder, but Kylo stops her by lightly catching her wrist.

“Rey, when are we going to talk about it?”

She scowls and peels his fingers off of her one by one.

“Talk about what?”

“What happened up on the ship.”

Her eyes widen and she freezes for a second before roughly yanking her arm free.

“Never, Kylo. Never work for you? Sure works for me. So, new addition to the rules, we don’t talk about that ever. And you’re forbidden from thinking about it. And stay out of my head. And stop just,” she flutters her hand at him angrily, “stop just constantly fondling me. You have your own personal space. Stick to it.”

Kylo’s lips turn into a thin line. He looks like he wants to argue the point then thinks better of it.

“Anything else you want to add to that list, Rey? Anything else you need to get off your chest?”

“Nope. My chest is- oh wait, there’s that. New new addition to the rules: unless you’re, like, actively swimming or something, cover the hell up. The last thing I need to deal with is you getting third degree burns.”

It’s his turn to scoff. When his eyes blatantly roam over her, Rey turns on her heel and stomps
After a few moments of him presumably watching her ass, or possibly stewing in quiet rage, Kylo bounds after her.

Good. Enough of this. More than enough. It’s time to cover some ground.

* 

Water became more of a priority when they had left the river.

The day was hot, much hotter than the last three, and now they were trekking up the steadily rising foothills through the jungle to the distant mountaintops. It made for a rough, slow, and exhausting hike, and one that was getting progressively worse as the slope became steeper and harder to ascend.

The landscape was changing unhurriedly, giving them minimal sign of their progress. Slightly more apparent was the new types of foliage transforming from the lowland jungle denseness to a slightly more open forest. In this stretch it consisted of mostly pale blue trees with white leaves that shimmered like snow in the heated breeze.

“Have you ever heard of a Gypsy well?” Rey asks when they come to rest in the shady bend of the narrow creek they’d been following as they climbed.

Unlike with the river where the water was fast moving, this little stream was largely stagnant with only a sluggishly rolling trickle down the center.

Kylo drops their pack of supplies and rolls his neck, shrugging in his way of answer.

He, being the stubborn lughead that he is, had maintained his insistence on carrying the lions share of their supplies throughout the whole journey. His excuse had been that he didn’t trust her not to take them, but Rey was left with the sneaking suspicion that he was trying to be a gentleman. That was far worse than a thief, at least in her book.
“It’s a well, basically,” she explains. “I had to do them sometimes back on Jakku when there was a water source but it was contaminated. There I had to line the well with charcoal from my fire, but here the ground isn’t sand and it should do the work for us.”

Kylo watches as she goes over to a spot of damp soil near the edge of the creek and begins to dig with the sharpened end of a stick.

“What’s that going to do?” he asks, annoying her further by making no move to help her.

“Filter it. The water, that is. There’s clay and carbon in the ground so, yeah, the water that comes out of here should be good to drink.”

“Won’t that taste like mud?”

“Uh-huh.”

“But-”

“You’ll live.”

Rey digs deeps, ‘accidentally’ sending a wet splatter of muck in Kylo’s direction and finally prompting him to come over. He stands above her, watching as deep brown and opaque stream water begins to fill the hole.

“I’m not drinking that.”

Rey smiles to herself. Poor Ben Solo, Prince of Alderaan. His spoiled privilege is starting to show in the most amusing of ways.

“Then you’re going to get really thirsty, and then you’re going to get really sick.”

She carefully scoops the top few layers of muddy water away with her hand, revealing a marginally cleaner source underneath. Then she bends down, drinking directly from the impromptu well with
her mouth.

Movement shifts at the back of her head. Kylo is holding her hair back. It’s... it’s a totally unnecessary yet kind of sweet gesture.

It’s a favor she won’t be returning for him though, especially after he starts to laugh when she sits back up.

“You look like you have a beard,” he comments, airily gesturing at her chin.

She swipes it with the back of her hand. It comes away muddy brown, but what did he expect?

“Drink up, pretty boy. I’m going to go scout up the hill and see if we can find a better way ahead.”

She can feel the weight of his stare as he watches her, an odd sort of reluctance gripping her through their bond as if he’s afraid to let her out of his sights for even a minute.

“Leave our stuff where I can see them, Rey. Don’t even think about taking them with you.”

Rey casually flips him off from over her shoulder as she leaves, throwing in an extra wiggle to her hips out of spite.

*

The rest of the daylight had been spent in quiet drudgery.

Up the hills, down the hills, carry the equipment, drink some dirty water, try not to pass out from heat exhaustion. The routine was as repetitive as it was miserable. Whoever coined the term “jungle paradise” was either a certifiable idiot or the closest they’d ever been to a jungle was the pages of a datapad because the reality of this place is that it totally sucks monkey balls.

However, despite the physical hardships of enduring this planet, the landscape was undeniably beautiful. Everything was full of life and color and vibrancy. The exact, diametric opposite of the
spectrum from Jakku. Here every color was accentuated. The blues were more blue, the pinks more vivid, the greens positively electric. Everything was a more luminous version of itself.

And now that Rey could actually see more, she could almost appreciate the strange beauty of the landscape. The higher up into the foothills that they got, the sparser the heavy jungle foliage became, affording them the occasional view of an endless prismatic landscape sprawling below.

“Come watch the sunset with me.”

They had made camp in the early stages of the evening. Water was still an issue, but the nighttime fire had been made, dinner had been eaten, and what little they had for bedding had been laid out. Laid out with each bedroll Rey having ensured was a separate and deliberate distance from each other.

“Come on Rey,” Kylo tries again, watching her more than the colors of the sky above them. “It will only be for a little while. Just until the stars come out.”

Rey’s first instinct is to say no. Shoot Kylo down out of principal. Their relationship is one of civil tolerance and strictly survival-required cooperation, not sitting together and watching a Kodachrome ski of golden orange as it turns into purple.

And yet, when Kylo gently takes the circuit board she had been fiddling with away and offers to help her up to her feet, Rey doesn’t resist.

She does, however, dodge his attempts to hold her hand and walks out into the clearing at the top of the hill beyond their camp, leaving Kylo to throw another log on the fire before hurrying to join her.

She stands at the edge of the field, taking in the sights and enjoying the day finally returning to more pleasant temperatures as the start of night begins. Sunsets here seem to last forever. Maybe it’s because the sky is always colorful, or maybe it’s that, the higher up they go, the more the clouds seem to glow with their own light.

How long are they going to be stuck here on this planet? Forever? Tomorrow? And, if they somehow even manage to get rescued, what happens then? Will it be her side or his? Kylo won’t let her go without a fight, she’s sure of that, but what if it’s the Res-
“Flower for your thoughts?”

Rey raises an eyebrow, eyeing the white and red striped bloom Kylo offers when he sits down next to her.

“Flower for my thoughts? What does that mean?”

She doesn’t take it and he shrugs, reaching out to tuck it behind her ear. It smells sweet. Pleasant and enticing, and Rey feels the knot of tension that had taken up a home between her shoulder blades begin to slacken.

“It’s a saying, Rey. It’s supposed to use a coin, but I didn’t have one. What I mean is, what’s on your mind? You seem… pensive.”

Rey sighs and turns from him, laying down against the soft grass and propping herself up on her elbows to watch the show. It’s odd how she’s already getting used to having her Force energy dampened by this planet. When she first touched any of the plants here it would tingle, creating a strange prickling sensation that ran along her skin and separated her from her 6th sense. Now, though, it feels almost peaceful. Soothing, even. Kylo is still here, their bond is still here, only the Force is less noisy about the whole business between them.

Kylo watches her, his eyes quickly skimming over her form before returning to her face. Perhaps it’s simply the light, but she could almost swear there was a hint of color to his cheeks.

“Did you just check me out?” she asks, turning her attention back to the sky.

Rather than answer, Kylo sits down next to her, his hand accidentally brushing against hers. Rey clears her throat, trying to think of something to say.

“I kind of like it here. I mean, I hate it, but…”

“But you also kind of like it.”

“Yeah.”
The sky is more of a magenta now. Or a fuchsia. A hot, hot pink that looks so strange reflected against Kylo’s pale skin and dark hair. She smiles and he blinks, looking surprised.

Oh. He thought she was smiling at him. Maybe it’s for the best their bond is somewhat subdued, because, if he realized she thought he was odd looking, he probably would have been a little hurt.

And then her heart skips a beat when he reaches under her head to pull her hand out and place it on her chest. He wraps his palm flat over it and this is too much, far too familiar to be tolerated.

“Kylo, we had an agree-”

“I want to talk about it, Rey. We’re adults. We should be able to talk about this like adults.”

Rey knows what he’s going to say and he’s right but she still can’t bring herself to look at him. She looks anywhere instead. At the sky, at the trees, even at the blue grass ringing the edges of her vision as she lays here. Anywhere but at her other half.

The silence between them grows, but Kylo waits her out. She fidgets underneath his hand, trying to ignore how his thumb rubs her palm in circles. It’s nothing. A nothing touch. For kriffssakes, she’s hugged his own damn mother and it had endlessly more affection that a boring old thumb circle.

“Rey...”

“I don’t have anything to say, Kylo.”

Suddenly the sunset isn’t so pretty. Or maybe it is, maybe it’s fluorescent rose and emerald swirls, but she doesn’t want to be here anymore.

Kylo lets go of her hand when she jerks it away, but he catches her shoulder when she tries to heave herself up and stomp back to their camp.

“Rey, please. We can’t keep dancing around this. Let’s clear the air.”
Despite his objections she stands up, glaring at the fiery crescent of the setting sun. Behind her, she can hear Kylo rise and join her, his heavy boots crunching in the grass.

Already their connection fuses stronger, flowing freely between them once more.

She sighs and closes her eyes. He doesn’t touch her, but he waits.

“Fine, Kylo,” she snaps, her control finally wearing thin, “you want to talk about it, let’s talk about it. Let’s talk about how you tried to murder me. Let’s talk about how you stranded us here. Let’s talk about how you… you…”

Rey can’t bring herself to say the words because it’s still too soon. She hasn’t prepared a pretty enough lie to herself to keep her going through the rest of her days.

“What do you think about what happened, Kylo? You did this. You did all of it. So what do you have to say for yourself?"

He recoils when she turns to face him. Rey feels a thread of guilt pierce through her shields at his miserable expression.

“You hate me,” he says.

No. No. He doesn’t get to play the pity card. Not now and not ever.

“Keep going.”

Rey has no intention of making this easier on him. At least not until she knows where her own head
is at, which apparently isn’t an action she’s capable of achieving when she’s around him.

Kylo shifts from side to side. He puts his hands in his back pockets and Rey wonders what he’s so obviously trying to hide from her.

“You’re angry,” he continues. “You think that I lied to you because I wanted sex. Because I only wanted sex. You think that I... that I took advantage of you.”

Gods he’s so thick-headed. Yes, the sex was a piece of the equation, but, to Rey, it was a very small piece. Something that was not necessarily undesired, but the time and the place and the how couldn’t have possibly been more wrong.

“Didn’t you, Kylo? Didn’t you take advantage of me?”

The clouds start to shift as the evening wind picks up. It ruffles Kylo hair and the growing purple hue tints his skin a slightly ghostly shade of pale.

“Yes. And I’m sorry. I know that’s not enough, but I want you to know that I am.”

Anger and sadness rise up in her equally, threatening to well over into tears of pure frustration. Tears that she absolutely refuses to allow to fall around him.

Her thoughts fall to the distance between them. In a strange way, they’re closer than ever before and yet still so very far away. Something has to give. Something has to break. It won’t be her, though. She won’t let it.

“Kylo, I don’t...” her voice fades and she turns away, staring directly into the setting sun.

“Rey.”

His hands fall upon her shoulders and she sighs, not finding the strength to keep pushing him back.

Then she tries to speak again and her eyes sting from the wind in the air and nothing more.
“Kylo, we are bonded.”

“Yes.”

“And we can’t change that.”

“We can’t.”

The hands on her pull back, guiding her until she’s flush with his chest. It’s almost a hug. Almost. Suddenly Rey can’t trust her voice at all anymore.

So why did you do it?

She speaks the words into his mind. That’s the real question. Forget their lovemaking, that had only been a side effect. Why did he put them through this ordeal when he could have reached her in a million and one different, better ways? Why nearly kill them both?

When he rests his heavy forehead against her shoulder she stares out into the horizon, watching the very last sliver of the sun set against the far hills in the distance.

“I suppose,” his voice rumbles against her skin and Rey’s breath catches for a moment, “I snapped. I just snapped. I was losing my mind without you, and then we found out where you were and I completely lost control. I thought that if we met in person, just the two of us, that I could… I could… kriff, I don’t know what I thought, Rey. I just wanted to be with you.”

She closes her eyes. It’s the only way she can fight this. She can’t be here now with him. This was a horrible idea. She should have never allowed it.

“That’s an excuse, Kylo. It’s all an excuse. What I want is an explanation.”

The hands on her shoulders tighten. Rey reaches up and grips him with her palms, unsure if she’s trying to pull him off her or offer him some strange, half-assed form of comfort.
“Maybe,” he says in a low voice, “maybe I thought that I could convince you to stop hating me. If all I ever was to you was someone you don’t hate, that would be enough. I could live like that.”

Rey’s heart hurts for him. A real, genuine pain in her chest that must surely be reflected through their bond from his own agony. You’re nothing to me. She had told him that this afternoon. At the time she’d thought he’d laughed it off, but now she’s starting to realize how deeply Ben holds everything in. How far below the surface he buries himself.

Her feelings surge, rising higher and higher to the surface before she just can’t stand it anymore. Their bond tugs at her from every direction, demanding that she does something about the pain radiating off of her other side.

“Kylo, I don’t hate you.” She makes herself say the words. They taste bitter as they leave her tongue. “Part of me wants to hate you. Part of me really, really wants to. But if I did, I couldn’t have saved you. I couldn’t have healed you like I somehow managed to.”

She blurts it all out, leaving the meaning for him to sort through on his own. Moments go by. The sky grows darker by the minute. They need to go back to their camp before the fire goes out.

But they also need to settle this. That’s more important. That’s why she doesn’t fight him when he wraps his arms around her and hugs her from behind, his breath ticking her ear as he kisses her temple before letting her go.

“But you tell me you hate me all the time, Rey.”

Rey sighs deeply, her shoulders slumping and relief filling her at both the slight change in mood and her having a modicum of her own personal space back.

“Sometimes I do Kylo. Sometimes I find myself filled with thoughts about you. Sentiments of such profound anger and rage and frustration. Sometimes I want to throttle you or give you a new scar or-”

“Wait,” Kylo stops her building rant with a hand to her elbow and this time she immediately pulls it free as she faces him. “Rage, anger… scarification? Pray tell, my dear Rey, exactly which part of the Light Side is this? Was that left out of the sacred Jedi texts or did I miss that lesson?”
Oh yes, there he is. Back to the beginning full circle. Kylo temporarily acting like a decent human being lasted about as long as she’d expected it to. Maybe she likes this version better because at least she understands him. This is the cocky, provoking asshole Kylo that she knows best. At least this one she knows how to deal with.

“You do that on purpose don’t you?”

She really doesn’t need to ask. This poor, simple, arrogant boy couldn’t be more obvious.

He doesn’t answer, either, and Rey turns and finally starts walking back to their camp, calling back to him over her shoulder.

“Kylo? I’m going to sleep now. I’m going to sleep, and I expect you to maintain a respectful distance from me at all times, understood?”

Even if she’s facing away, she can feel him smile. Yeah, that little moment they had is gone. Good riddance. It only served to confuse her from her goal of getting the hell off this rock and away from him.

“And if I don’t?” he challenges, following her and infuriatingly matching her step for step as she works her way back through the knee-high grass to their distant smoking fire.

“And if you don’t, I’m really going to do it. I’m going to give you a new scar and this time I’m going to be aiming a hell of a lot lower than your face.”

Rey won’t look at him as she goes, she categorically refuses to. But, if she didn’t know better, she’d swear their bond was circling around them both and pulling the noose even tighter.

Chapter End Notes

Anyone get the title of this chapter? The Traveler? Crazy ass planets? Thirsty clouds? Journey to the center of the universe? Any of that mean anything? C’mon, I can’t be the only playing this game right now...
Also, I’m going to have to miss next week’s update because I’m traveling, but ch8 will be up 2 weeks from now sometime between the 14th and 17th so I hope everyone will check it out when it’s ready! :)

Next chapter:

Where our duo discover that the single biggest threat to their survival is each other.
Chapter Summary

Where Rey meets and names three new friends, Kylo takes a hot bath, and our duo face an abrupt change in fortune.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

There were so few times in Rey’s life that she could remember being this content.

She was so used to waking up fearing the day and how ironic is it that now when she truly has something to fear her soul is finally at rest and at peace?

Their Bond has to be having a part in how she’s feeling. It’s a warm and heavy thread wrapping close to her, lulling her to stay asleep for as long as she possibly can.

Rey knows what means. It means that Kylo broke his promise. She needs to wake up, peel him off her of, and discipline him.

Except, when she forces her eyes open with a reluctant jerk of her will, Kylo is not, in fact, cuddled up to her like he had the night before. Oh he’s moved alright, laying down right next to her and not on his designated side of the fire pit. But he’s not fused to her. Is barely touching her at all, actually.

No, now he’s simply holding her hand. He’s laying flat on his back and he’s holding her hand gently but firmly, sleeping with it resting directly over his heart.

Rey swallows, an abrupt surge of emotion falling through her. This is ridiculous. He’s Kylo Ren, for kriffsakes. Kylo Ren should never look so unguarded. So… so content and happy. Exactly like how she had been just moments before.

She pulls her hand away smoothly, careful to keep her movements even so as not to wake him. Then, when she’s free, Rey props herself up on her elbow and regards him.
The sky is pink and delicate, glowing softly with the gentleness of early dawn. Kylo looks like someone else in this light. Someone she’s sure she would have liked far better than the real him.

And there’s something she wants to do. Something she’s sorely wanted to do for so long. Carefully, Rey dips into his mind, making sure that he’s still deeply asleep enough. Oh yes, he is. He’s completely unaware of the thoughts going through her head.

To scan his subconscious like this when he’s resting is a violation but… well, that just serves him right, doesn’t it? If he can do it to her, if he can somehow sway her dreams or drift into her head whenever he pleases, then she damn well gets to do the same.

Still, her confidence wavers when she reaches out and touches his face. She listens through their Bond, wary of any hint that he’s waking. He isn’t. She’s free to go ahead.

His scar is surprisingly smooth under her questioning fingertips. The seam of it lies flat and even.

“You don’t own me.”

She mutters the words under her breath, rising to her feet and shuffling unsteadily away from their campsite. A cup of caf would do wonders for her disposition right now. Help her rise and shine with renewed energy and the strength to keep going even in the face of such overwhelming odds.

Practicing morning forms will have to do instead. A chance to get her blood up and clear her head. Today… today they travel. They have to tolerate each other. She has to control her temper around him. And, if all of that goes off flawlessly, maybe they can find a way to send a signal.

This time tomorrow she might be back on base, freshly cleaned up and with a perfectly executed lie ready for explaining why the Millennium Falcon will need to be towed from the ass-end of the galaxy back home.

And what about Kylo? Where does he fit into that plan?

He doesn’t. She’ll have to get rid of him. Can’t risk the Supreme Leader catching even a whiff of the remaining Resistance’s whereabouts.
Irrationally, the thought of abandoning Kylo on some moon or neutral planet somewhere makes her feel very sad. He’ll be devastated. He’s already so worried, the thoughts of their impending breakup have been playing around in the dark recesses of his psyche and she’s caught an echo from time to time.

She knows what he feels because of their… their unique connection. It’s changed ever since they were intimate. Ever since they made love and that one flawed, natural act somehow made them far closer than it had any right to.

But sweet karking hell, don’t tell her that it’s always going to be like this? Not from now on? It’s going to go back to normal, right?

It has to. It absolutely has to. This close of a proximity to her bondmate’s deranged psyche will surely be unbearable. Lead her down the same path of madness that brought him to decision-making failures like believing plunging his saber into a drive core is an acceptable way to tell a girl he likes her.

Rey doesn’t have an answer to that one. She only knows one thing for certain about what will happen when they send that signal: Kylo is going to be an epic, world-class, galaxy-renowned pain in the ass about letting her go.

* 

The wind is stronger today, and the sky has a different quality to it.

Sometimes, as Rey ambles through the forest near their camp, she swears she can feel eyes on her, but not in the ominous hungry kitty sort of way. There are more signs of animals here out of the depths of the jungle. Occasional droppings on leaves or the odd paw or hoof shape in the patches of mud.

Rey stops by a narrow trickle of a creek and sits on a rock, resting for a few minutes to calm her mind. Kylo is still asleep, but he’ll inevitably rise soon and they’ll need to be on their way. Yesterday they had found a plant reminiscent of bamboo. Not quite bamboo as she’s ever seen it, but, with a little improving and adaption, she’d managed to turn a length of it into a watertight vessel.

When she bends down to fill it up from the creek, a creature well-hidden in the foliage chirps and
moves sightly.

She leaps to her feet in an instant and the animal recoils in turn. It’s a... thing. A large... caterpillar like thing. Blue-green and almost shaped like a question mark but with antennae on its head and countless short little legs on the bottom. Like if a millipede and the letter ‘S’ had a baby together.

On the other side of her mind Kylo stirs, rising from the sudden burst of her adrenaline at being startled.

Rey hesitantly reaches out, offering the Question Thingy her hand. Her off hand, just in case it happens to be of the bitey Question Thingy variety.

The antennae wiggle. It scuttles backwards, it’s tiny legs gliding it smoothly across the forest floor.

It’s alarmed. She can feel that through the force. This creature was a young Thingy and had been curious about her, the newcomer, and now she’s scared it.

“I’m not going to eat you,” she whispers softly. The antennae stop. Then wriggle with renewed energy.

Rey? Where are- what in the hells is that thing?

She rolls her eyes, pushing Kylo out of her head but the damage has already been done. The creature must have sensed something was happening to her because it takes off, scuttling quickly away until it disappears into the underbrush.

‘Morning Kylo.

She pushes the words deadpan. This is why she’s not allowed to have nice things. Because, inevitably, her bondmate would show up in one form or another like a bogeyman and scare every curious Thingy away with his dark gloom.

Where are you? Why did you leave?
His voice has a touch of anxiety to it, but the meaning behind his concern is obvious.

_I didn’t run away, you nerf-herder. If I had, I would have taken all our stuff, wouldn’t I?_  

A pause. The image of their camp swirls through her mind and Rey pushes back harder, finding looking through his eyes highly disorientating.

And she takes the scenic way back, ambling along the sides of the stream or occasionally dipping out into the wide open space at the top of the hill to watch the sky. A flock of brilliant white birds watch her from the trees, cocking their heads and bending their long necks in ways that should have been physically impossible. She’ll name them… Twisters. Yes. A flock of Twisters are watching her, and ripples of alarm are emanating from them. Guess they don’t like her nearly as much as she likes them.

There’s something slightly odd going on. Usually, at least over the few days that she’s known it, the sky is a scattered kaleidoscope of clouds and bright colors. Today it’s cloudless but hazy, an odd sort of energy signature is gathering along its edges.

It makes her think of the jungle cats. The same nameless sensation of something building. It almost feels… it almost feels like the planet is starting to take notice of her.

In the distance behind her she can hear the Twisters chirping. Rey decides to pretend they’re wishing her a happy goodbye instead of good riddance.

“_What in all kriffing sweet hells is that thing?_”

“It looks like a pineapple. A bouncing pink pineapple.”

“This planet is the strangest.”
Rey nods, watching as the electric fuchsia beastie bounces by them, hopping without a care in the world. And it does look like a pineapple. Or a pincushion. It’s top area where he assumes the head is located is elongated and spikey while it’s round lower body appears to be covered in hundreds of tiny quills, each one with a yellow bulb at the end. If it wasn’t moving and clearly sentient Rey would almost think it was some sort of exotic hybrid plant bred by a rich collector for its exceptionally whimsical beauty.

“It’s not afraid of us.”

Unlike her, Kylo appears to have minimal interest in the newcomer. He barely gives the- oh, what should she call it- the **Pink Pincushion** a second glance as they come to a stop in the shade. It’s afternoon now and they’d been discussing the possibility of shared meditation. Combining their efforts, so to speak, to see if they could sense together an easier course of direction.

“Well, I suppose this is as good a spot as any.”

Kylo sets their bundle down on the rock and starts heading toward the flat grassy spot a few hundred feet down the wash. They had spent the earlier part of the day climbing and descending, slowly gaining elevation but there was no easy linear path. Now they’re in a sort of rocky slot canyon edge along the side of one of the low foothills. The canyon itself was relatively shady, offering a welcome reprieve from the odd winds and intense bursts of heat that they’d been challenged with, but the location made her nervous. The ground of it was unstable and full of deep holes and crevasses. They’d had to be exceptionally careful with how they stepped or they might literally fall into a pit in the earth.

"The sky is so odd today," she says as she joins him.

Kylo nods, already having adopted the meditation stance. She sits down across from him.

Back on Jakku this was what would happen before a sandstorm. Here gods only know what might be about to happen. The humidity has risen precipitously as well, making their clothes cling to their skin and both of them be a little more irritable than usual.

Case in point, he doesn’t wait for her to offer her hands. Instead, he simply reaches out and yanks her forward, gripping her wrists firmly. The air around them is suddenly stifling hot, but somehow his touch still sends a shiver down her
spine. Rey can't stop herself, really can't, and a memory of their intimate time together flashes through her mind before she can catch and bury it.

He'd held her then, too. Pinning her down but then it was softer and more romantic. His lips against her skin, his voice in her ear.

"Rey."

She swallows, opening her eyes and feeling her pulse spike at the potent look he's giving her.

Sorry.

He clears his throat, his palms sweaty against her skin but that's unavoidable, they're both sweaty as hell right now.

"Rey... concentrate, please. Let's meditate."

"Right."

She waits until he closes his eyes first.

That was all you, by the way. I had no part in that line of thought, I want you to be clear on that.

Rey squirms, cheeks burning as she tries to bury her embarrassment. As soon as she’s ready, she feels his mental presence slip against their Bond before he darts into her mind.

For a split second she can see them, both of them. It's a bird's eye view from above, she and Kylo sitting there surrounded by an ocean of glowing blue grass. He's leaning towards her, both of their eyes are closed but even from this new vantage she can see-

"Holy shit are we sunburnt and filthy."
They are. Kylo more burnt than she is but Rey hadn't realized how encrusted with dirt her clothes and skin were getting.

"I told you to take a bath earlier, back there by that creek."

“Kriff off, I wanted to cover some ground while it was cool. And you stink just as badly as I do.”

Rey squirms, feeling a bead of sweat form on her brow and trickle down her neck to join the existing dampness around the ring of her collar.

“It’s so kriffing hot today, Kylo. Shouldn't it be getting cooler the higher up we get?”

His visage shrugs in her mind.

*Reach deeper, Rey. Let's see how far we can look.*

Their minds merge closer, both of them drawing the Force inside of themselves. The different threads show up clearer and clearer the more she reaches. Her light. Kylo's dark. Both blending together in a field of green.

*Yes. The green energy. This planet is coated with it.*

It really is. She can almost make out the shape of the plants just by how the energy drapes over them. Oh, and she can see living things, too. They glow within the Force. Little birdlike bat things flying through the air, landing on a nearby tree to watch them.

*Further. Let’s keep going. Beyond this canyon.*

Their view pans higher. The green fades and something pulls at her, drawing her attention to distant movement. Something very large and powerful. It’s them. The jungle cats. It has to be. They’re close but must not be aware of the two of them.

“So we’re still in their territory, huh?”
Kylo's hands on her tighten but he doesn't answer. He's looking at something else from his side of their connection. The image in her mind starts to become muddled. As hot as it's getting, it's hard for her to concentrate.

"Kylo?" she asks, a strange feeling of dread starting to fill her senses.

Her skin begins to crawl, a feeling of ants crawling across it. Maybe they've been doing this for too long, fighting against this energy that keeps trying to dampen down their abilities.

"Kylo," she repeats, squirming against the shifting grass.

"Do you see it?" he asks, voice sounding parched and strained.

"What?"

"The mountains, look at them," he pulls her mind in deeper, bringing their powers together more fully. She follows, letting him drag her awareness up and further away.

"What are those things?" she asks, feeling her pulse spike at the inky dark paths leading through her vision. They run along the ground, carrying her far across the hills and the canyons, up higher and higher. They run like veins, pulsing their way up towards the mountains.

"Caves, I think."

Oh? Oh. That's right. When the piss cat had cornered her and earned it's namesakes, she'd hidden in a cave. Where do they lead? Why can she see them at all?

"Focus Rey, we're losing it."

They are. A haze starts to ring around the edges of their vision, Kylo's hands slipping against her sweat-covered forearms. He squeezes her tighter pulling her and pulling her until-
The mountains. She can see them for just a second. A single moment. The peaks of them are barren. Just rock and open spaces.

No life. No living things either flora or fauna. Which means no green energy. And no interference to get in the way of their transmitter.

Then the vision, mountains and veins and green glow and all, comes to an abrupt and absolute stop.

She opens her eyes and Kylo is staring up, a look of great concern etched onto his face.

In the time that they were meditating, the sky has gone dark. Very dark, actually. A deep purple and grey miasma is swirling through the sky, advancing towards them rapidly and casting deep shadows across the heavens from horizon to horizon.

Then the smell hits her. Pungent and acrid and unmistakably caustic.

It's a chemical storm. That's what she had been feeling. That ominous dark dissonance on the horizon of their vision.

Kylo realizes the danger moments before she does and he leaps to his feet, grabbing her hand and yanking her up so hard she's actually airborne for a second. They take off running, leaping over cracky fissures and boulders alike as they race back to where they'd dropped their belongings.

The trees above them are empty.

"The birds are gone!"

She doesn't know why that's important, but it is. They knew this was coming before she did.

The winds hit them just as they reach their bundle. These were no dry desert winds, not at all. These were scalding gusts of steam, so thick and heavy that it her lungs started to choke and she bent over, coughing furiously.
Kylo grabs her again, yanking her by her shoulder as he half-carried half-dragged her towards a rocky outcropping that would offer them at least a little reprieve. He pins her against the wall of the rock, shielding her as the burningly hot winds lash at them from the sides.

"Kylo?"

She can barely say his name, the air is so heavy and starting to stink of sulfur. This is toxic. They need to get out of here or they're going to literally be cooked to death.

"Where?!" she shouts, looking around in a panic.

They were effectively trapped here. The high walls of this canyon would be all but impossible to scale under these conditions.

Above her Kylo cries out, a sharp and cut-off howl of pain. She looks up at him, his whole face distorted in agony, and then it hits her too. Literally hits her. The storm is intensifying, and with it comes scalding, foul-smelling waves of torrential rain. No, worse than scalding, each drop literally sizzling as it hits their skin.

"Fuck! Just- RUN!" she shouts, snatching the bundle up as panic takes over.

They both scramble away from the boulder, Kylo wrapping his arms around her as they lunge forward, tripping and tumbling on the rocks for how little they can see through the blistering onslaught.

Dear gods this hurts so bad! Her skin starts to welt immediately, the stinging rain hotter than anything she ever experienced on Jakku. She falls and Kylo picks her up, slinging her into his arms as he stumbles.

They're not- they're not going to make it, are they?

Is this it? Is this how they're going to die?
KYLO! She tries to shout his name, but the winds drown out her words and fill her lungs with fire. She screams, burying her face into the cloth of his shoulder.

Then he drops her, hurling her onto the ground and she's already in so much pain that she doesn't even feel the sharpness of the rocks cut into her red and raw skin. She cracks open her eyelids enough to see the glow of his saber swinging toward her.

It would have been a mercy killing. It really would have been.

Except what Kylo was doing was cutting into the earth next to her. Rocks and debris fly, the irregular blade spitting dangerously close to her skin but Rey understands immediately. He's opening up an entrance into one of those pits. A hole in the ground into the unknown but the plummet into black uncertainty is infinitesimally better than certain death up here.

Rey activates her own saber, hacking and slashing almost blindly alongside him. She can't breathe. Can hardly see. She boiling.

GO!

He shouts it at her as soon as the opening is big enough. Rey doesn't have to be told twice. She shoves their bundle through and plunges in after it, leaping headfirst into the darkness below.

Rey falls to a hard stop and sudden splash.

There's water at the bottom of the pit. It's not deep, maybe waist height, but it's enough to cushion the impact from the good five or six meters drop that she fell.

And the water at the bottom of the pit is cool. Gloriously cold. Rey flops face-first into the shallow lagoon, trying to soothe every overheated, welted part of herself.

Her eyes are fused shut from the dirt and chemicals that had coated her during the storm, but seconds after her descent she hears a much bigger splash next to her. She scrubs at her face,
dousing herself and furiously washing away all the layers until she can see again.

"Kylo."

Her voice is cracked and her lips taste like blood, and when she looks around she finds them to be in a small cavern. Or maybe it's a large cavern, but the tiny hole high above them that they fell through only lets in a little of the dim, muddy light. There the storm rages on with a fury, but it seems like they are safe enough down here for right now.

"We're alive," Kylo hisses, sounding every bit as destroyed as she is.

Everything hurts. _Everything._ But they're living somehow, and it’s blessedly cooler in here. Much cooler, actually. The air smells thick and loamy with earth, but nothing like the toxic clouds of hell they had endured.

Next to her the water churns as Kylo drops to his knees. He rips off his shirt, tossing it on top of one of the many stalagmites that are scattered along the bottom of the small chamber, and splashes at himself frantically.

"Oh, Kylo..."

His back is covered in welts, far far worse than the fiery stinging spots that she's suffered. He really did take the worst of the brunt for her, didn't he?

"Martyr," she murmurs, frowning and wishing they had the foresight to find some sort of soothing plant earlier when they still could.

He laughs, a short bitter choke as she helps him, scoops up the soothing cool water and splashes it against his broken skin. Maybe this is a bad idea. Maybe the water is actually filthy and she's only going to make his wounds septic, but right now Rey would do anything to help ease the burning pain radiating off of him in waves and through their Bond.

"Can you-" his voice breaks before he can say it but she knows what he wants. He wants her to... to ease his burden.
"Alright" she tells him softly, shifting in the waters to kneel behind his crouched over form.

He looks at her through slitted eyes, his lips a grim line of pain. Yeah Kylo, she feels it to. But her wounds were far less serious than his. She'd said they were being cooked alive up there, but she had no idea exactly how close to the truth that was until she rests her palms against the flat of his shoulder blades and feels the heat radiating off of his skin. Kylo hisses, even her soft touch proving to be nearly unbearable, but he lets her try.

"I don't... I don't know if I can do this again. I don't know how I did it the first time."

He nods stiffly, and it's a true testament of how much pain he's in that he doesn't try to boss her around or ‘teach’ her.

Rey closes her eyes. Summons the light side of the Force. It's hard for her to touch it right now, after everything they have just gone through her mind is fractured and scattered. Not at all in the right headspace to perform something as focused as a Force healing.

She breathes deep, trying to will herself into a more meditative and productive state.

It doesn’t come easily. Kylo fidgets under her touch, her frustration echoing back into him.

*What did you think about? Last time?*

Last time when he was dying she’d thought about... she'd thought about how she doesn't hate him. She could never hate him because he's a part of her now

Rey feels her heart flutter, emotions surging up within her at he memory. The memory of feeling so helpless then. At feeling so utterly powerless and useless and wanting to do something, anything to make him better.

Kylo gasps under her touch, and Rey's eyes fly open. She stares bug-eyed, eyes scanning his back. His skin looks better. Marginally. A little less furious. Less red and weeping.

He's still plenty hurt though, just now he looks like someone who spent an hour out under the
Jakku noontime sun and not a post-mortem crime scene victim.

"More?" she whispers, hoping that he'll say-

"It's enough. Now it only feels like Hux put out ten-thousand of those damn cancer sticks of his against my back."

She doesn't know what that means, but there's a definable trace of gratitude to his voice.

Next he repeats the same move she did herself when she's first plummeted down here. He flops facefirst into the water, submersing himself completely.

Rey looks at her palms. Opens and closes them. Oh what she would give to have her Master here with her now. To tell her what she did so that she can repeat and refine it. Odds are high that this won't be the last or final time that one of them faces a severe injury.

Kylo surges abruptly up out of the water, splashing and tossing his head back, sending an arch of water flying through the air.

Despite the ridiculous intensity of these last moments, Rey can't help but crack a small, lopsided smile.

"Feel better, Darksider?"

She's glad that the cave is so dim. Glad that the storm still rages, angry and dark and purple, high above them. Because if she could see him now she's pretty sure that he would be delightfully wet and half dressed.

“Rey.”

Her eyes flick up to his face when he says it. That’s not the tone of a happy man. No, indeed not. His expression is wide-eyed, almost stricken.
“Oh gods… Kylo, what-”

She gasps, literally gasps, when he holds up the power cell. It had been in the bundle which she’d blindly thrown when she’d jumped down into this cave, and it must have struck one of rocks jutting out from the water.

Half of it is held in his hand. Only half. It’s shattered, broken irreparably in two, and taken with it their one and only hope of getting off this planet.

Chapter End Notes

These last two chapter titles? Anyone? No? Oh, okay…

No Man’s Sky! Incredible game! I totally have been basing this planet off their Viridescent planets. Here are a few videos to give you the idea:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziA37FTlyFs (spot the jungle kitty at 1:30, or technically jungle foxy but same difference)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWg7U5Zsxt4

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHNNHoqB_fc

“Weather Warning: Incoming Storm”

Oh man they aint kidding about that in that game. I’ve landed on a number of cold viridescent planets but my home base is built on a temperate jungle one with these occasional sweltering storms that send my Traveler running for cover in the nearest cave so you know I just had to have some of that going on in this story too!

next chapter:

To mark almost reaching the halfway point of my outline it’s time for Kylo and Rey to celebrate by doing what they do best… and by that I mean spelunking of course.
Dude… You’re Screwed

Chapter Summary

Where Kylo lets Rey express herself, our duo explores the tunnels, Kylo pulls a Seinfeld approved move and stops short, and Rey could really use a self-help guru to show her the way to inner peace.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Grief was supposed to be a five-step process.

Denial was the first, stage of the journey, and it Rey hard and fast with the destruction of the power cell.

“I can fix this,” she told herself out loud. “It’s nothing. I can fix this.”

She had snatched the two halves out of Kylo’s hand and taken them to the brightest area of the dim space. The central power fluid had leaked out. All of it. She would need to… fix... the fluid was gone. No.

“You can’t repair this, Rey.” Kylo hovers behind her slumping form like a fretful parent. “You’re good, gods know that you are, but you’re not-”

She waves him back with a snap of her hand.

“Shut your trap Kylo and let me think.”

Next she pulled out her multitool. Dragged it out of the satchel with such aggression that the fabric of Kylo’s cowl tore slightly. Then she spent a few good moments staring between it and the power cell. The bisected power cell.

Bisected as in cut in half.
“Rey-”


It’s not broken. It’s only in two pieces with no fluid. It’s not broken.

Maybe she could…

…

The urge to scream began to bubble up in her but that would be unnecessary. She can fix this.

How? How can she possibly-

No, Rey. Don’t go down that road. Think your way out of this. What does she need? More power fluid, new housing, a new mechanism, a new energy reserve tank.

She just... described a new power cell. She needs a new power cell. That’s what she needs.

Finally, her eyes begin to burn. It must be from the storm. Like, a delayed reaction.

“Rey.”

His hands extend then retracts when she growls. He wants to touch her. Wants to drag her away from her project because he doesn’t think she can do this.

“1-” her voice is scratchy and high, and she swallows compulsively to force down the lump in her throat, “I can still make this work.”
“Okay.”

Rey glares at him then. He doesn’t believe her.

“Is that pity in your eyes, Kylo?”

Her bondmate visibly recoils as the words strike him. His gaze drops from her to the cavern floor.

“Kylo.”

At the bark of his name he takes a step forward. Just the one. Doesn’t dare to take another.

“It’s broken, Rey. But we’ll figure something out. This isn’t your fault so don’t… beat yourself up over it?”

Oh, is that what he thought she was doing as she was crouching here, literally trembling over the broken husk of her only remaining hopes and dreams?

This brings her promptly to stage two of grief: the anger.

No, not anger. This isn’t anger. This is rage.

Rey’s control had broken all at once. She had started screaming at him then, her patience collapsing faster than the fall into this pit that had lead to their ruination. She can hear her blood rushing in her ears, the very walls of the cavern shaking around them as her fury flares out in spikes.

And she thinks she had shouted some pretty hurtful things at Kylo, but she’s not sure. Wasn’t really paying attention to the words that left her mouth. She just needed to verbalize her feelings. To lash out at anyone and everything.

Most of her verbal assault was centered on how of course this wasn’t her fault because how could it be when this and everything wrong in the universe was his. But her exact accusation faded from
her mind as quickly as she said it, along with all other rational thought beyond expressing what had been building for so long to get to this point.

It’s so easy for Rey to lay into him. He’s her enemy. They’re not friends, they’re not allies, they’re not lovers. He’s the Supreme Leader and his side is responsible for killing off her friends.

She uses that truth to fuel her rage. To fan oxygen onto the flames of her anger. It’s so much easier to be furious than to accept the truth that they’re now stranded out here. No wonder her other half goes off on tantrums all the time. They’re a shortcut to mental release.

Kylo hadn’t fought back. No, he’d simply stared at her, his expression gradually transforming from cold to wounded as she laid into him. He painted an ironic picture of bleakness juxtaposed by the almost comedic sight of the Supreme Leader waiting in a pool of waist-deep water for her temper fit to subside.

Finally Rey curses herself hoarse and the cavern is silent once more.

Rey slumps then when it’s all over. Stage four: depression. Three apparently decided to skip itself entirely because where the hell could she bargain for what she needs anyhow? No, this was different. This was exhaustion of a different level. She’d done it. She’d finally just said everything that she’d wanted to. Put it all out there but it didn’t make her feel even a shade of better. No, rather, she felt drained. Emotionally vacant.

She doesn’t even have the energy to yell at him anymore. Instead, Rey simply shoves, closing their connection and taking a cruel sort of satisfaction at how he winces when the door between them slams shut.

As time went on, Rey began to feel pretty crummy about what she’d said.

Not that she exactly remembered her words specifically, it had been one of those near-blackout-with-fury kind of things, but still she makes a point of being a little nicer to Kylo.

So she tries to talk to him. Tries to be chatty. She leaves her side of their Bond open and can feel him nudging at it from time to time, testing how much he can get away with without her noticing
his presence. Which is of course nothing at all, but she doesn’t let onto that.

Little by little, he stops being so hurt. His mood lightens from full on Doom and Gloom Mode Ren to another version of himself. Someone who seems almost intrigued by the change in their scenery.

Like with everything else on this planet, these caves are something else. They couldn’t be standard, boring, rocky fissures with nothing but darkness and dirt, oh no. These caves carry on their above ground twin’s proclivity for being a psychotropia of weirdness.

For starters, they glow. Some of the rocks emanate their own fluorescence, illuminating their way and presumably providing energy for the scattered plants and occasional other lifeforms.

Rey crouches next to one of the radiant stalagmites. This one is green and casts a dull aura in the air immediately around it. It’s not much, but when you put all the glowing rocks and the lightbulb-like plants that flare up grandly when she walks near them together, it makes for the caverns to remarkably effectively lit.

“Ow.”

Behind her Kylo recoils his hand, shaking it like something has stung him. When she gets closer she sees that it’s a plant. A vine. It’s shrinking away from him, curling up on itself.

“Oh,” Rey says, “it’s one of those flowers from up above.”

It is. One of those red and white striped ones that Kylo had put in her hair before. She didn’t recall it being mobile up on the surface, but it seems like down here everything is a slightly different interpretation of itself. She’ll have to keep that in mind in case any of her self-named friends wanders across their path.

Rey swings her bamboo jungle canteen off her shoulders and takes a sip of water. At least down here there was plenty of drinkable water, though the underground river had dipped in and out of their path as they traveled.

“I was going to put it in your hair,” Kylo mumbles, yanking the canteen from her hands when she offers it to him.
So… still kind of salty after her litany against him earlier, huh?

“That would have been… sweet,” she offers as a peace token.

Kylo could be sweet. He could be. She knew that he had it in him. He just chooses to be an asshole most of the time.

Before they go, Rey makes a cairn from fallen rocks. She’s been vigilantly marking their path as they go and, who knows, maybe some decades in the future lost traveler will see her little markings and be all ‘WTF’? That would be pretty funny.

“She mentally flips him off. If he wants to be in her head, that’s what he gets. Maybe he won’t always like what he finds in there and that will serve him absolutely right.

They continue on their way, this time standing just a little bit closer to each other than they had before.

Rey had met one of her old friends.

It was the squiggle. The curious little Question Thingy that had greeted her by the stream above, except its subterranean cousin was white and black and glowed red when she approached and tried to offer it her hand.

“Better not, Lightsider. I don’t think this one is too friendly.”

Rey pouts. It’s true. The creature- and truly this is one of the strangest ones on an already strange planet- but this creature is recoiling, making a show of its strength in warning to her proximity.

Then Kylo activates his lightsaber and the creature releases a horrific stench and darts away, zig-zagging in a flurry of legs from one rock to another as it flees.
“Kylo!”

Rey glares at him, pushing herself back up to standing and crossing her arms over her chest.

“What? I wanted to eat it.”

Her scowl turns into a sneer.

“Did that Question Thing look edible? It reeks like a flipping bantha and I wanted it to be my friend.”

He deactivates his saber with a nonchalant shrug. Rey has to fight the urge to stomp on his foot or kick him in the shin.

“And I wanted it to be dinner. We’re going to have to find something to eat down here, Rey. And so far all I’m seeing are some fireflies, flowers, and your friend. The three F’s.”

“I’ve got a forth one in mind too,” she mutters, turning away crisply so she doesn’t have to see the growing smirk on his face.

* 

The cave had been getting narrower and sometimes there’s an odd, eerie rushing sound above their heads.

“Do you think that we’re below the river now?” she asks, craning her neck.

Kylo, who had been walking ahead of her, stops suddenly, his arm stretching back to steady her as she bumps into him.

They both stop and listen. Rushing. A distant rumbling. It’s not getting closer, though. But they
had been going in a downward direction and now the air is denser and cooler, the plants and animals less frequent, and moisture is leaking from a myriad of cracks in the cave walls.

When Rey presses her hand to the sides, the rocks are trembling slightly.

“I don’t like it here,” she says.

Kylo listens, then shakes his head sharply in agreement. The movement reverberates down his arm, connecting with her because he’s still holding her behind him. It’s at this exact moment that Rey realizes that, when he’d stopped, he’d reached back and had actually been grabbing one of her tits this whole time.

“Kylo.”

He cocks his head, listening with one ear pointed up and not noticing the same thing she’s noticing.

“I think,” his voice is serious, “that we should get out of here. This tunnel seems stable enough, but let’s not push our luck.”

“Speaking of pushing your luck...”

She grabs his hand and shoves it off of her with a flick of her wrist. Kylo looks back, that same, stupid, confused look of ‘thickheaded git’ that she’s come to know so well furrowing itself across his features.

They continue on their way like they so often always do: with Rey’s cheeks burning and Kylo being a portrait of dumb oblivion.

* *

Predictably, since nothing in Rey’s life could ever be allowed to go smoothly, they had gotten lost.

She and Kylo had walked for an indeterminable amount of time. The tunnel had split and split and
split, but they’d always chose the rightmost path. Then they’d hit a dead end.

Okay, no big deal. They’ll just retrace their steps.

They’d returned, choosing left this time. It lead them to a grand chamber of a room that should have looked familiar except it absolutely didn’t.

“No. It’s not possible. We only did two turns. We’re not lost. Let’s just turn around and try it again.”

Kylo had been the one to say it, but apparently Rey had gone back to Grief Stage One: Denial because she had readily agreed with him.

So they went back. Okay, now this narrow passage only has three options, all three of which they’ve tried. By process of elimination, going back to the second of the splits should take them back to the dead end and the first back to where they-

“Rey, do you remember seeing this caved-in section?”

For a second her blood runs cold. This was supposedly the way they came, but this giant rock most certainly hadn’t been there before. It nearly blocks the whole passage, with barely enough space for them to squeeze around.

Is this place collapsing? Like, had there been some major tremor and they hadn’t noticed it? Could they get squished to a paste at any moment and this is how they finally die on this godsforsaken hell rock?

Then it hits her. The sound of distant rushing water.

She looks at Kylo and he’s activated his saber, using it to cast a light on the dirt floor they’re standing on.

The only footprints are theirs from right now, pointing in the direction of the boulder and not away from it.
“We haven’t been here before,” they both say in unison.

They haven’t. This is all new. Somehow they’ve gotten horribly, horribly turned around.

“We’re lost.”

Suddenly Rey can’t breathe. There’s just not enough air down here.

They can’t be lost! They can’t be! They’ve only seen one way out and that was back there, whenever there is, where they first fell through the surface. Hours and hours ago.

Kylo catches her shoulder, trying to draw her closer. Rey realizes that she had been trembling, shaking violently as the full horror of the situation dawns upon her.

“We have to turn around,” she gasps, feeling simultaneously lightheaded and like her feet are buried in concrete.

“Which-”

“I don’t care, Kylo!” she slaps his hand away, staggering backwards into the dimly passage they had just come from. “One of those tunnels back there has to be the right one. We find it and we go back. We’ll wait the storm out if we have to, but I want to get out of here right now. Right now.”

Rey doesn’t wait to hear his answer. A primal need is gripping her. She has to prove this to herself: they’re not lost. They’re not trapped down here. They can get out at anytime.

She grips the hilt of her lightsaber as she stomps away from the boulder and back into the branching side passage. The weight of it in her palm comforts her, as does Kylo’s obedient silence as he shadows her.

Suddenly these caves aren’t so pretty anymore. The glowing rocks aren’t so fantastical, the lightbulb plants are a nuisance ruining her night vision, and even the gorgeous flowers aren’t so
captivating. All Rey wants to do is get back out into the open air and so that’s exactly what they’re going to do. No matter what.

* *

They followed their returning footprints until the tracks were lost on an area of hard, compact bedrock.

They never found them again.

* *

They walked.

They walked and they walked until they’re feet hurt and Rey’s nerves were frayed more than the severed wires that had once linked the two halves of their power cell.

She still didn’t admit defeat, though. Still hadn’t reached the fifth stage. They weren’t lost. They weren’t.

It was all going to be okay. Somehow.

* *

Rey starts to cry.

She hadn’t cried once since crash landing into this planet, but now she does.

“We’re lost and we’re going to die on this planet,” she whimpers, her words muffled by the breadth of Kylo’s chest.
Stage five: acceptance. It was the bitterest of all the stages.

He hugs her to him, not letting her token resistance get in the way of the physical comfort she so badly needs at that moment.

“Are you enjoying this?” she mumbles, “enjoying watching me suffer and cry in your arms?”

He holds her tighter than, but for all of his feigned grimness Rey can sense an ember of happiness burning inside his mind.

“I’ve always wanted to do this,” he confesses, “to comfort someone when they needed it.”

“You’re useless. I hate you.”

Her words come out choked. She feels his lips curve into a smile against the top of her head.

“You don’t mean that. I know you don’t. Not even a little bit.”

“Gods Kylo, just shut up.”

And he does. Bless him, he does.

He holds her in happy silence until her fit is over and she’s ready to continue on.

Continue on to where? They’re lost.

“To the next bend in the road, Rey. And then we’ll take each one from there as they happen.”
It’s night.

Or, if it isn’t night since the glowing rocks never seem to change and time seems to no longer have meaning underground, they have finally come to a point where they have to stop walking or fall over in pure exhaustion.

Rey slumps to her knees, her whole bodyweight practically collapsing.

Today had easily been one of the worst in her life, and gods only know that she’s had a few bad ones. But this… this just kept on going. One hit after another.

“We’re safer in here, at least for the time being.”

Kylo stands above her, one of his hands falling upon her shoulder and steadying her as she starts to sway. Rey sinks the rest of the way, sitting on the hard and compact stone floor of the cavern and not giving a care if her already dirty clothes are made even dingier.

“Do you really think that?” she asks, turning her head slightly as he sinks down next to her.

“I… perhaps. At least there are no piss cats here.”

“No toxic storms.”

“No heat waves and humidity clinging to our skin.”

Rey blinks, her eyes feeling dry and scratchy. The air down here was breathable, but some places in the cave system were fresher than others. This particular cavern was not one of them.

Her shoulders slump in defeat and she lets her head loll to the side, resting her forehead against his wrist.

“Rey?”
His other arm comes up, catching her elbow. It’s a half-hug, and an awkward one at that. Maybe that’s all he thinks he can get away with, but after everything Rey would have preferred the real deal.

“You only need to ask, beloved.”

He embraces her fully from behind and Rey’s eyes widen even though her body all but melts into the warm touch.

“Did you just call me-”

“Yes.”

She swallows. Kylo rests his chin on her shoulder. She can’t bring herself to look at him, instead preferring to stare out into the wide chasm of glowing lights.

“Do you-”

“Yes.”

She shouldn’t have said anything. Shouldn’t have even thought it.

The silence that falls between is pleasant, though. So are his arms around her. He doesn’t squeeze. Sometimes Kylo is too rough with her. Picking her up and holding her tight until she bruises.

“I’m sorry,” he mumbles the words against the back of her shoulder, sending soft vibrates through her vertebrae. “I’m sorry. I don’t- I never mean to hurt you.”

“I get it, Kylo. It’s because I try to run away, isn’t that right?”

When he swallows deeply it tickles. Rey’s stomach flip-flops and her fingers worry themselves
against the scratchy stone floor.

“Sometimes,” he admits after a spell.

There’s more to it than that, Rey is sure of it. That’s just touching the very surface of the issue.

But she doesn’t want to talk about that now. It’s far, far too exhausting to take on the role of Dr. Rey, psychiatrist to the criminally insane First Order elite.

He still makes no move to let her go, not even when she politely tries to wriggle free of him to lay out their meager materials for bedrolls.

“Kylo...”

He rocks back on his heels and hauls her into his arms, turning her so she’s facing him. This naturally brings both of their chins to rest on the others shoulders.

Rey doesn’t know what to do with her hands. Her palms itch, their Bond whispering unwelcome suggestions into her ears.

“We should sleep,” she says weakly.

There he goes again, holding her a little too tight. It makes her voice come out raspy and then her breath hitches when he starts to stroke her back.

*Kylo.*

He shakes his head, loosening his hold on her only enough to make her breath come easier.

“Rey, the last time-”
His voice breaks almost immediately. She can hear his breath coming shorter and sharper next to her ear. Rey catches a glimpse of his thoughts before he pushes her away gently.

The last time he’d held onto anyone for this long it was his mother decades ago.

Rey feels her eyes start to burn, her own throat closing up in sympathy. Their Bond tugs harder, figuratively or possibly literally tugging on her heart.

Just what is she supposed to say to that? Yeah Kylo, me too? Physical displays of comfort have been limited to brief embraces with her various Resistance friends. Or warmer but still short-lived moments with his mother. Master Luke… well, he had given her a hearty shoulder pat at one point. That still counts, right?

Unable to stand it anymore, Rey allows her arms to come up around him. When he swallows, it sounds exceptionally loud in her ear.

“Are we just going to sleep like this? Holding each other? Won’t our asses get stiff after a while?”

His laugh is a deep rumble that would put a thunderstorm to shame.

“Probably.”

Honestly? Right now Rey doesn’t care. Not when there’s something else she needs to say. Something that has been bugging her this whole time since crashing down from above into this cave system.

“Kylo… I’m sorry for what I said earlier. All those nasty things I called you. I was angry and I don’t actually remember what I said but I’m sure that maybe a few of them were out of line. Maybe. And maybe one or two of them weren’t even true.”

A beat passes between them. Rey waits patiently. His heartbeat thunders in her ears. He’s not going anywhere.

“Oh?” he says after a few moments. “You mean like when you called me an intergalactic idiot who
will never be more than a waste on society and everything I touch turns to f*cked up? Or how if I, how did you say it, or how I’m such a die-hard screw up that I should just do the universe a favor and schedule my next vacation in the center of a black hole? Don’t worry about that, Rey. I’ve already forgotten all about it.”

Her brows pull together. Did she really-

“Yes. You did. But that’s fine. When I’m angry I destroy things with my blade, when you’re angry you annihilate feelings with your forked tongue.”

Ouch.

She mumbles another ‘I’m sorry’ against his neck, borrowing her face in deeper to hide how her cheeks are tinting.

Words hurt. She should be a better Jedi than this. Master Luke wouldn’t have been proud of her for saying these hurtful, factually true things to his nephew.

Kylo scoffs, his lips skimming against her temple.

“You sure about that one, Lightsider? Because I’m pretty sure Luke had more than one choice phrase ready for me in the afterlife.”

Rey smiles but falls silent, her eyelids gradually growing heavy as the weight of the day begins to win its battle over her.

Kylo mutters something under his breath and she snuggles her face in closer. Fine, if Kylo wants to tuck her in and be her mattress, that’s fine. At least the lugheaded, f*rf-brained, nerve-burned git is useful for something.

These caves are much cooler, too, so his bodyheat pulls double duty. Her little heating pad. Or big heating pad, to be honest, because, when he leans back and flops her against his cheat and she curls in tight, she feels so small against him.
It’s been a long day. An awful day. Kylo’s back is still hurting him, too, she can feel the aching burn through their connection.

Hey, he chose to be her mattress. Chose it because he was a stubborn fool who couldn’t make the right decision to literally save his life.

“Shhh,” he murmurs, his lips pressing against her temple.

There’s the weight of the Force to his words, but this time Rey doesn’t fight it. She falls asleep immediately, embracing the darkness that surrounds her from all sides.

Chapter End Notes

Poor Rey, it’s getting harder and harder for her to resist her Ardent Lothario isn’t it?

Next chapter:

Kylo and Rey continue on their subterranean trek, encountering many strange sights and bouts of sexual tension along the way.
Chapter Summary

Where Rey wakes up between a Kylo and a hard place, the caves fail to provide any answers but sure do raise some questions, and we reach what in writing theory is known as the Middle Moment.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Rey woke up feeling both horny and mortified.

She’d been having that dream again. The same one that she had before by the river, except this time it had progressed from hardcore making out to full on “en medias res”.

Specifically speaking, she had been dreaming about bouncing up and down on a naked Kylo while simultaneously holding his mouth tightly shut with her hand. Why? Because, even when dreaming that he was buried in her to the hilt, he simply wouldn’t stop talking. How is it that, even in her most depraved of fantasies, she still imagines her bondmate as being an absolutely insufferable ass?

Realism was a bitch. She could hardly stand him in real life, but couldn’t her sex dreams have had the bare minimum of decency to make him more Ben than Kylo? Was that really so much to ask?

But now she’d woken up feeling needy as hell and having her other half’s massive, heavy form underneath her wasn’t helping her condition one bit.

He was asleep. There was that one small kindness. He was also… noticeably aroused. Maybe her dream had inspired him or maybe this is part of his normal routine and she’d never been intimately introduced to it until he was pressing insistently against her stomach while holding her tightly to his chest.

Her face is buried against his neck and she can smell his skin. Something earthy and male and inspiring as all hell. It makes her mind wander to places absolutely forbidden but entirely delightful.
Rey tucks her face in deeper, literally trying to hide her shame but that just makes everything worse. Now Kylo’s breath is scratchy against her ear and all she can think about was when he panting above her, holding her down with tenderness and not restraint. His arm around her tightens even now in his sleep, tempting her to surrender to the moment and fall into his web of decadence.

Could she? Shouldn’t she?

Maybe that would help put him in his place. Show him that she’s the one in charge if she straddles him now and rides him until they’re both bow-legged.

That could be fun.

What would it be like if she gave into this? He wants her to, their Bond wants her to. Kriff, even her own body wants her to.

An uncomfortable flush is starting to settle between her legs. If he wasn’t her, she would take care of it herself. Fan her own flames like she has for all of these years.

But now she doesn’t want to settle for second best. Why have a hurried and bashful self-session when she can have something better? Deeper? Kylo touched her in ways that she could never touch herself. Never had considered until that night.

Rey had zero doubts that it wouldn’t be pleasurable. If she’d been able to climax before when she’d been in the process of losing her virginity while stranded on a dying ship and awaiting her imminent fiery death, now should be a snap. Easy peasy. Push him down, shut him up, take what she needs. Battery operated boyfriend with a pulse.

Is it so wrong that she would want that again?

Yes. Yes, it truly is.

He had tricked her. Or in the very least, deceived her. But that doesn’t make her itch go away.

Rey has no idea why she’s thinking these things. Or why she literally has to keep squeezing her
hands into fists to keep them from wandering down his body.

Or wandering down her own body.

Gods, why is she like this? Is it because she finally got a good night’s sleep? Or is Kylo secretly influencing her? He’d sworn up and down that he had nothing to do with her dream before, but now she’s starting to wonder if it is all his fault and he just doesn’t know it? Like, maybe he’s so damn bad at censoring himself that he’s actually projecting his fantasy of her into her?

Either way, she needs to put a stop to this right this second before she loses her battle of wills.

Kylo grunts when she peels herself off of him, but he doesn’t wake up. Even the sound of his voice is enough to make her quiver and she immediately uses the Force to help her dislodge his heavy limbs from around her. Gods, the man can cling. Somehow manages to be all over her everywhere at once even when he’s asleep and so obviously distracted by himself.

When she pulls away from him he rolls over on his side, curling around the space where her body had occupied.

Rey frowns for a moment, regarding him. There was a time she would have taken this opportunity and done the whole galaxy a favor. Or, at least, there was a time she would have considered it deeply and seriously.

Now ending his life has less than no appeal. She would be alone out here. Might die herself in the process. Have to figure out how to repair the unrepairable on her own.

She’d lose her warm mattress. The big, moody behemoth oaf that had kept her safe from the cold last night even at the expense of the welts on his back. Which he’d also happened to get while trying to keep her safe.

For all those reasons and those reasons alone, Rey decides to declining killing him in his sleep with her lightsaber.

Besides, beheading an unaware, unarmed man with a morning wood situation hardly seems like becoming conduct for a future Jedi like herself. She’s the last of her kind now, she needs to set an example.
Rey’s legs are wobbly and she can feel an uncomfortable slickness between them. There’s one surefire cure for that: an ice cold morning dip in one of the nearby pools will have to do.

She darts away to one of the smaller adjoining antechambers, gritting her teeth the whole time as the movement only encourages the needy throbbing betwixt her thighs. Then she drops her clothes, practically tearing them off herself, and dives in head first to a deep and inviting pool illuminated blue by the glowing rocks.

It’s inviting only for a second, then the ice cold miserable needles sink deep into her skin, instantly robbing her body of its hope for a horizontal morning romp.

She comes up sputtering, teeth chattering, and with uncontrollable shivers racking up and down her spine.

That was… extremely effective. She’s way too cold and pissed off now to be horny.

In the back of her mind her bondmate jerks away with a shout that she can hear echoing off every wall around him.

“Morning Kylo,” Rey chirps, and, despite her teeth clattering together, she grins.

Aspiring Jedi or not, giving him such a rude awakening had been far more satisfying than she could have ever imagined.

Both of them had been rather grumpy at first.

Kylo had been particularly sour, glaring daggers at Rey as she flounced back to their camp with wet hair, damp clothes, and a knowing gleam in her eye.

They’d had a rather one sided discussion about their food options with Rey nixing every and all
suggestion of his at killing and eating any of her named friends down here. Not that there had been any other than the Squiggles and the odd firefly like insect, but Rey was rather fond of the former and had no interest in eating the latter.

“If I see a fish, I’m getting it. I don’t care if it’s one of your ‘pals’ or not.”

“Fine. Fish are fine. Maybe some of the others too, but not the Squiggles, they’re… cute?”

Kylo had grunted, giving her a sideways sneer before stomping over to a glowing white mushroom that was nearly the size of his whole torso and carving off a chunk. They’d been eating them since yesterday without any serious consequences other than they tasted like dirt and had next to zero nutritional content.

He had been complaining endlessly about it. Rey was grateful to have a meal at all. Having something in her stomach helped to distract from the feelings of butterflies she’d had in there since waking up. Or the growing sense of frustration at the constantly branching tunnels which provided absolutely no sense of direction beyond ‘I dunno, pick one and let’s try it’.

So they just picked one. They didn't try to plan because that would require talking to each other and that had only ever lead to more trouble.

* 

As their ‘day’ wore on, Rey had begun to feel very peculiar.

Her petty annoyance at his existence had faded, replaced by something far more overt and harder to ignore. Ever since last night, she’s filled with these… these urges. This need to give herself to him.

Maybe their lovemaking has awoken something in her. Some deep and forbidden need to be touched more and more and more. Even walking close to him in the tight space of a narrow passage is enough to make her blood heat up. She feels different now. More gown up and womanly but also like every emotion is heightened more than it rationally should be.

If Kylo had noticed, and Rey was sure that he had at least on an instinctual level, but he hadn’t directly acted on it. Indirectly perhaps. Just like hers, his own moods seemed to change almost
randomly the further along their underground journey that they went.

By the time it came around to when they’d decided it was noon, purely a guess based on the growling of their stomachs and how many hours had passed since they’d woken up, Kylo had gotten over his sourness and gotten more affectionate.

Okay, Rey couldn’t quite call it that, but he’d slowly been finding excuse after excuse to touch her. Simple, innocuous touches like a palm on the small of her back to steer her in a particular direction instead of using his damn voice like a normal person. And then the touch would linger or his hand would find its way to her shoulder and ever so casually rest there.

And she hadn’t minded at all. That was the worst part. Normally she would slap him away, shove him aside and tell him to keep his filthy hands to himself.

Not this time, though. Now it was all Rey could do to remain silent, stoic, and not let on how her heart would skip a beat every time skin touched skin.

All because she’d let him hold her last night? She’s been tired, okay? Emotionally devastated and feeling all kinds of raw and delicate. Kylo had been there but she could have as easily made do by hugging the stalk of a squishy mushroom and drawing a smiley face in it.

Whether he’s following her thoughts or not, his hand accidentally bumps against her own and he catches her wrist as she stumbles over an uneven spot on the ground. When she raises an eyebrow and flaps her hand, trying to shake him loose, he simply looks straight on ahead and pretends like he has no idea what he’s so obviously doing.

“Smooth, Kylo. Sometimes you really take after your old man, don’t you?”

He doesn’t answer, but there’s a certain airiness to his soul that hadn’t been there before.

Apparently sleeping in his arms had been triggering for both of them. It had made her horny and him clingy and needful. This is why Jedi were forbidden attachments. All they do is gum up the works of what had been a tolerably functional ‘business only, survival only’ relationship.

Not that Kylo had ever exactly agreed to it. That restrictions had all been on Rey’s side, and he’d only reluctantly huffed and hemmed and his way through accepting her terms.
Now, as they walk together side by side, hand in hand, and his fingers just so happen to slip between her own, Rey is starting to wonder if he ever meant his promise to behave himself at all.

Things reach a fever pitch that evening.

They were bound to boil over at some point. All the stress and animosity and confusing lust… it was all too much. Rey hadn’t wanted to confront Kylo tonight. Or ever. But then he’d done what he does best and stuck his foot in it and set her off.

It was their bedding that had done it. Kylo hadn’t even pretended he was going to respect her wishes for a safe nocturnal distance. After she fool heartedly had fallen asleep in his arms last night he now seemed to think that one-time only event was a new constant.

He had spread their bedding together, creating one wider and thicker mattress instead of two separate one. That had been too far. He hadn’t asked if it was okay.

Rey had stormed off then. A vague and flippant ‘I’ll be back late, don’t wait up’ was all she had told him, and then she spent the next few hours exhausting herself with practicing forms, pushups, crunches, or whatever else she could come up with to tire herself out to the point where she would sleep dreamlessly.

When all else had failed, she had simply paced back and forth, waiting for some revelation from the divine to come and help her get her thoughts back in order.

It never did, but blessedly Kylo is asleep when she finally returns to him.

He’s laying on in her bed. Her bed. Not theirs. There is no theirs, just him and his big selfish ego. A cold piece of crisped mushroom is waiting for her, resting gloomily on a flat rock. He’d made a small fire, too, and it warmed the cool air of the cavern into something approaching pleasant.

Kylo had literally left the light on for her. She... Someone was finally waiting for her when she came home.
That single, nothing little gesture brings a pang to her chest and robs her of her next two breaths. Her determination wavers, but she can’t let it. No, Rey needs to prove something to herself. She can’t go another day without it.

Rey kneels next to him, sitting on her heels. She reaches out tentatively, pushing on his shoulder. He’s heavy. He’s huge.

She pushes harder. His eyes flicker open as she rolls him onto his back. There’s a soft smile on his face. Uncertain, but he’s glad to see her.

That’s good. That makes this easier. Rey knows that she has to do this. She has to do this for herself. For both of them, really.

She leans over him, supporting herself with a hand on either side of his head.

And he’s about to say something but she silences him with her lips.

She’d wanted her kiss to be angry. To hurt and punish him for being so utterly intolerable in every way. Instead, it’s uncertain. She presses her lips against his and it’s… nice. Really nice. The contact feels both electric and natural. He opens for her, the question dying on his lips as she nips at him.

One of his hands drifts to her shoulder, his neck straining up as she pulls away.

That had been…


Her lips are tingling.

“Rey?”
Rey pulls away, having to drag his eager lips back forcefully. “I feel *nothing.*”

He stares at her incomprehensibly and Rey loses herself in his eyes for a moment. His pupils are dilated and his lips swollen, making him look positively delectable.

Then he cranes his head forward, kissing her again even through the doubtless pain of his hair being yanked as she tries to tug him back. His lips skim lightly against her, tingling over every part of her skin that they touch. She pulls him away harder then, fighting as much with herself as against his ardent determination.

Kylo whines, his eyes pleading as he relents and falls flat onto his back.

“Rey.”

Emotions boil over inside her at her name. He always just… it’s so reverent. So much longing said in just one syllable.

She rests her forehead against his, stubbornly refusing to look at him.

“I feel nothing for you, Kylo,” she repeats. “Nothing at all.”

His breath, warm and happy, fans across her face, and her lips part automatically for him before she realizes it. He next kiss is sweeter than hers to him, his mouth imploring but never insisting. Even his hands on her have a surprising delicacy to them.

Why in the hells is this so damn pleasurable? Why does kissing feel this good? This weird, wet skin on wet skin touch that people do that should in all logic be gross in practice is so absolutely divine?

“Kylo.”

She doesn’t know what she’s trying to say, but she’s growing dizzy every time she pulls away. The impulse to squirm and writhe against him is strong, but the second she does he gasps and Rey knows exactly why.
He looks up at her with a piercing intensity, cradling her face in one of his huge hands and Rey has to look away for a second to collect herself.

“What are you-” he begins to ask

“I don’t know,” she snaps, one of her hands twining with his other and half pinning him, half holding him.

She glares down, her eyes narrowing as her blood settles low inside her. Having Kylo underneath her like this is intoxicating. She could do it now, really live out her fantasy.

No one would ever have to know. That was a promise she’d made to herself up there on the ship when she opened her legs for him, but now it’s still every bit as true as it was then. He could be her dirty little secret. She could take from him just like he took from her. And then, afterwards…

Afterwards she would still have to leave him, but it would be so much harder. Already the notion of being separated him is approaching unbearable.

She shouldn’t have let things get this far.

That’s it then. It’s now or never. This is her last chance at this, before she falls any deeper under his spell.

She starts to push off of him, her mind made up, and his hands immediately tighten, keeping her firmly where she is on top of him.

“What are you up to, Scavenger?”

He doesn’t sound angry. Suspicious, but not angry. So must not know yet and she needs to keep it that way as long as she can.

“Stay out of my head, Kylo.”
How many times has she said that? One more. Just one more.

Her throat is tightening and there’s a burning prickle in the corners of her eyes. His hands hold tighter when she tries to pull up, now yanking slightly in his need to hold onto her. When his thumb traces her lips she shakes her head slightly, causing him to frown then relent.

“I like it in your head, Rey,” he answers. “You can’t lie to me in there. Or hide from me.”

That finally cuts too close to home. Rey jerks herself away, pushing back hard until he eventually has no choice but to let her go or risk hurting her with holding on.

With a deep sigh he flops back down and stares blankly the cavernous roof above him rather than look at her as she scrambles away out of reach. She scrubs at her stinging eyelids, rubbing them vigorously with the back of her hands.

“So that’s it then?” He sounds annoyed but also every bit as weary of all of this as she is. “Are you done with me again for the evening, Rey, or did you ave something else to prove to yourself as well? Perhaps something about how everything is always my fault, including you throwing yourself at me then stopping when you started to actually feel something real?”

If she had been a better Jedi she would have simply shrugged that comment off. Instead, it sinks in deeply, cutting her breath short as she stares stricken at him. Kylo swallows, his brows pulled together, but he still won’t look at her.

“Kylo.”

He doesn’t answer. He closes his eyes and sinks back to side of their Bond quietly.

“Kylo.”

Rey won’t have this. She’s in charge. He doesn’t get to get away with this.
She bends, intent on snatching his cloak right out from under him and using it to make a nest in one of the adjoining rooms for the night. His eyes snap open and he catches her wrist in a flash, holding her in an awkward stoop as she yelps and tries to leap back.

“You can either sleep here with me or sleep in the dirt, Scavenger, though I suppose thats hardly a punishment you’re unused to.”

He shoves her away with that as his parting barb, dropping her wrist and letting her fall gracelessly onto her ass on the cold, hard ground. Then he rolls over, turning his back to her, and for the second time that night Rey feels an impulse to run him through with her saber.

“I wouldn't stop you if you tried,” he says quietly, drawing his cloak up around himself.

It’s not a temptation. Right now Rey wants nothing to do with him, not even taking his life.

She gets up and, without another word, turns and leaves, ready to find someplace, anyplace far away from him.

* 

Rey feels like slapping herself.

Or screaming and pulling out her hair, possibly with some sort of writhing on the ground in the fetal position added to that maneuver.

*That* would accurate surmise her current emotional state.

Erratic and blended with unbelievable sadness and regret. And shame. A whole lot of shame to top it all off.

This isn’t her. Rey is no stranger to misery, but this is different. Something has intrinsically changed within her during her time on this planet.
The further she goes from Kylo the worse it gets. That part scares her too. She doesn’t miss him. Their Bond does. She doesn’t. Rey doesn’t want him or need him.

He’s infected her. Somehow Kylo has contaminated her. Done something to her to pollute her once clean and pure soul with this overwhelming need to… to let him have her. Let him love her. Love her body and love her mind.

Rey doesn’t need him. Not for his affection or his company or… or to get off this planet. The only reasons they had started working together was to send that transmission signal. Now the power cell is gone and with it their only hope.

So that reason was gone and now she’s free. Kylo is superfluous. Goodbye. Good riddance. She can just keep on walking. Lose herself in this maze of tunnels and either she’ll find her way back up to the surface on her own or eventually die alone down here. Would dying with him be so much better?

There was a time when she let Kylo be her confidant. When she trusted him over those who were more deserving.

She had told him then that she had never felt so alone. Now she has never felt so lost.

Gods, why is she thinking like this? What’s happening to her? He’s her enemy. Why does she keep losing sight of that?

A tear slides down her cheek, stinging poignantly in the chilled air. The second time in two days that she’s cried, but this time it cuts much deeper than her panicked tears of frustration.

Who is she anymore?

Not someone she recognizes.

Gods, what kind of a person is she to long for such a monster? When this journey is over, who will she become?
Rey.

His voice is a soft whisper against her mind, one that’s nearly drowned out by her steady sniffling.

She shakes her head, pushing him out further. This was a private moment, Kylo, and you’re not invited. She’s done more than enough sharing with him to last her a lifetime. He doesn’t get to have this one too.

But it’s not too late. It’s never to late to change, her Master had taught her that. This was a mistake, but it can be fixed.

Rey winces sharply then. Their Bond knows what she’s doing and its scared. That’s all this is. Self-preservation all around.

That’s what everything is about, isn’t it?

She takes a deep, pained breath and forces herself to relax. Be meticulous. Meticulous. Little by little she closes tight their connection. She can’t sever it, wouldn’t even dare to try, but she can silence it. Block herself off from it so completely that it might as well not even exist.

Kylo at first is hurt but stubborn. He knows what she’s doing but not to the full extent. He thinks she’s being petty and will give in and come back around sooner rather than later.

Then his concern becomes alarm, but his reaction is muted. He thinks something is wrong and she’s hurt and trying to hide it from him. He doesn’t know how right he is, but Rey can’t stop now.

It gets both easier and harder. Easier when she can start to hear him less and less. Harder when it starts working. Her head is getting quieter. No Kylo. Almost no Bond.

Just a few more pieces of her blockade to go and he gets it. She can see him, a hazy and murky and barely comprehensible image of him jerking upright. He shouts something at her, but its tinny and echoing then gone.
And then it’s gone.

Rey breathes a sigh of relief. It sounds almost like a sob.

For one brief moment her head is her own again. No Kylo. No Bond. Just her.

Only her.

Quiet. Still. Static.

Empty.

No.

No.

This isn’t what she wants. She’d thought it was but she was wrong. This is wrong. It’s been less than a minute without him and she feels like she’s in mourning. Like half her soul has been cast aside.

This is agony.

Rey reels in on herself, focusing on turning back time. She grabs a piece of her mental wall and yanks it away. It’s not a big one, not one of the fundamental blocks she’d put up for a damned good reason, but it’s enough. Just big enough for her to reach in and touch their Bond. Reassure herself that it’s still there.

Kylo rages back at her, his anger lashing at her, scorching worse the heated chemical burns of that storm.

He’s moving now. Even through her very limited viewpoint through the crack in her walls that she’s peaking through she can see him stalking the many passages of the caves, searching for where she is.
He’s not chasing her, he’s *hunting*. Kylo has figured it out: both parts of her plan. Not only to shut him out but to leave him as well.

Rey knows, and it’s not just a feeling or an instinct but she knows that if he finds her, she won’t get another chance. If she ever wants to be truly free of him, this is it. This is her last, best opportunity.

So she puts the piece of her wall back. Leaves a tiny crack of it open around the edges. Barely enough so that she knows that, no matter how furiously angry he is with her, he’s still there. And so is she.

And then Rey takes off running, springing almost blindly through the twisting mazed web of passages, giving no thought to her direction beyond getting as far away from her belligerent darksider pursuer as she can.

From the very corners of her mind she can feel his determination only grow all the more.

*Tag, you’re it.*

And chase is on.

Chapter End Notes

So what’s the Middle Moment? It’s the middle point in many writing design theories where the main character must look within herself and address the core conflict of the story head on. No more dancing around here, it’s time for that self reflection. And then said main character can either embrace the changes happening within them and grow as a person, or freak out and take off, sending their enraged and possibly aroused bondmate to chase after them on a merry pursuit through a labyrinth of caves on a remote alien world and setting the grounds for the next half of the story off on the wrong foot.

Okay, informal poll time:

I have a ton of new projects that I’m working on, many of which are fanfic related or fanfic-to-future-independent related. I’m feeling very scatterbrained with far far too many ideas brewing at once and I think what I need to keep my focus is to publish them on a regular schedule. Once a week has seemed to work out really well for this story, but since I have some more coming up I don’t want to post all of them on
Friday/Saturday.

So, my question to you my much-esteemed readers: what day of the week are you most interested in reading a story update? Friday/Saturdays are out since their reserved for this and an upcoming Rogue One series, so how about… Wednesdays to combat mid-week lull? Tuesday since Tuesdays inherently suck? When’s a good day/days to aim for that would work best for you?

Next chapter:

Rey flees, Kylo chases, and our story gets one step closer to earning its ‘E’ rating.
Rey runs.

She runs blindly, darting and swerving across the uneven rocky passages. She picks the paths with her eyes half closed, hoping that if she barely recognizes the spaces around her that Kylo certainly won’t. He’s pounding at her mind, slamming himself against her mental barricades with a rage that is downright frightening.

He’s **strong**. It takes every ounce of her focus to keep him out of her head.

It was too easy for her to forget that until now. He was normally always so gentle with her before. Even during the interrogation he had been using precision rather than blunt force.

All that has changed. Now he’s full-on assaulting her, clawing and tearing away at her mental defenses. It reminds her who he really is. The new Supreme Leader of the First Order. *That’s* the man who’s attacking her right now. Not the restrained and approaching sweet boy who used to be Ben.
He pushes harder, sensing a crack in her defenses. The crack she had stupidly left there to appease her own weakness. Rey screams, her mind briefly overrun by his furious rage. She falls, collapsing against the ground and grips her head tightly, brutally shoving him back out little by little. He doesn’t even try to talk to her, simply pulls and yanks, clawing at her mind to try to link them back together again.

Apparently the Supreme Leader does not taking being broken up with very well.

When he starts losing ground, he changes strategies. Now pushing images rather than impulses into her mind. They hit her rapid fire, strobing behind her eyelids one after the other. Some of them are Kylo’s memories of her. Fighting against her. Fighting with her. Running with her, darting through the deep underbrush of the jungle as the cats pursued them.

There are sensations as well, some more sharply tactile and not always pleasant. Rey can feel the same burning sting that Kylo had during the storm. Her own back boils in sympathy, pain lashing through her with more than the power of a ghostly touch should possibly have.

Rey gasps then, pushing him out harder. Kylo clings all the more, not letting himself be shut out without one hell of a fight.

*Give it up, Scavenger. You can’t win against me. This is stronger than the both of us.*

The pain intensifies, now shooting up and down the length of her arm. She can feel her knuckles split open, blood hot and fresh dripping down. Except it’s not. When she forces her eyes open, her wounded limb clutched tightly to her chest, the skin across the top is smooth and unblemished. Nothing like the steady shards of pain she’s feeling would lead her to believe.

Kylo is hitting something. The rock wall, probably, because he’s an overgrown child and that’s what he does when he doesn’t get his way.

If he keeps this up, he’s really going to do some damage.

*Stop it Kylo!*
She shouts the words at him, possibly crying them out in real life as the bones of her hand begin to protest the relentless phantom assault.

*You don’t care, Rey. You’ve said it yourself.*

Gods he’s being so impossible! Maybe he really is doing this on purpose. Hurting himself to get back at her and not caring what he’s putting them both through.

The pain stops abruptly. Kylo’s presence stills in her mind, pulling back slightly.

Rey blinks out into the open stillness of the cave. Her knuckles throb, but then he takes that pain away from her as well.

She spends a few moments gasping. Too stunned to speak and feeling incomprehensible at what’s really going on.

*Kylo?*

He doesn’t answer her at first, and Rey picks at the edges of their connection, feeling bits and pieces of his scattered emotions.

*Did I hurt you?*

His question sounds surprised. Had he really not realized that she’d felt everything he’d just done to himself?

*Yes!*

A moment of silence. Rey can almost see him. He’s holding his hand. His sword hand. The kriiffing idiot had been punching the rock with his good hand, and now he’s in a state. He doesn’t even care though. Doesn’t care that he’d nearly disabled himself.

He’s insane. This is it. This is why she needs to get away from him.
Rey pushes him again, shoving at him and trying to seal up the gap in her defenses. Now that Kylo’s fully aware, he makes it so much harder. Impossible, perhaps. She’d been able to rid herself of him before when he’d be unaware, but now it’s like trying to separate sand from water. Everywhere in her head he’s flowing, spilling into her mind and filling her with his darkness.

Kylo laughs then, a loud bark that startles her, distracting her and making her loose that little bit extra purchase against him.

*What?* She snaps irritably, frustration bubbling up within her. Does he have to be so difficult? Can’t he ever let her be?

*Rey, I do believe I could listen to you describe me filling you up until the end of time. Your choice of words is very… significant.*

*Oh kriff off?*

She pushes again, this time closing her eye and balling up her fists in concentration. He budges. She pushes harder He snarls. She growls.

Until she wins.

It’s a harrowing, exhausting process, but she’s stronger than he is. Or maybe not, but she’s more focused and rational. Kylo is simply too belligerent to have the control needed to overcome her will to shove him out.

This time she slams her barricades up completely. Her head rings from the effort but finally all she can hear from him is a distant and persistent pounding.

That awful feeling returns immediately. The feeling of being torn in half. With it comes misery and dread but she has no choice. She can’t have him in her mind when he’s like this. Maybe, once he’s calmed the hell down, she can check in on him. Make sure the karker isn’t doing something stupid that will get them both killed.

For now, though, Rey needs to get away from him. Put as much distance between them as she can.
and hope that maybe, *maybe* the feelings lancing through her will lessen with time.

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Kylo doesn’t give up. Neither does their Bond.

It’s becoming claustrophobic now, a feeling of pressure building inside her heart that has nothing to do with the alarmingly narrow passage she’s crawling through. Their Bond is literally weighing her down, making each step forward away from him much harder than it should be.

This had happened before when they’d first crashed. Then the reasons had been obvious: life or death. Now everything is taking a toll on her. She’d been tired to begin with, had been ready to get some much needed sleep earlier before they had their tiff. Since then hours have gone by and she’s nearly as physically tired as she is emotionally ruined. Keeping Kylo out of her is taking all of her concentration, though he too has been slacking somewhat in the strengths of his assaults. Neither one of them can keep going like this for too much longer.

And their Bond, their *kriffing* Bond... It’s hurting and punishing her for it. Sharply and like a genuine physical pain. The worst headache she’s ever had in her life.

Just give it a godsdamn rest… *fuck*…

Rey would do anything to make the vice let up. Well, almost anything.

But not *that*.

Kylo is too dangerous in every way. This is necessary. She has to keep reminding herself of who he really is and not whom he pretends to be when he’s around her.

As she goes it becomes more and more clear that there’s something else out there. The deeper she gets into these caves, the more Rey gradually becomes aware of a fourth *thing*. Another piece of the puzzle. Not her or Kylo or their Bond, but a new element that’s calling out to her.

It’s not living. Not a creature. She can't describe it any other way than as a ghostly feeling in her
mind. Something about it very familiar, though, but she can’t place her finger on exactly how.

Rey had thought that her choices when the passages split had been random. Now she’s not so sure. It’s hard to hear over all the cacophony her other half is making, slamming and kicking and cursing at her walls like a child having an epic tantrum, but she’s starting to believe this new thing is trying to lead her in a very specific direction. It’s answering the questions for her as she goes, subtly influencing each choice she makes. Go left or right? Go left. Three splits, which one? Take the middle path. The sensations have no words, but there is a pull and it’s guiding her. And the deeper she goes the louder it becomes.

She pauses for a moment to catch her breath, leaning against the rocky side of the passage, and concentrates. Kylo has finally quieted down now. She keeps automatically pressing herself against the wall she’d put up. Nudging it aside a tiny bit to see what he’s up to.

Oh. He’s blocking her out for a change. Petty bitch.

Well that explains the brief moment of peace. Their Bond is still her tormentor, though, tightening the vice on her mind harder every time she gives in and lets a crack start to form.

Almost as if it can sense her thoughts, the walls of the cave passage begin to tremble.

She stands up immediately, stepping away from the wall. The trembling continues, vibrating through the ground under her feet. A sense of panic wells up in her, greatly out of proportion with the new threat.

Is this… is an earthquake? If it is that would be…

She start to run then, sprinting as best as she’s able to. If this really is a tremor, she can’t be here. Not in a narrow passage where she could too easily be trapped. No, she’d have a better chance of survival, marginally better, in a more open-

It stops.

The ground stops shaking just as quickly as it had started. Along with it goes that panicked feeling, leaving her confused and scared.
What in the hell was all that about? Has this planet really decided to throw a new challenge at her? Yet another challenge she’ll have to face, alone this time?

Discomfited, Rey hurries on, eager to get out of this section of the caves and hopefully to find a place to rest for a few minutes.

That strange feeling grows as she continues.

Something most definitely is pulling at her, leading her forward. The section of cave she’s now in is wider and more open, and there’s a very strange aura about it.

There’s more life, for starters. The amount of the flora and fauna had been diminishing steadily, but now all of a sudden they’ve come back in droves. The psychedelic mushrooms are back, giving her something to eat, as are the occasional striped flower and even a few creatures though these are new ones that she doesn’t recognize. Small, rodent like animals that move exceptionally fast. So fast, in fact, that the only way that she can see them at all is from their glowing green backs streaking along the nooks and crannies of the room.

It’s then that she realizes she can’t hear Kylo at all. No, not through her mental barricades, but his constant presence has faded completely into the background.

Her head is humming, but not with him.

This has happened before, but then it was when she was about to be attacked by the Jungle Kitties. Now there’s nothing. The little creatures, the Green Streakers she’ll call them, are scared of her and not the other way around. They’re no threat and there’s nothing indicating that she should be afraid.

Rey walks forward carefully her lightsaber in hand but not activated. There’s something going on. There’s a reason she was brought here to this particular room.

When she rounds a corner, the walls are glittering like stars. Tiny dots of light, each emanating
their own unique energy.

Kyber.

The walls are laced with Kyber.

This is what had been pulling her here.

It’s beautiful. They shine like sequins, casting a scattering of colors but far the predominant one is green. That same green energy that seems to shape the fundamental nature of the planet.

Is this where it’s coming from? This room? No, no there’s more. Rey can feel a greater pull. Something much bigger much further on. Now that she knows what to look for the way is clear.

And what does she hope to find there? What good does a Kyber deposit do for her really?

Nothing probably, but it gives her a sense of direction and a purpose: go there and find it. Whatever it is. It wants to be found.

Okay. So that’s how it will be. Kylo will chase her and she’ll chase this aura. It’s not much of a plan to go by, but it’s the best she’s had since falling down here.

The Kyber room leads to a great chamber full of light and water. Beyond it the passage continues with several to choose from but her soul telling her to ‘go left’.

It’s such a beautiful area though that Rey finally decides to stop and rest.

She’s completely exhausted herself and, compounding the problem, is that she’s starting to feel very lonely. It’s so quiet down here, so eerily still. There’s light, courtesy of the glowing rocks and the fireflies, but those do little to ease her troubled soul.
Alright, she’s ready to admit it. It was better with Kylo. He was horrible company, gloomy and moody and unpredictable, but it wasn’t all bad. Sometimes he would be so uncharacteristically kind with her. A side of him that Rey didn’t doubt only she was allowed witness to.

And he would have been someone to talk to. A heartbeat to soothe her. A shield to protect her.

Rey slumps against the rocky ledge she’s decided to make into her bed. It’s been hours and hours since she ran away from Kylo, and the pressure in her head comes in waves. He’s not slamming against her now, but a bone-deep weariness is starting to set in.

It’s their Bond, of course. Their Bond has caused her so much grief, of course it wouldn’t be content to simply sit idly back and let the two halves figure it out for themselves.

She curls up tight, having nothing but the clothes on her back to shield her from the hard, unyielding surface of the rock mattress. It’s cold, too. She hadn’t bothered to try and make a fire. Didn’t have the energy or the motivation. Rey knows that she can’t rest for long. Maybe an hour or two. She needs to keep moving and find a way out of here.

If Kylo were around…

They could continue where they left off last time.

Her face burns at the memory, but it doesn’t change the fact that she’s starting to miss more than just his mind.

Compounding to all of the problems she’s facing is that Rey aches for him. It must be these caves. Here every emotion is heightened into far greater than it should be. Minor fear grow into full-on terrors. Anger becomes blind rage.

And lust grows as well. Transforms itself from that consistent but easily overlooked longing to be touched into… something greater. Something that Rey doesn’t fully understand because it’s so foreign to her.

Perhaps it’s the sensory deprivation. Not enough outside stimulus here in these dark and quiet
tunnels, so her body’s turning to within to find anything to feel.

Kylo had accused her of exactly that. Of using him for her own needs and not caring about his. Maybe that’s why she had chosen this particular rocky shelf to rest, because it reminded her of him. This spot, this uncomfortable and tiny platform, has a single flower growing out of a corner. It had caught her eye immediately when she’d first found her way in here.

This was the same sort of flower that she keeps seeing on her journey. The one Kylo had put in her hair earlier and then pricked himself on. It’s not blooming yet, only starting to bud out, but Rey took it as a positive omen. Maybe this is sort of her spirit guide here? A visual signal that somehow, everything is going to be okay.

When she touches the bud, her fingertip tingles. It doesn’t sting her like it did to Kylo. It’s this planet. This strange, irrational world. Here everything is something other than it should be. Including herself. This planet is transforming her. Turning her into someone she doesn’t recognize.

Now her soul is hurting, aching to be reunited with its other half. She shouldn’t have gone. Shouldn’t have separated herself from him. Her body wants the same. Longs to be close to him again like they were and then even closer still.

She’s no good to herself like this, at least down here in these caves where everything becomes so much larger than life.

Rey waits until she absolutely can’t stand it anymore. She wants to check in on him. See where he is and if he’s missing her too.

It’s tempting, isn’t it? Maybe it would be enough to satisfy that damned Bond of theirs. Perhaps a few seconds of free and unobstructed connection will be enough to get it to settle the hell down for long enough for her to get a tiny bit of rest.

The moment her walls come down Rey gasps.

Countless different sensations overcame her, pulling her senses in every possible way.

For a few seconds she can feel Kylo and only Kylo. Not their bond and not even her own self.
He’s far away, somewhere by the underground river that she’d left hours ago. Cold, wet water is soothing the wounds on his hand. The ones he put there himself with his display of temper. He’s kneeling, his joints aching, muscles tired and sore. And he’s angry.

No, not angry. Annoyed. Frustrated.

Afraid.

Kylo is searching for her and he’s afraid that he’s lost the trail. He’s afraid that he’s going to be trapped down here all by himself and he doesn’t want to be alone.

*Oh... Kylo.*

She projects the words to him without meaning to, so wrapped up in his head that she’d forgotten about her own role in all this.

He immediately snaps his head up, glaring at her. His upper lip curls into a sneer, but he doesn’t plunge inside her mind like she’d expected. Instead, he holds still, frozen with resentment.

*Rey.*

The sound of her name is filled with so many contradictory emotions. Rey flushes, swallowing down the nervous pit forming in her throat.

Neither of them move or speak. He watches her and she watches him. Their visions of each other never waver, staying strong and bolstered despite their physical separation.

Rey finds herself at a loss for words. There are so many things she should be saying. Instead, she focuses on their shared pain.

*How is your hand?*
Her question is rather pointless given the far greater issues they both seem inclined to ignore. Kylo’s face hardens and he looks down, pulling his fist out of the inky dark pool he had been numbing it in. When he flexes and opens it, Rey can feel his pain through her own skin.

*I think I may have fractured it.*

Rey approaches cautiously, working her way closer until she can kneel down next to him. He gives no indication of being about to seize her, but she’s not letting her guard down around him.

And neither is he to her. When she reaches out to touch his hand and see for herself, he draws it back. Glares at her, never breaking their eye contact as he stands up and looms over her.

*I wasn’t going to hurt you, Rey. You shouldn’t have left me.*

That isn’t why she… No, of course not. She’s rarely feared for her actual safety around Kylo, even when he’s at his most irrational. And certainly not when they were… becoming closer.

*I should go.*

She shakes her head, trying to brush off his mental presence next to her. Kylo reaches out and for a second she thinks he’s offering her his hand to help her up.

Then an image, raw and uncensored, flickers into her mind. An image of the two of them. No, not an image, a *fantasy.* It’s not any way Kylo has ever known her, with her turned away from him and bent over. Her body arching against him, hands against her hips, the front of his hips slapping against the back of hers.

Rey’s eyes pop open then, her hand flying up over her mouth to stifle her gasp.

It had been so real. So visceral. For a few seconds she’s stunned, then she remembers that she’s safe. Alone in that big chamber, surrounded by lights and water and nothing or anyone else.

*Did you like that?*
His voice is louder in her head, his presence heavier and becoming more firmly rooted. All her hard work to keep him corralled into place lost at just a glimpse of his-

*That’s how you fantasize about me? About rutting into me from behind like, like-*

She doesn’t know how to even describe it. Excessive and unnecessary, perhaps.

*Sometimes I do. Usually not. But when I’m angry with you, Rey, yes, that fantasy seems fitting. And you didn’t answer me, did you like it?*

Kylo’s question makes her squirm. How dare he ask her that? Ask her whether she-

*Rey.*

He draws out the sound of her name and Rey can’t tell if he’s being serious or not.

*I don’t know!*

Surprise ripples through their connection. Neither of them had expected her to answer like that, but now it’s out there for him to judge and exploit.

...*You don’t know, Rey? Are you sure about that? Perhaps you’d like to run away again? See if that suits your perfect vision of right and wrong better?*

Rey pouts. She wants to shut him out, but he’s daring her. If she backs down now he’ll have won this fight and he’s not allowed to win against her ever.

*Oh, are you still there?*

Now he’s taunting her and not even trying to hide it.
Don’t be like this, Kylo.

She’s fallen for his trap and she knows it, but what choice does she have? Run from him now and he will know that… that he can effect her like this. That there’s one area of their association where he can easily get the better of her.

Even when he’s like this, when he’s at his worst, she still wants him. If anything, their shared Force vision is making her desire only intensify the longer it continues between them.

An unreal touch against her arm brings her out of her thoughts. He’s stroking the exposed area of her skin between her tunic sleeves and forearm wrappings. It’s a small, innocent sensation but even that makes her shiver.

And it feels so real. Like he’s really there right with her and not someplace far and unknown. This is new. Never before have their Force linkings been so vivid.

Is the cave doing this, too? Are they making our connections more powerful?

Kylo seems to consider it. When she closes her eyes she can see him. He’s hovering over her, his fingertips drawing unknown shapes as he tugs the top of her wrapping free, slowly baring her arm to him.

The fabric band slips down, pooling against the dirty floor. Rey frowns at it, unwilling to bring her gaze up to meet his.

Would you prefer something else, Scavenger? A different fantasy that I’ve had of you. I have many. We can try to find something you might like more.

His hand slides down the length of her arm to take her hand. She shakes her head. The shadows cast by the glowing rocks reveal her and only her. He shouldn’t feel this real, like he’s right here with her.

I thought you were angry with me?
Her heart starts to beat faster when she asks it. All she can stare at is her bare wrist, wrapped tightly by Kylo’s projected touch.

\textit{Furious.}

He steps closer, catching her chin with her other hand and guiding her up to standing.

\textit{Your heart is beating awfully fast, Lightsider. Does it help if you remind yourself that I’m not really here?}

She finally forces herself to look up at him. There’s anger in his eyes and it’s an emotion she knows so well from him. But there’s more. A need that she’s only recently become intimately familiar with.

\textit{You’re really not running away.}

His voice sounds incredulous. Rey’s mind is rapidly shutting down. Whatever protests she keeps at the ready are failing now at this most crucial of times.

He’s right. Not completely, but enough. This isn’t real. They’re not really doing this.

\textit{Kiss me.}

She tips her chin up expectantly when she gives the order, waiting for him to say something smart-assed that will be obnoxious enough to shock her senses back into her.

He takes her head in her hands, holding her with that gentleness that defies who he should be. Then he kisses her but her forehead not her lips.

\textit{You’re a very, very selfish girl, Rey.}
He rests his own forehead against her and she sighs, her lips tingling in expectation.

*Kylo... she whines when he starts to pull away.*

*Shhh... We do this on my terms, Rey. Or you can leave me now, again, and scratch your own itch.*

His hands drop away and he steps back, letting her make up her mind.

Rey doesn’t feel like herself. Their connection, this pull between them, is drowning out all her common sense.

This is alright. This is okay. It’s not real. This doesn’t mean anything.

*You’re a terrible liar, Rey.*

*Shut up, Kylo. I’m trying to...*

He steps forward again, bringing them back chest to chest.

*Rey, I’ve been losing my mind since you left. But you know that, don’t you? You know that and you don’t care. Maybe you even like it, having that sort of power over me But now that I have you again I don’t think I’m going to let you leave just yet.*

His hands grab her wrists again, holding her in place.

She swallows and forces her eyes open, reassuring herself that he’s not really there. Hasn’t somehow teleported into this room with her.

He hasn’t, but then her eyes drift closed on their own. Kylo, or her vision of him at least, is guiding her backward. Leading her to that narrow little ledge she had been laying down on.
And this is so much better than sleeping next to me, Rey? Laying here alone in the dirt?

When the back of her knees hit the ledge she doesn’t fight it. Lets him guide her back until she’s laying down and he’s hovering over her.

I had to, Kylo. You gave me no choice. It was the best thing for the both of us.

He smirks and that cocky look on his face reminds her of Han for a second.

We’ll see.

When he kisses her it’s like missing piece. The desire that had been flowing through her finally finds it’s conduit, short circuiting her brain and leaving behind nothing but pure desire in its place. She moans into his mouth, her back arching and if anyone were to have seen her at this moment it would look like she was erotically grappling with thin air.

Kylo returns her enthusiasm kiss for kiss, moan for moan. When she bites him he bites her harder. When she squirms, he holds her down, pinning her underneath him with his phantom presence.

She pulls her lips away, breathless and dizzy. The heat is pooling between her legs, making her buck against him. He may not really be there with her, but the feeling of his length pressing insistently against her through both their clothing is exactly like she remembers.

How far are we going to-

As far as I want to, Rey. Remember, this means nothing. I’m not even really here.

His hand trails down, finding her breast. Rey moans louder, arching into his touch. She can feel his pleased smirk against the skin of her neck, but he bites down when she starts to form a protest.

This is all too much. Her desire for him has been building for too long. It has to boil over. She had to find some sort of release for this need that has begun to consume her.
Take off your clothes, Kylo. I want to see you.

Rey tugs at his shirt, dimly noting that he’s wearing his gloves again. She hadn’t even noticed him putting them back on, or perhaps its only in his projected self?

No, Rey. You don’t get to decide how this happens.

Kylo pulls her hands off him, drawing them up over her head. He holds her in place by her wrists, his smirk growing when her legs snake around his hips. She grinds herself against his obvious arousal, feeling liquid heat flowing through her and settling between her thighs. She’s already so wet and he’s barely even touched her.

Such a needy thing, Rey. I think you might be even more deprived than I am.

His voice, dark and luscious, vibrates against her ear and Rey moans again. She lets him hold her arms pinned over her head one-handed, only half fighting with him as he starts to open her tunic from the top. Every inch of skin he exposes tingles in the cool night air.

Deprived? How could you not be-

His gloved fingers glide over her skin, silencing her immediately. He takes his time exposing her to him, tracing every curve of her flesh or slightly protruding rib. When her upper body is bared she shivers, the cool of the real cave air fighting with the contradiction of his ghostly self.

Kylo.

He palms her breast and she moans his name mindlessly, her thoughts rapidly devolving to nothing but pure animalistic lust. The smooth leather of his gloves adding a fascinating new quality to his touch. When he grazes over her firmed nipple, the seam rasping softly against her skin she throws her head from side to side. Her hips grind against him with fervor, and she can’t help but wonder if he’d really be able to take her like this? Surely there must be limits to their remote Force connection, even enhanced with the energy of these caves? Could he really fill her and give her what she’s starting to ache for?

Such a filthy mind you have, Scavenger.
His hand dips lower, starting to work at the fastening to her pants. Rey squirms, trying both to get away and draw him closer.

Maybe he can? Maybe it’s really possible? She wants to find out. Gods help her how she want to find out…

*Take these off.*

She means his shirt, and she struggles, writhing under his touch to try and get one of her hands free. Kylo clicks his tongue, laying kisses down the center of her body until his breath is washing over her chest.

*No, Rey. I think I like this better. I think I like you like this better. Having you any way that I want.*

When his hand slides between her legs she howls, her cry echoing obscenely off the walls of the cavern. The image his words paint is almost enough to send her over the edge. She’s already so close, so slick that his fingers slip over her skin with ease, rubbing her and rolling her between them but still holding back.

*Touch yourself, Rey. That’s an order.*

He lets go of her wrists and takes her nipple between his teeth, biting down on it and drawing out another chocked scream from her. She tries to bury both her hands in his hair and he grabs one of her wrists, jerking it down to between her legs. He hikes her butt up with his arm, drawing her knees over his shoulders so she can work her hand on herself in tandem with his own.

“Kriff...”

Rey doesn’t know if she moans it out loud or not, but Kylo’s lips curl up into a grin. Two hands are better than one and hers, though slimmer and shyer than his, provides the added touch that she needs. Her fingers reach places that the limits of his projection cannot, answering her earlier question.

Kylo lifts his head off her chest to watch her face and Rey meets his gaze through slitted eyes. A
nudge of his mind tells her to crooks her fingers inside herself, finding that place that he’d shown her before.

When his thumb finds her little nub and presses down she finally comes apart, her cries of pleasure sharp and wordlessly echoing even as he silences them with his lips.

Rey collapses then, dragging him down to lay on op of her. His weight is heavy and real, and for a few long moments she is perfectly content to kiss him sloppily back, her free hand carding through his hair.

Her other hand, the one she had *used* on herself, is pulled away from between her legs and he brings it up to her mouth.

*I want to taste you again, Rey.*

She whines, a thread of embarrassment working its way back through her lust saturated mind. But again she obeys, lightly pressing her slick fingers to her tongue and letting him share the experience vicariously.

Then he pulls away, rolling her onto her side so they’re laying face to face. She smiles up at him, feeling sleepy and ever so content to fall asleep in his arms right now.

He strokes her face, the smooth leather of his gloves reminding her that he’s both still clothed and still unsatisfied.

At that thought he rises, propping himself up on his elbow so he can look down at her. Rey feels a flutter in her chest, but he pushes her back down when she starts to reach out for him.

*Kylo, don’t you want to-*

*I’ll take care of it myself, Rey.*

His face sets into a neutral expression, his thoughts guarded as he redresses her, pulling her clothes back on for her until she’s fully covered again. Then his hand falls to rest on her hip, his thumb
rolling in circles against the bone there. She nuzzles in closer, burying her face against his chest and appreciating the warmth, imaginary though it may be.

When it appears that he’s not going to speak up on his own, she asks him the question that’s starting to burn in the back of her mind.

So what now?

He shakes his head, and Rey can feel him putting his shields up, blocking her from hearing what he’s thinking.

Now, Rey? Now, are you ready to come back to me? To stay with me by my side where you belong?

Suddenly she’s extremely grateful that he can’t see her face. She knows her cheeks are burning, shame roiling within her. She shakes her head, mouthing the word ‘no’ against the fabric over his chest.

To her surprise, he nods. Then he pulls away, straightening up. Immediately she misses his warmth.

Kylo, we can just… for tonight, we can-

He silences her with another kiss. This time it’s short and impersonal. But when he pulls back he’s smiling and Rey blinks at him, confused and being pulled in far too many directions at once.

Rey, I’m going to find you. I promise you that.

His voice is warm even if his words aren’t.

And when I do, Rey, I’m going to have you again. I’m going to have you in any way that I want.

Rey blinks, having trouble processing what he’s saying. How he can suddenly change this much in just a matter of seconds. Then he continues, stroking her face with a soft affection that contrasts
completely with the weight of his words.

*I think we’re done here for tonight, Rey. There’s just one thing left for you to do.*

His voice is low and cool against her mind as he starts to pull away. Rey grows still in his arms as she waits for him to continue.

*Now you will stay the hell out of my head. You’ve lost your privileges to me.*

Before she can argue, before she can shout out his blatant hypocrisy, he disappears, blocking her completely from his side of the bond like she’d done to him only hours before.

At first her heart constricts and her breath won’t come easily. All she can do is stare at the space above her where he once was. Then the anger comes back in full force. Rey leaps up, nearly tripping over her own limbs, and snatches the flower right out of the rock it’s growing from.

It’s cursed. A symbol of this hellish planet and all the mistakes that have happened here. Of everything that’s wrong with her life.

And she grinds it tightly in her fist before dropping it into the dirt, stomping to the nearest of the cave pools to wash away all the evidence of what just happened.

Chapter End Notes

Oh Kylo… go give your girl that D, she totally wants it...

Next chapter: (which might be delayed until the 23-24th, hence why this chappie was extra long but maybe, maybe not)

Rey continues her journey both through the mysteries of the caves and the twisted web of her feelings.
Chapter Summary

Where our duo gets a nudge in the right direction.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It felt so different without him.

Rey tried to pretend otherwise. Tried to tell herself she didn’t miss him, didn’t want him. Didn’t need him for anything.

It was all a lie. She did. Gods how she did.

Now that Kylo was nowhere, he was suddenly everywhere. Every shadow, tall dark and foreboding, reminded her of him. Every sound of the cave could have been his footsteps, always walking alongside or behind her own. Every whisper against her flesh could have been his fingers and not simply the movement of air throughout these endless tunnels.

He wasn’t here. He was gone. As silent and unreachable to her as she had been to him before.

He’d shut her out. The nerve of him.

Kylo doesn’t get to shut her out. He doesn’t have the right to. She had always just assumed he would be there for her, ready to pick up the pieces and play by her rules but only if he had been a good boy and deserved the time of day.

Now his side of their bond was a void. A painful, aching gap within her soul. It made her run faster, fleeing through the network of passages to try and escape what she let happen. No, not what she let happen, what she had instigated. She had done that. He hadn’t. She’d made an already unbearable situation even worse.

By this point and everything that had happened to lead up to it, Rey is completely exhausted. So
much so that she stumbles, bumbling clumsily as she crawls over debris strewn passages or squeezes through narrow gaps in the rock walls. The tunnels here are more difficult to navigate. More of them are collapses or obstructed by rocks. It brings to light the sheer dangers of being down here. That tremor that she had felt before, brief though it was, must not have been the first of it’s mind.

And that feeling stays with her. That unmistakable pull. It’s becoming stronger now, though perhaps part of that might be because she’s so terribly tired. Or because her mind has lost half of itself and now there’s nothing but her own thoughts to echo back to her.

When she comes to rest she more falls over than sits down. Kylo not being around her has thrown her off balance. He should be there, pleading with her. They had shared something…

Significant?

Not special. Special is too sentimental of a word. But they had shared something and then he’d thrown her to the curb. When she presses against his side there’s nothingness. It’s very one-sided. That’s why she’s such a mess now. All his fault once again.

Rey closes her eyes, shoving the mental image of their bond out of the way. Inner peace greets her, cold silent and empty.

Perfect. She likes it so much better this way.

Then she reaches out, trying to pull the Force into her and project herself. See what’s beyond this stretch of cave so she knows what she’s about to be facing. A hint about whether this phantom pull on her mind is her friend or foe.

She did it before, with Kylo. They managed to do it together. So of course she can do it alone. She doesn’t need him for anything.

Her powers are worn out, growing weaker with her increasing need for sleep. It makes it difficult to concentrate, but all the Kyber in the very walls of this place help. With effort and struggle, she can see a small ways. There are tunnels and tunnels and tunnels. Some small, some bigger, some above and below and that underground river too.
Rey pulls up, trying to see the surface. See if there’s any route to escape. Somewhere high, high above her is life. Big, green, angry life. Still going at it, Jungle Kitties? What, are they following her even now, waiting for their meal to pop up out of the ground like a whack-a-mole?

Gods, give it a rest. She’s too tired for this shit right now.

Her vision also confirms how very far below the ground she is now. It’s quite frightening, actually. To think of all the meters upon meters of solid earth and rock that are between her and the fresh air. The fear of it all collapsing on her, even if she knows that logically it won’t and these caves have existed here for untold centuries, is palpable.

She almost reaches out to Kylo. Normally, she would self-soothe herself on their bond. They both do it when they’re under duress, though she had only become aware of that recently since they had started to spend so much time together.

Rey mentally slaps her hand, scolding herself. No. He’s nothing. Don’t think about him. Don’t lose focus.

She needs to find out where she’s going and what’s leading her there. That’s what she needs to concentrate on. The surface is too far away. She needs to go forward and find a way somewhere else.

Rey doubles down on her efforts, keeping up her side of their mental barricade is taxing and making her projected sonar much harder than it should be, but when she begins to follow down the tunnel she’s currently in all she can feel is the Kyber. It’s lacing through these walls, dotting them like stars in the sky. There’s a bigger source, more powerful and deeper. She had expected that to be the pull, but it’s not. Something else is, the Kyber glows like an ember, intriguing to her attention but not commanding for it. A different attractant is the nearby, and that’s what is beckoning to her. But what is it?

Oh it’s so frustrating. She almost can. Almost can see it. Almost… but not quite.

Defeated, Rey’s concentration breaks. She opens her eyes and glares down the dim cave, frowning at the glowing rocks and the patterns of blue light they’re casting against the stalactites.

Well then… that was unhelpful. And Kylo’s still shutting her out. What a karker. Not that she’s checking up on him or anything, though.
Rey wipes her brow, feeling the dust on her hands mix in with the light sheen of sweat that her efforts had produced, and reluctantly continues on her way.

Someone had been down here before.

It’s impossible to say when, probably a long, long time ago, but there are markings on these walls. Words in a script she doesn’t recognize but she thinks she may have seen somewhere and sometime before.

Kylo might know what they are. If she were to show them to him, perhaps he would know what to do. His entitled, princely education growing up surely was more robust than her close to non-existent school experience.

But she’s been keeping up her walls. Shutting him out while he’s shutting her out. Two sides of the same coin, both giving each other the cold shoulder. If she were to reach out to him, it would be almost like an admission that she needs him. Which she doesn’t. She’s a smart girl, she can figure this out on her own.

It’s dark here in this section of the passage, but when she lights her saber to shine some more light the markings start to glow. They’re green. Everything on this planet is so green, even down here so far below the surface.

Should she touch them? Last time she touched anything like this was the Kitty bone and that had ended poorly for her.

The message, whatever it says, is long and stretched out across a good portion of the cavern wall. Whoever wrote it must have had plenty of time on their hands.

How bizarre. She should ask Kylo.

Carefully she drops her mental defenses. Enough for her to reach through to the other side, but not enough for him to buffet her with his unwelcome presence when he senses this weakness in her.
Then she extends her presence, performing the mental equivalent of knocking on the door to his psyche.

No answer. His wall is an impenetrable barrier. She might as well be knocking on air.

Rey huffs. Fine then, the kriffing sod has to be difficult doesn’t he?

She clears her mind, sending an impulse at him. *Kylo, there’s something you should see.*

Silence. Endless silence. Is he even listening to her?! Oh he’d better be. But, if he’s not, he’s about to get a rude awakening.

Rey changes her efforts. Gives up on politely summoning him and instead wraps her consciousness around their bond.

Immediately she feels soothed. Calmer, even. Making contact with their unique connection feels right. The headache that had been plaguing her ever since their mutual ostracizing finally easing up.

Well that’s just kriffing intolerable, isn’t it?

Rey uses the annoyance she feels to sharpen her control. She grabs that bond, that unwanted thing, and gives it a good, solid yank. Knock knock, Kylo, answer me when I call for you.

A feeling ripples over her from his side. Oh, she got his attention. How lovely.

*Kylo, I found some-

The door slams shut again, this time with a push of the Force that shoves her back into her mind. Their bond lies slack, his end of it disappearing back into nothingness,
“Oh screw you, Kylo!” she shouts, “I was trying to be nice!”

Her voice bouncing off the rock walls and scaring a curious Green Streaker. She kicks at the ground, wishing it was him instead of a clot of dirt.

Immediately her walls snap up again. Fine. Fine. If that’s how Kylo wants to play it, then that’s how what he’s going to get. See how long he can hold out on her.

*Good riddance, Kylo. I never needed you anyhow.*

Rey looks at the glowing symbols one more time. She has the feeling they might be very important.

Oh kriff it. Whatever.

Rey is on the verge of collapse but she can’t stop. Won’t stop. The feeling in her head, the *pull*, is steadily increasing. Dragging on her mind and making her put one leaden foot in front of the other. All in the name of finding it, whatever it is.

Maybe she is getting closer to something. The caves are in terrible condition here, the signs of erosion and collapse much more apparent. Water was even leaking from the walls, causing the journey to not only be claustrophobically miserable but also frigid and damp.

And still no Kylo.

The effort to keep going without him is growing harder over time. She only keeps her barricade up half-heartedly, giving him a chance to work his way through the gaps if he should want to.

He doesn’t.

That stings more than it should. Rey is getting exactly what she wanted, so why does she feel so empty?
She hasn't cried yet, but she can feel the urge to. To be so lost and so alone.

Or perhaps not alone enough. Sometimes, out of the corners of her weary eyes, she thinks she can see something. A wisp of a shape. Not a creature, though. Something else. Someone. The pull increases every time she sees it.

Is this one of the later stages of sleep deprivation? When your minds starts to play tricks on you and make you see things that aren’t really there?

But then there is this piece of Kyber. Rey had found it laying on the ground in an area that was oddly clear of any rocks or pebbles, almost as if they had been deliberately pushed aside so she could find this.

The stone had been small, only about the size of Rey’s fingernail, but it had glowed when she’d picked it up. Scoring marks were etched into the surface.

None of this made any sense. She doubted it would start to until she’s slept and the fog in her brain clears back to cognizance.

After a debate, she picks up the Kyber. It’s of no real use, too small for a lightsaber and she can’t think of anything else to do with it, but taking it had felt right.

And if this proves to be a mistake and brings down the wrath of some new jungle beastie than so be it.

Someone is watching her when she stands up.

Rey freeze mid-rise, staring at the glowing shape but refusing to blink in case it disappears. It, whatever it is, radiates with the Force. A green silhouette in the size and outline of a human.

And then it’s gone. She hadn’t blinked. The light of the Kyber in her hand fades back down to nearly black.
This is wrong. Something is very wrong. Maybe she’s finally losing her mind, but she doesn’t want to be alone for this. Something just happened, and she hasn’t a clue what it is or what to do about it.

*Kylo.*

Her mental walls melt when she reaches for him. All her resistances cast aside as she pulls, imploring him to stop being so stubborn and to come to her now.

He doesn’t. He’s still gone, still fighting her.

Rey pulls harder, tugging on their connection. She doesn’t give it the same vicious yank like she did before, but this time she holds on it, pulling it tight around her.

It’s slim comfort. She feels to exposed here, but the only way out is forward. Forward where she had seen that… thing.

It’s either that or turn back, but, as soon as she starts to retrace her steps, the pull comes back, pushing at her tenfold. It feels like invisible hands are tugging on her, now nearly dragging her off her feet in an effort to make her keep going.

She activates her saber, turning around in a quick circle. No one. No Kylo and no hallucination. Just her, all alone.

Rey takes a step forward, all of her instincts on edge. The Kyber in the walls glitters with the light from her blade. She takes another step, her feet crossing over each other in a low defensive stance. If someone were to see her, she would look like a crazy person.

There’s nothing here. Nothing.

Is she hallucinating? It can’t have been real. This has gone from bad to even worse. She can’t even trust her own eyes now.

Rey takes a third step, and then the ground begins to shake.
Now this is real! She feels it rattling up through her very bones. This is no minor tremor, either. It starts off as a low rumble, the walls and ceiling vibrating slightly when she casts her lightsaber up to look at them. Then it grows exponentially, every side of the cave flexing and rattling. Pieces of debris starts to rain down on her and Rey bolts, breaking out into a full run.

That feeling, that pull in her, propels her faster, like a wind in her sail. Even as tired as she is, she suddenly doesn’t feel weak anymore. The rush of adrenaline when a piece of the ceiling, no small chunk of rock but a huge portion, crashes down in front of her. She’s nearly trapped but she leaps over it, using the Force to lift her up out of the way as the left wall cracks and collapses.

*Kylo!*

She screams his name, dashing forward almost blindly into the dark corridor but still trying to warn him if he’s somewhere behind her, and this time she feels a thump back. And then something green flashes across in front of her, breaking their brief connection.

Rey trips, falling face-first into nothing.

No, she doesn’t trip, she’s pushed. Phantom hands slam against her back, knocking her off her feet. The ground of the passage has cracked open, leaving a giant fissure that she plummets head over heels into.

Rey screams, pushing blindly out with the Force, trying to cushion what could easily be a fatal impact.

Water, not rock, hits her face.

The river. It must be. She must have been in a passage directly above it.

She falls a good ways through the air, and darkness and the ice cold currents hit her hard enough to snatch all the air out of her lungs. This is much worse than when they had jumped in the river together to escape the cats. There at least she knew which was was up. Now it’s so dark Rey can’t even tell if her eyes are open.
The waters lash at her, dragging her under again and again and again. They fill her mouth, seeping into her nose, the cold of them so sharp she would cry out of that wasn’t a guaranteed death. Every time she breaks the surface, cold air stinging against her wet skin, she gets pulled under before she can take a full breath.

Again and again. Dragged by the currents, slammed against rocks. She is thrown about, a weightless, rootless rag doll. Is this it, then?

Death by drowning. Could there be a more fitting end for a selfish desert girl?

Rey loses it then. Whatever sense of control she had is gone. She panics, clawing at anything and everything as the rocks are ripped out from under her hands and she’s set loose again. Her lungs take on more water, burning, aching, filing. She starts trashing wildly, slamming her limbs from side to side as the pure, raw need to survive obliterates every rational thought.

Suddenly an image flashes into her mind. For a second she can see where she is, even if she’s currently underwater. There’s an edge, a pillar of rock. She can almost reach it. Almost-

*Open your eyes!*

There’s a voice in her head. She doesn’t recognize it, but she’s* compelled* to obey. Energy raw and powerful surges through her, pushing her upward.

She breaks the surface.

There it is. A glowing rock. There for an instant and then it’s gone, the currents dragging her under again. She’s getting weaker now. Too much water. Too much-

She sees green light. A flash bursting in front of her closed eyes. Then her hand touches hardness. Rocks.

Rey slips. Her arms move on their own. She fights. Something stings, bruising her. She can’t think. Just wants to breathe.
She touches something.

The river bank. She touches the river bank. It’s not solid, but it’s real. It’s life.

Her hands close around the muddy edge, her nails sinking and clawing into the embankment. One last push, more the Force than her own physical strength, and she pulls herself up. Up over and out.

Rey collapses face first into the putrid river mud. Instinct demands that she press on her diaphragm. Press it hard. Start hacking. Start couching up water. It pours out of her mouth and her nose, burning and miserable, until she can finally breathe again.

Then Rey rolls onto her back, feeling beyond anything else. Beyond tired. Beyond hurt. Beyond… no, not beyond caring. Not yet.

There’s a small alcove or bay recessed into the rock wall that she can crawl to. That’s about the limits of her abilities at the moment. Beyond it is yet another cavern, but she can’t face that right now.

Everything hurts. She needs to sleep. Tomorrow… tomorrow she can think about what happened. About that energy she saw and how it both tried to help her and hurt her.

Somehow almost dying, again, has become the least of her problems.

When she gets there, Rey curls up against herself, tucking her knees in as she hunkers down in the tiny alcove. She’d tried to eat earlier, but the cold and by now rather congealed piece of mushroom that was the only thing she’d had left hadn’t gone down without a fight. Now her stomach rumbles hungrily, her head hurts, and she feels like she’s about to burst into tears at any moment.

Rey doesn’t want this anymore. She had been desperate to be alone before, but now she’s cold and wet and just plain scared.

How much longer can this go on? Not only these caves, they could easily span the entire planet’s subsurface and Rey is beginning to wonder if they’re going to do exactly that. But how long can she go on?
Her will to fight is weakening. It feels wrong to be doing this. He should be here with her. They should be facing whatever is about to happen together.

The first tear that streaks across her cheeks is warm and shameful. She’s stronger than this. Stronger than the fear in her head and the ache in her heart.

Rey swipes at it, feeling the grime on her skin shift around. She should clean herself up, but going anywhere near that river seems so abhorrent right now. Not only had it almost killed her, but that was also where she’d last seen Kylo. He’d been using it to ice down his hand, but that had been hours and hours ago. Now gods knows where he is. She couldn’t find her way back to him now. She wants to, but she can’t. He’s gone. They’re lost and separated.

Rey finally gives in to the urge to cry. She needs to vent. Needs to let these feelings have an outlet or they’ll destroy her.

She doesn’t want to die down here. She doesn’t want to be alone anymore. She just wants… wants…

Rey wants to be whole again.

She sobs into her knees, wrapping her arms tighter around herself. How many times has she been exactly like this before? So utterly alone and crying her eyes out because of the hurt of it all?

Kylo.

She whispers his name weakly.

No answer.

Rey closes her eyes and lets darkness embrace her.
This time, Rey knows that she’s dreaming.

She knows this because she’s warm and happy. Somewhere safe. It’s a lie. It’s all a lie.

But it’s a pretty one, so she basks in it. Lets her troubled mind conjure up the images that she wants to see. She’s laying on Kylo’s cloak, not the hard and unyielding ground. His cowl is over her, wrapping her up tight.

She’s being swaddled, but it’s okay. She likes it, actually. It makes her feel so protected.

A fire is crackling near her. It smells like the moss they had been burning in the past. The heat of it soaks through her skin, warming her down to her bones.

“Rey.”

Kylo’s voice is weary. She shakes her head, not wanting to open her eyes and ruin the spell.

His hand, his bare hand, touches her face. He strokes her cheek, wiping away the tears she hadn’t realized were still falling. Then his touch ghosts up, his fingertips lightly skimming her temple.

She feels him in her mind. He’s searching through her memories, but doing it so gently. She could shove him out at any time, but she doesn’t. Even if this is all a dream, it feels right to be so open with him.

“There… there is someone with you.”

Rey opens her eyes then. Her dreams flickers, starting to fade at the edges. She stares at him, transfixed by the hypnotizing sensation of his presence fluttering around her head and pulling at her most recent memories.

He begins to fade too soon, her dream coming to an end already.

“Look around, Scavenger.”
Where he was is now but a shadow. She’s alone, next to the river. No fire, no comfort. No Kylo.

The last thing she hears is his voice whispering low in her mind.

*I know where you are, Rey. I know and I’m coming for you.*

And then he’s gone, and she’s all alone again.

Chapter End Notes

Managed to get this done for this week, sticking to my schedule. I’ve got a ton of things going on in my personal life right now (all good stuff, but very time consuming), but I think this chapter sets the ground for the next 4 right. We’re now well into Act II, with the third act happening probably around chapter 16 or maybe 17. So we’re getting there, folks! A huge thanks to everyone who’s hanging in with me for the long run as well as all the newcomers too, both your comments keep me going whenever my motivation starts to slide and I couldn’t do this without you! <3<3<3
Hi everyone! I’m making this a brief update to say that unfortunately I’m going to have to miss this week’s chapter. I really, really aim to update every weekend and so far I only skipped once before, but these next few days I just won’t have time to give this story the attention it deserves. I’m currently in the final stages of publishing my first two novels (or novellas, depending on how you look at them) and while this is a very exciting moment for me it is taking sooooo much more time than I’d imagined. Writing, editing, cover art (i’m doing my own), formatting to .mobi or the other types, setting up facebook, mailinglist, website, multi-platform, trying to find erotica-friendly promotions, navigating the hostile and aggressive hell that is Amazon, GAH THE LIST JUST KEEPS ON GOING!!! I am completely swamped in this, pray for me please!!!!!

*Ahem* ANYHOW, next week everything should be back on track. We’ll be going back to regular updates and I’m toying with the idea of updating this story twice a week, once on fridays and the other on Mondays. I’m not sure. If I don’t, I’ll probably finish this 3 months from now and that’s such a long time. On the other hand 2x a week is a lot. I don’t know. Anyone have any thoughts?

Okay, sorry I couldn’t update this week! Next week’s update will make up for it, I promise! Thank you all for sticking with me and this story and all your kind comments, you have no idea how much they motivate me when I’m writing this and I absolutely love you all for them! <3<3<3
Chapter Summary

Where Rey gets the fright of her life, our duo are reunited, and Kylo discovers that Rey is one thirsty, thirsty girl (totes canon).

Chapter Notes

I’m back! This one’s kind of rough, written very very late at night and I may well change the ending of it on Thursday or Friday when I have more time. Until then, let’s get back to our regularly scheduled programming:

See the end of the chapter for more notes

An odd sort of restlessness took over Rey’s existence.

Once Kylo had woken her up, made her look around so he could see through her eyes, she’d been completely unable to get back to the sleep she so badly needed.

By now Rey was more than exhausted. She was fully at the end of her rope in mind, body, and especially the aching void in half of her soul. All she wanted to do was sleep forever. Never wake up if it meant leaving that warm little bundle Kylo had left her in inside her mind.

And yet, despite everything that had happened since she had left him, Rey was suddenly too tired to sleep.

Kylo was now completely gone from her mind. The empty, aching void was back. He had shut her out so utterly, so wholly that he might as well have ceased to exist.

Or maybe she’s the one who has ceased to exist. The concept stirs in the back of Rey’s psyche as she wanders the narrow cave that lead her away from the water’s edge. Her feet may be stepping forward forward forward but her thoughts remained a million miles away.

So maybe she’s dead.
Maybe?

It would make sense. Explain why she feels so outside herself, like she couldn’t command her body to stop moving now even if she tried.

So what if she had really drowned back there, back in the river? Somewhere she heard it takes the brain quite a while to die from drowning. It would certainly account for a few things. Like how weightless she feels, how disaffected.

This is unnatural.

Why does she keep walking? If she’s dead, can’t she finally be in peace? Is she condemned now to wander, aimlessly stumbling down these cavernous subterranean halls?

But she can’t stop, can’t be in harmony and one with the Force, because she’s compelled. The cycle loops and loops on itself. Every time she stumbles and falls, she doesn’t even feel it. Doesn’t register any pain from the bruises forming on her knees or the cuts and rasps on her fingers as she claws back against the rock walls to come up to standing.

The whole cave is glowing now. Not just the stalagmites or the flowers or plants, but the walls themselves now. The passage is blazing, like she’s literally walking through that metaphorical passage of light separating life and death.

*Find me.*

Oh, it’s Kylo now. His voice is back in her head even if his presence is not. How odd.

There’s a wind at her back, pushing her forward. The further she goes, the stronger it becomes. Something in the far recesses of her mind is warning her, telling her not to go on. The feelings of need are changing, turning into something closer to dread. Dread and sadness and… unbelievable regret.

So this is what dying is like? It hardly seems fair. Rey has done plenty in her short life that she regrets, but nothing that ever provoked such a strong feeling of-
Kylo. This is his regret, isn’t it? Could it be?

If it is, that means… that means she was wrong. That he’s dying and she’s being pulled down with him?

Rey tries to turn then, spin around and start running the other way. Flee back from this bright, strange tunnel that her spiraling mind has conjured.

The winds snap her back, turn her head so fast her neck aches. They start to buffet her then, pushing and slamming against her back, nearly lifting her off her feet.

*Find me.*

That impulse again, this time much more insistent. She has no choice with this. Rey lets herself be shoved forward, fighting each step but knowing that it’s a losing cause. The passage bends ahead of her, brilliant green light shining from beyond the turn like a beacon.

Rey screams when she sees Kylo.

He’s laying there, an unmoving shape of darkness surrounded by a growing pool of red. All around him is that green energy, spitting and twisting like a fractal trapped in a crystal.

Every limb of his is bent in a way that is wholly unnatural. Rey runs to him, panic making her nearly blind and unwilling to believe what the Force is showing her. Above him is a distance. A high distance.

He… fell. He fell to his death? It seems impossible. Illogical. He should have been able to stop himself. Kylo was too strong, too powerful to die in such a way.

And yet the truth is laying right there in front of her.

Rey kneels shakily, almost collapsing against his lifeless form. He fell face first, but she has to see
this for herself. She catches his shoulder, turning him over with an unnatural ease. He should be heavier than this. He weightless, almost. She can flip his whole ruined body without even the slightest effort. She holds her breath, turning him-

The face that looks back at her is not his.


Rey gasps when the dead hand flies up, catching her wrist and holding her when she tries to drop him and run. The body changes, transforming from Kylo’s bulky strength to that of a reed-thin cadaver. Bones jut out, pulled tight over acute emaciation.

“Who are you?” she shouts, the wind picking up and howling in her ears.

The lips of the face don’t move but the eyes open. They glow green, staring at her with a terrifying power.

The hand on her squeezes tighter, holding on as she struggles to free herself. Above him, whoever this- the apparition is, are words glowing into the rock. The same words she saw written on the cavern wall hours earlier.

This is a trap! She’s fallen for it, and now-

Rey pushes with the Force, screaming blindly as the wraith takes her hand in his. Something is pressed into her palm, stinging her and pulling her strength away. It’s the kyber. The piece of kyber she picked up earlier. Somehow that is what lead her to this point.

“STOP!”

She screams the words, shoving at the ghastly form. The creature holds tighter, pressing another impulse into her mind. Find me. Rey howls, the pressure in her head rapidly becoming unbearable.

And then it ends.
All at once her mind goes ‘pop’. And then there’s silence. Silence and darkness.

She can’t see anything. Nothing. Absolute nothingness.

Is this death? Is this it?

“Rey!”

Kylo’s voice. She can’t see him. Pressure on her shoulders. A rattling of her bones.

“Rey!”

She falls limp, collapsing into the abyss. Not welcoming it, not at all, but accepting of it.

Rough fabric scratches against her cheek. Something shakes her. Two somethings. Shakes her hard.

“Rey! Open your eyes!”

Open? How-

Oh .

That’s why sh couldn’t see anything. Because she had her eyes closed.

It takes a few moment before her brain can re-circuit itself into remembering how to raise her lids.

It’s dark, mostly. Just the dim of the glowing rocks and the sound of running water and Kylo’s wide-eyed and shocked facing gaping down at her. For a second his is the most welcome, most captivating face she’s ever seen.
“Ben?” she asks, her voice hoarse.

He stares dumbfounded. Then huffs.

She notices then that he’s trembling, a thin sheen of sweat shining on his brow.

Rey reaches up, lifting her hand to touch his face and prove to herself that he’s real. The kyber falls out of her palm, landing on her chest. His skin is smooth to the touch. Damp and warm and very much alive. Her stomach flutters when she traces his lips.

Kylo blinks at her, his expression betraying every emotion to clearly.

He’s desperately relieved to see her. So is she. Their Bond hums, nearly glowing with giddiness at their reunion.

Then Rey suddenly realizes that she’s staring at him while laying on her back and she jerks herself up to sitting, nearly headbutting Kylo with her frantic movement.

“Rey.”

He’s still holding onto her shoulders the squeezing her just like that… whatever the karking hell that thing was. A shiver runs down her spine at the memory, cooling the brief joy of reunion. The happiness at seeing him there in the flesh beside her disappears like smoke.

There’s blood under her fingernails. She only noticed it now, when she took a moment to look over herself. It was Kylo’s blood. Long welts are streaked down his arms, the sleeves of his shirt ripped nearly into shreds.

“Did-” Her voice sounds so brittle, had she really been screaming or was that also just in her head? “Did I do that? To you?”
Kylo stares at her, his eyes wide and wild. He looks down, staring at the tracks on his forearms, then back at her. He slowly lets go, rocking back on his heels to crouch next to her.

The river is behind him. She’s still laying on that little rocky shelf where she’d fallen asleep. That was all- No, that wasn’t a dream. That was something else.

“Yes, Rey. You did. You were screaming in my mind. Howling and shrieking. I couldn’t see you. I tried to reach you but I couldn’t, and I when I got here you weren’t alone.”

Rey cringes in on herself, wrapping her arms tight around her knees and trying to banish all traces of what she had seen from her mind.. Rey can still feel her heart pounding, adrenaline thundering in her veins as the memories of a dead phantom play out despite her best efforts.

“He- There was someone. A...being. I don’t know.”

It’s all she can say. Nausea begins to grow in her, gnawing a her insides. She had been so scared. Terrified of a dream. This was ridiculous. She should never have let it rattle her so deeply. She’s the Last Jedi, for kriffsakes...

“Rey.”

Kylo says her name softer this time, one of his hands leaving her shoulder to stroke her face, soothing her into looking up at him.

“What happened?” he asks, his eyes both imploring and suspicious.

Rey doesn’t know where to even begin. Start from the top? No. No, she can’t handle that right now.

She jerks her chin to of his grasp, not missing the pinch of hurt that reaches her from his side of... yeah, of their connection. He’s back in her head where he should be, but his walls are still up. That can only mean one thing: he’s still pissed off at her.

“I had a vision,” she says, her mouth dry. “A... dream. I saw someone. He was dead, but... Kylo,
did you block me? I couldn’t feel you at all. I thought you were dead.”

Kylo blinks, his expression pulling back to an unreadable stoicism.

“You were the one blocking me, Scavenger. I heard you screaming and screaming in my head, but you were still shoving me out. I had no idea what was wrong or why you were so… you sounded like you were dying. I ran back here as fast as I could but it took me so long. When I finally came you were clawing at the air, howling as this green shape hovered over you.”

Rey looks up then, staring at the rock wall above her head. Nothing. No strange symbols.

Kylo begins to pull away and she snatches his hand, closing her eyes and pressing his knuckles against her forehead. She tries to remember how the symbols looked. The image is foggy, hazy, but she pushes it against Kylo’s mind.

When she opens his eyes he’s starting at her with such an expression of slack-jawed confusion it would be comical in any other circumstance. Their Bond buzzes louder when they touch, turning itself into an annoying distraction demanding attention after their neglect to it.

“That’s the old Jedi script,” he says, his voice dropping to a whisper. “How did you-”

“It was on the wall. And in my dream. But also on the wall. Earlier, before the earthquake. These symbols were carved there like some sort of inscription. Do you know what they say?”

Kylo stares at her for a long moment, his eyes searching her own.

“I saw salvation as I lay dying.”

Rey blinks at him. She pushes herself more upright, her hand letting go of his. She can’t decide if that’s more confusing or more morbid.

“That’s what it said?” she asks quietly. “Are you sure.”
“Yes. And there was no earthquake, and no inscription on any walls, Rey. I’d been following your footprints, right up until you apparently jumped down into a hole in the ground. I think you might have been hallucinating for some time. You were… gone from me for too long.”

Wait. How long had she been asleep? Her nightmare had felt like it had only been minutes. How deeply had she been swept up in it? She’d said before that every part of her seems exaggerated in this caves. Every emotion heightened, every fear increased. Now it seems like that scope has extended even into her unconscious mind.

A shiver rolls over her again, and she instinctively tugs on their Bond for reassurance. It’s there again, strong and steady as always.

Kylo’s hand falls to her knee, rubbing it in circles. Even if he’s blocking her out, he must be able to sense her unspoken fears. He leans closer and she swallows, another urge rising to meet the anxiety.

There was that too. This need for him. It hadn’t gone away like she’d silently prayed it would.

“Rey...”

She’d been staring at her feet. Staring at the shadows. Anywhere but at him.

“Rey, why did you run away from me?”

That’s why she didn’t want to look at him. For every unanswered question she has, there are a dozen more unresolved impulses. And what he just asked her comes first and foremost to her list of things she’d rather not answer or contemplate.

Still… she had almost died. Drowned like the foolish desert rat she is. And then her mind had been invaded by a creation she couldn’t even begin to understand.

In short, it had been a tough day. One that Rey badly wants to forget and replace with some other, any other, more pleasant memory.

“Can I have a hug?” she asks, snagging her fingers around Kylo’s tattered sleeve when he starts to
pulls away.

“Rey.”

Oh he sounds angry now. His earlier gentleness as she’d woken up from her terror has faded far too quickly.

Before he has a chance to shove her away, Rey pushes herself to him, half crawling up his body and burying her face against his chest. She’s not crying. She refuses to cry. She wants to, but she won’t. But she will take every ounce of comfort she can squeeze out from her grumpy, short-tempered other half. By osmosis, if necessary. If he won’t do the right thing and give her this.

Kylo doesn’t return her embrace. He kneels there, letting her hold onto him but not touching her himself. It makes her heart hurt. Why can’t everything just go back to how it was before? When he was devoted to her and he was the one begging for crumbs and not the other way round?

When she pushes at him with her mind, he’s still blocking her out. Still. A lump starts to form in her throat, but she swallows it down. She picks up his arm herself and drapes it over her shoulders, snuggling herself in snug against him. Kylo is really here. He’s solid and he’s warm and he’s a living thing. That’s what she needs right now.

“Have you learned your lesson, Scavenger?” he finally asks, his voice heavy and his soul a welcome lead weight in her mind.

Rey stares abjectly at the now dirty and dusty black fabric of his shirt. She learned… she learned that she’s not good at understanding her own feelings, let alone those of someone else. She’s learned that she can’t trust herself. She’s learned that… that she won’t know peace unless they drop their walls and let each other in.

“We are-” her voice wavers before she can control it, “we are stronger together.”

For a few seconds all she can hear is the sound of his breath through her hair His heartbeat next to her ear.

“That’s not what I expected you to say, Rey.” His voice is a quiet rumble that makes her eyelids flutter. “But it’s much better than I’d thought. And you’re right, we will never survive this planet
alone.”

He wraps her tight then, hugging her properly. Both his arms envelope her, his hands cradling her head against his chest. Rey sighs, all the tension of these last terrible hours beginning to ebb away.

“Supreme Leader,” she mutters, knotting her fingers into the fabric of his cowl to hold him close.

“Scavenger,” he returns.

With that, he opens his mind to her. Memories flicker through psyche, edges of scenes and emotions not her own. Kylo running. Kylo raging. Kylo... making a promise to himself. The second she tries to hone in on that reflection, he snatches it away from her.

“You made me chase you, Rey. You closed off our Bond and you shut yourself away and I didn’t know if you were living or dead. That was very, very cruel of you.”

She shakes her head, the way his fingers sink through her hair is both possessive but not unwelcome.

“I didn’t. Not... okay, at first yes, I did. But then I think it was all the kyber. It was blocking me. Or maybe it was the Thing. I don’t know. I wanted you, too, after a while. I really did.”

The movement of his hands slows to a stop. She can feel the deep resentment that he’s trying to bury down. The bitterness mixed with profound relief at her being safe and back with him.

“I’m not sure if I believe you.”

He pushes her away before she realizes it, shoving her back gently but firmly until she’s sitting and he’s looming over her. In his hand is the kyber, the piece that she found earlier right before the earthquake. She should warn him about it, that it might somehow be a part of all this, but she feels him in her mind, poking at her memories before she can stop him.

“There was no earthquake, Rey. I told you that.”
She swallows, shaking her head. No, no, *that* had been real… Hadn’t it?

Kylo turns from her, pacing away. His movements are sharp, precise. That brain of his is working deviously, she can just tell that it is. But he’s still blocking her. Whatever he is thinking, he’s keeping to himself.

Rey rises to her feet, eager to level the playing field between them. Her legs so stiff she has to stand up in stages. Gods, how long had she been out for?

“So now what?” she asks.

Tentatively she moves closer to him. They need to talk about this. Need to get through this animosity festering between them.

Kylo shakes his head, looking at her over his shoulder with an open scowl.

“That is the second time you’ve asked me that since you ran away, Scavenger. Why don’t you answer it for yourself this time? What is it that you want to happen?”

Rey flushes, immediately remembering the last time she had said that. They had been separated then, and she had been so lonely. So needy. Her desires had clouded her judgment and she gave into them. She had just—He had touched her through their connection and—

“No.”

Kylo turns abruptly to face her, his eyes narrowing. Rey’s heart flutters, untrusting of the look in his eyes. He had made a promise to her then, too. One that, when he takes a step forward, closing the distance between them, makes her pulse start to rise.

“No what?” she asks, her eyes quickly darting over him.

*I’m going to find you, Scavenger.*
Those, or something approaching those words, had been the last thing Kylo had spoken to her before he’d thrown her out of his head. He had purred them into her mind where they now resided, burning lurid and full of deep implication. His words were both a threat and a promise. Rey didn’t even know which one she wanted them to be anymore.

“No, Rey, you had done all of that. You had shown up in my head wanting me. I had nothing to do with the choices you made. How you chose to tell yourself over and over so charmingly about how I was nothing to you-”

Rey swats his hand away when he reaches for her face. This is all wrong. All of it.

She tries to turn away, but he grabs her chin firmly, the seam of his glove imprinting against the soft skin of her lip. He steps closer again, bringing to stand with barely a space between them. Rey finds herself rooted to the spot, warring emotions winning out over her ability to verbally defend herself.

“You told yourself,” he continue, “that I was just a dirty secret. Someone you could use and discard as you pleased. And then you flung yourself into my arms with abandon. You, Rey. You did all of that. I simply offered a helping hand with your lies.”

She should slap him. Should push him away. Use the Force to discipline him for touching her without permission.

Rey can do none of that, though, because a heat is starting to bloom within her. Having him here, really here, so close… He had come to her. Even after she’d thrown him away, he had still come for her.

“Rey?” he asks, and her eyes can’t help but drift to his lips. “If you have something to say for yourself, now is the time. Now before it’s too late.”

No Go away. I don’t want you. I feel nothing.

The words won’t come. She should say, put him back in his place, but she can’t. Not when his thumb strokes her bottom lip, lightly tugging on it. The smooth leather of his gloves has a tactile feeling that had been so muted during their previous interlude. Now it’s all she can feel, distracting her mind from the growing dangers of being so close to him.
“I don’t want you,” she says robotically when he steps forward.

She can’t back down. She can’t think.

“Liar,” Kylo whispers, dipping his head low.

Rey trembles, curling her hands into fists and digging her nails into her palms to keep from reaching for him. She’s suddenly absolutely dizzy with desire, so much blood leaving her head so quickly that she wavers unsteadily, only his grip on her keeping her legs from buckling.

“That good, Rey? I haven’t even touched you. Yet.”

His breath is warm against her lips. He’s so close. So close.

“Don’t-” she has to lick her dry lips to speak properly, “don’t remember this. Let’s forget all about it tomorrow. That’s the only way.”

Kylo’s mouth, dominating the center of her vision and focus, curls up into a smile.

“No, Rey. I won’t be used by you. If you want this, you’ll admit that you want it. You’ll admit it, and you’ll make this up to me.”

Her breath catches when he pushes his thumb into her mouth. The edge of his glove pushes between her teeth, drawing her jaw down. Rey frowns, not fully understanding, but when he starts to pump his finger in and out of her mouth the meaning of his words becomes more clear.

Rey shakes her head slightly and he pulls away so she can speak, tracing her lip with his now wet fingers.

“What do you-”
“Be creative, Rey. You’re a clever girl. Figure out how you make can make up for all of this hell you’ve just put me through.”

This is the point where she knows that she should say ‘no’. Push him away, possibly for good this time.

But their Bond won’t let her. Her soul won’t let her, and neither will any other parts of her. Rey can already feel herself start to ache, the need to touch him growing with each passing moment of indecision.

“What’s it going to be, Scavenger? The choice is yours, but I expect you to honor it. No more changing your mind when it’s convenient or your conscience takes you away from what you know you really want.”

Is she so transparent? She must be, she practically writhing in his arms, her legs squirming together to ease the growing pressure between them.

Their Bond surges up, sensing the growing weakness in her resolve. It’s all the prompting that Rey needs, the rest of her objections and justifications flying out into nothingness as she reaches up and drags his lips own to her own.

Rey devours him, her hands suddenly everywhere at once. She claws at his hair, nipping angrily at his smirking lips when he refuses to open for her.

Gods, does he still have to be difficult now?! She’s giving him what he wants!

Not quite, Scavenger. Not quite.

His voice hums inside her head, the sound of it resonating through her. Rey kisses with an even greater passion, messily moving her lips over his until he opens and lets her slide her tongue inside his mouth. His hands move around her, lifting her and supporting her weight as she wraps her legs around his hips.

Kyl o quickly takes over the dominant role then, walking her backwards until her back hits the rock wall, effectively pinning her in place. He kisses slower and deeper than she’d done to him. It’s too intimate. She doesn’t want slow intimacy. What she wants, what she needs, is a release. A
physical expression of her overwhelming desire. What he’s trying to coax from her is something more cerebral. Another fucking mind game of his.

He pulls away then, grinning widely and not even trying to mask his triumphant look as he sneers at her.

“You’ve finally figured it out, then,” he crows, wiping his mouth off on the back of his hand. His black gloves come back slick with their shared spit.

A whimper forms in her throat, her mind still battling but losing to the needs of her body. He’s here with her now. He came for her and now they’re reunited. They should celebrate this.

“See something you like, Rey?” he taunts. “Do you enjoy your handiwork?”

She hadn’t realized she’d been staring. But of course he was in her head. Prowling around and following every shameful line of thought as it came to her. His lips are swollen, flushed from her frantic bites. The sight of it does something profound to Rey, arousal unlike any she’s ever felt sparking through her.

“Kiss me,” she demands, her voice shaking from the strain of fighting this.

“No. Ask nicely.”

She glares at that, her nose wrinkling. Kylo and his kriffing head games. She hated him for it before. She… wanted him. Wanted him so so badly. But she still won’t say it. Not that. She won’t let him have that.

When she leans up, trying to take his lips with her own, he pushes her down. Waits with a sharply arched eyebrow. Her cheeks bloom with both need and shame.

For a moment it seems like he’s about to take pity on her. He dips his head, his lips ghosting over her. Rey opens, flicking her tongue against them in anticipation.

And he pulls back again, drawing out an enraged cry from her instead.
“Say that you want me, Rey. Say it and mean it.”

She grits her teeth, shaking her head. His arrogance, his cocky nastiness, somehow only fuels the flames of her lust, but what he wants is too far. She won’t do it.

“Have it your way, then,” he says with a shrug.

His hands start to let go of her, her body sinking when it’s only her own arms supporting her

“Kylo!” she shrieks, grappling with his neck.

He pauses, mid drop. She glares up at him, tears of frustration pricking at her eyes.

“Have I gone too far?” he asks.

She nods. The words refuse to come out, but when she chokes her way through pushing them into her bondmate’s head his expression softens.

“Do you want me to be nicer to you?” he asks, lifting her again.

There’s a lightness to his tone, a playfullness that she had missed before. That makes it easier, this touch of Ben peaking through all the arrogant dark smirks and erotic aggression.

Rey glares, pouting but not denying anything. With a chuckle he brings his hand back, effortlessly holding her up with just one arm, and presses his fingers against her lips.

“Open,” he commands, and this time she complies.

The leather of his gloves has a tangy, earthy quality. It strange, this odd sexual ritual that he’s making her do to stroke his own ego, but the dark glint in his eyes distracts her. Kylo watches with fascination as he finger-fucks her mouth, pumping two then three of the digits in and out until a
trail of saliva leaks down her jaw.

The way he’s looking at her makes this worthwhile. He looks like a man on the edge. Like she’s finally pushed him too far and now his control will snap at any moment and he’ll just… just take her. Take her in any way that he chooses.

“How kinky,” he purrs, his fingers sliding wetly out of her mouth. “You really have a very active imagination for a Jedi. When I said that I meant it: I will have you again. Is that you want?”

It’s a trick question, and a clumsy one at that. She shakes her head, holding onto the last threads of rational thought as his hand traces her cheek before gliding down her neck. She had expected him to- her cheeks burn harder, an image of his guiding himself into her mouth flutters through her mind before she can stop it.

Kylo laughs, his hand darting inside her tunic, leaving a trail of wetness along the valley between her breasts. He reaches the waistband of her pants and stops. Rey bites her lower lip, looking at him with pleading eyes.

“Tell me something, Rey,” he opens the knot of her cloth belt, slowly working the layers of fabric apart. “Are you always such a ball of repressed need? The more you deny yourself, the worse it seems to become.”

Rey knows that she’s proving his point for him, rolling her hips eagerly to make his movements between their bodies easier.

“I’d thought about or first time together a lot since you’d left me,” he continues, “and I think I’ve found your greatest weakness. Or your second greatest weakness, perhaps.”

Rey blushes all the harder when his hand darts inside her pants, stroking her now very wet and swollen folds. She shivers, leaning back slightly so she can have room to grind against him.

“And what-”

Her voice breaks when he finds her clit, rubbing it between two fingers and making pleasure shoot through her so sharply her eyes almost roll back. “And what is that?” she manages to gasp.
This is all happening so fast. Not fast enough. He should be inside her by now. She *needs* to feel him inside her soon.

“Intimacy, Rey. You’re so desperate for it, but you’re also terrified of it.” His hand moves, letting go of her nub and shifting lower. “You try and tell yourself that our lovemaking was meaningless, but every time you try to prove this to yourself you fail completely.”

“Is that so?” she asks, her voice barely above a whisper. “You sound so sure about- oh- *OH*!”

Before she can continue her protest, he slides a finger inside her. Rey throws her head back, moaning loudly, her voice echoing off the cavern walls.

Kylo gives her only a few seconds before he continues, his finger pumping leisurely in and out of her, that naughty seam of his gloves enhancing every sensation.

“You want me because you know how I feel about you, even if you won’t admit to it” His tone is casual and almost dismissive as he fingers her. “But this is also what you fear most in the world. That’s why you can’t even bring yourself to ask for pleasure. You have to feel like it’s thrown upon you so you can let go.”

The… karker… *kriff* ! He’s psychoanalyzing her *now* ? The man is insane!

And how is it possible that it feels so much better than when she did this to herself?! Her walls flex greedily, relishing the sensation of having another do this to her. Of having *him* attend to her for the second time.

“More?” he asks.

Rey whimpers, shaking her head from side to side. The gesture saying no but every other part of her meaning exactly the opposite.

Still, she has to clench her teeth from the sweet blend pleasure and pain as a second finger slides into her nearly-virginal passage. It burns. It aches. It feels like it’s not nearly enough.
“K-Kylo.”

Her voice is constricted, an all-encompassing urge to just give herself to him filling her. This has to be right. Nothing bad could ever feel this good.

“Rey.”

His eyes are dark, nearly fully dilated as he watches her squirm on his hand. They hadn’t had time to do this before. On the ship their lovemaking had been hurried and attentions were distracted. Then the second time he hadn’t even really been there with her. Now… now he’s here. He’s here and this is real and it’s everything to her.

Rey can barely suck in enough air to speak.

“Yes Kylo, I want you,” she gasps, his thumb flicking at her clit as she gives into him.

His movements against her and within her slow. She stares at him balefully, begging with her eyes and hoping that will be enough.

“Do you really mean that?” he asks.

Is this… permission? He wants permission. If she says yes now, they’ll… they’ll make love again. And this time will be different because she won’t have the convenient excuse of death to hide behind.

“Yes.”

She stares into his eyes and for a second all she can see is Ben. For less than a second, she can feel her heart try to give into him. Let this happen. It will all be alright. They were bonded for a reason, after all...

The moment is fleeting. Kylo comes back with a vengeance, smirking meanly down at her as he
pulls his hand away.

Rey blinks at him, her heart pounding in her ears.

“I’m glad you finally said it, Rey,” he kisses her temple, his wet fingers stroking her cheek as her mind reels, desperately trying to play catchup.

“What-”

“Oh we’re done for the evening, my darling. Or did you assume I’d forgive you cutting me out of your head the second you spread your legs for me?”

He drops her then, setting her on her feet and her legs almost immediately buckle, making her slump against the wall. Rey trembles, shock and rage both hitting her at once. He turns to walk away, a swagger to his step that was exactly like she would expect from a Supreme Leader.

“KYLO!” she screams, her hands clawing into the rock wall. The room shimmers slightly, bits of debris shaking down from the ceiling as her control of the Force wavers.

Kylo pauses mid-step, glancing up. Then Rey catches herself and it subsides. She snatches her pants back up, dragging both sides closed and triple knotting it while glaring daggers at the back of his head.

“Where the hell do you even think you’re going?” she asks as he continues to walk away, heading toward the far end of the cave opposite the river.

“To mediate, darling. Feel free to continue on with our fun, just try not to be too loud about it.”

If he’d had the nerve to say that when they first landed on this planet, Rey would have tried to gut him. Instead she grabs the nearest rock, a good solid one the size of her fist, and hurls it at him, throwing her whole bodyweight into the move.

Kylo dodges with a simple, barely detectable cock of his head to the side. Clearly a man used to having things thrown at him.
“Nerf herder!” she shouts, though a million other insults play out in her mind.

Just before he turns, disappearing from sight, Kylo calls out to her one last time.

“Oh, and Rey? If you’re gone when I come back, you won’t like what happens next.”

The next rock smashes against the wall behind him. Rey doesn’t bother with a third. Then she waits until he’s far enough away to scream into her knees.

Piece by piece she puts her mental barricades up. They’re back together now. If he wants to talk to her, to apologize for being the galaxy’s biggest prick, he can come to her and use his words. Otherwise she doesn’t want to hear anything else from him ever again.

Chapter End Notes

Can anyone guess how and why they’re going to end up boinking? I feel like I’ve left massive, 10 ton billboard sized hints about it. We’ve got two people on a jungle planet who are reluctant to get horizontal because of all they’re massive issues both real and perceived. And yet, this fic will not be complete without vigorous Tab A into Slot A action. Or maybe even Slots B and C, who knows? Haven’t written it yet! But however could all this be possible and happen? Hmmmm…..

next chapter:

It’s time for everyone’s favorite chapter! And this time our duo get to have their E-rated shenanigans in the same space as each other!
The Ubiquitous Sex Pollen Chapter (part 1)

Chapter Summary

The answer to last week’s question is in the chapter title.

Chapter Notes

So sorry this is soooooooooo late! This chapter fought me every word of the way. Hope you enjoy it nonetheless :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The longer Rey sat stewing in her own frustrations and messed up clothing, the more angry at Kylo that she became.

How. Dare. He.

What he did was… a next level of antagonism. Was that all just a game to him? Did he really think that working her up and then leaving her high and distinctly not dry was going to punish her?

She’d done nothing to be punished for. She had left for her own good. Their own good, the both of them. Maybe, maybe, she could have done things differently. Not torn him from of her head so violently and then kept him locked out even when he’d been so desperate for her. That had been a horrible and brutal experience for them both.

Good.

Now she’s glad that she had done it. The kriffer didn’t deserve a moment of her consideration. She shouldn’t give him even another second’s thought. She shouldn’t-

Oh why the hell is she so angry?! Rey has rarely felt this over-intensity of fury. These feelings coursing through her, rising higher and higher with each pulse of her heart, are strange and foreign. She’s not an angry person, spiteful at times perhaps, but who could blame her for that? What with the way her kriffing Bondmate choses to behave.
This is different. Very different. She’s seldom ever felt so irrational. Like she’s ready to find him and stalk him and pounce on him and…

Well *nevermind*.

Thoughts of rough and primal sex are one thing, but what she needs to do is calm down. Rey is far too wired. Too full of energy. It makes her pace along the sides of the river, prowling from one end of the cavernous room to the other, always shooting the dark, distant corridor where *he* disappeared to her angriest of looks. If her conscience had been guilty, she could have blamed her irrational frustration on that. But it’s not. Not really. Maybe sort of.

The lucid part of her brain, now mostly overcome by sheer pure emotion, had been telling her to let it go. She was blowing this out of proportion. Maybe she should run again? Take off down along the river or lose herself again in this endless maze of the underground. Kylo had given her some strange and ominous threat regarding her doing exactly that, but let’s be honest, he’s not going to do shit.

Whatever. Rey knows exactly who to blame for making her so angry, and it’s not herself. She can’t sleep. Can’t relax enough to calm her thoughts. Can’t leave because there’s nowhere else to go and there’s a scary glowing green*thing* out there with her in its crosshairs.

Enough is enough. Kylo doesn’t get to treat her like this. Not ever and especially not now.

The kyber crystal in her hand, the one she found yesterday and somehow ended back in her hand after her and Kylo’s little encounter, glows brightly. It pulls on her, drawing her away from the water’s edge.

Strange as it may be, seeing this stone helps Rey makes up her mind. She must be fueling it with her own emotions, that’s the only explanation. But she’s willing to bet it’s going to lead her straight to the root of the problem.

The path to him is a clear and blinding beacon in her mind. She doesn’t even have to follow their Bond. The feelings of his smug radiance fuel her resolve. No matter what’s about to happen, whether they finally lock blades or chose to battle this out with scathing words, this will be a fight to the death between them. Because Rey is sure as all the hells that she can’t let Kylo think he can get away with what he just did.
No rest for the wicked indeed. Time to settle this.

Kylo didn’t go far.

And, when she finds him, he’s not meditating. Oh, he may be sitting cross-legged in a meditation stance, but his attention is on her alone.

Rey had been ready to attack him as soon as she saw him. Start with her words and then move on to her saber if need be. However, the cavernous chamber he’s waiting for her in makes her pause in her building diatribe. The whole room is filled with flowers. The same red and white striped blooms that she’d been seeing since the surface are growing along all four of the walls, illuminated by the blue lights emanating from cracks in the stone formations. These are similar to the one that Kylo had tucked behind her hair up on that windy hillside at sunset. Then again down here in the caves where everything was a different version of itself, they had pricked him when he came to close to them.

For some reason, these blooms keep coming back into her story time after time like they were a preconceived facet to her journey. They had even been in her nightmare. The ghostly spirit had lead her right by them as it had dragged her through the cave.

Rey takes a step forward closer to Kylo, her suspicions raising. Unlike the flowers she’d seen before, these weren’t fully blooming yet, though very nearly.

They’d been there, too. After she’d ran away and when she’d touched herself while Kylo had been projecting from a distance. The memory of it brings both shame and anger, and the latter is much easier for her to latch onto in her current escalating emotional state.

She doesn’t try to be quiet as she stalks forward, keeping her feeling of growing fury close to her heart to steady her resolve. And she knows that he’s knows she’s there and he’s not really in a meditative trance. Because, if he had actually been, he wouldn’t have stopped in mid-air the coconut sized rock she had grabbed and hurled at him. It hovers suspended next to his head for a second before his hand drops and it clatters to the floor.

He scowls when he turns to look at her. Rey hopes her expression is as murderous as her thoughts
“Finished with yourself already, Scavenger?” he taunts. “I would have thought you would have wanted to take more time since-”

Rey screams and lunges, her patience breaking before she can hear whatever terrible thing Kylo was about to provoke her with. He may have sensed the rock hurtling on a projectile path towards his skull, but apparently Rey charging at him in a literal flying leap for him came as a surprise.

She collides with him knees first, slamming into his side so hard they both cry out. Very briefly Kylo is pinned under her, Rey wrestling him down with her legs as literal blind rage fills her. What the hells is she doing? She has no idea. Something has come over her. She wants to show him she’s the one in charge. Prove to him that she’s the alpha in their relationship even if she literally has to prove the truth of it into him blow by blow.

Those are blow by blows that never come. Kylo is stunned by her assault for the blink of an eye before he turns the tables on her. Catches her by her waist and throws her to the ground instead. It winds her, stars bursting behind her eyes.

And then he sits on her. The flustered, disheveled cause of all her suffering actually sits on her. His massive bulk pins her easily, her bones protesting from the weight bearing onto them.

“Rey!” he growls, seizing both her wrists and dragging them over her head.

She kicks. She thrashes. She howls and curses and tries to buck him off. He’s too damned heavy. She might as well be trying to shift a boulder.

“Calm down!” he orders, fighting to keep his hold on the rabid woman underneath him.

Rey barely hears him. The blood is rushing through her ears, blocking out all her awareness beyond…

Beyond a green light.
Her vision is tinged with it, glowing green halos circling at the edges of her perception.

Rey immediately falls slack when she realizes it. This, *this* was that ‘something’ that was wrong. That force, that *energy*, had been filling her. Saturating her and supercharging her emotions. The urge to murder him lifts as her mind struggles to clear itself from the haze.

“*Rey.*”

Kylo glares at her. He’s wearing tracks from her fingernails clawing at the exposed skin of his neck. His hands are squeezing her wrists brutally tight, like he expects her to resume her assault at any moment. Pain lances through her right hand but it’s not her own. It’s his. His fracture from earlier. He must have aggravated it when he was trying to subdue her.

“*Ky-.*”

“*Shut up.*”

He doesn’t let go, though. No, instead he has a faraway look in his eyes. This energy she’d felt… is it spreading? This could be very bad indeed if that’s the case.

“*Kylo?*”

He’s still so heavy on her that it’s hard to breathe. She squirms, her mind reeling between rage and confusion. Her eyes dart from his face to his hands on her to the sides of the room. The green light is gone, but the strange feeling remains.

“*Your hand is glowing, Rey.*”

Kylo’s voice has an odd ring to it. He’s right. The glow has refocused itself from inside her head to her palm. Green light is leaking out from the seams of her tightly clenched fist.

She stares at it, finding herself oddly unable to move at all. Not even when Kylo lets go of her to take her hand. He picks it up, giving her a slightly worried expression as he looks at her.
“Rey, what’s going on?”

She can’t speak, but she can shake her head. Mouths the word ‘don’t’ at him.

Kylo has to peel back her fingers, twisting her hand so it’s facing palm up. It’s the kyber. She’d completely forgotten about it, but it glows with a renewed energy at Kylo’s proximity. He moves to pick it up and she blinks, the pressure and remaining disarray in her mind lifting instantly.

“Don’t touch it!” she whispers, trying to sit upright.

Kylo grips her shoulder with his other hand, holding her in place as he he regards the glowing rock.

“Why are you holding this?” he asks distantly.

Distantly? Yes. His eyes have a certain glassiness to them, the brilliant glow leaking out from the seams of her fingers reflected back in their dark depths. Whatever had been happening to her seems to be effecting him now, though less strongly.

“Rey.”

Of all the ways that Kylo has ever said her name, this has to be the most dangerous. He doesn’t tease her with it, and he doesn’t insult her. Instead, the sound of her name rolls off his tongue like a prayer, now far more enticing than she could ever imagine it being.

An unnatural wind picks up, dusting along her skin and making the flowers all around them shake in the breeze.

Why is there a wind in these caves? There shouldn't be. There was one in her dream, but now she’s awake. It doesn’t make sense.

“Kylo.”
Rey doesn’t know what she’s asking for. The confusion, the muddledness, that she had felt before returning tenfold as a sweet smell drifts down over her, the blooms around her seeming to shimmer and twist.

Kylo holds her tightly, watching her with a measured expression in case she tries to run away. Rey couldn’t even if she wanted to. It’s like her limbs are immobile, heavy beyond heavy, and yet her head is full of air. She feels so strange, the aroma of the flowers surrounding them making her restless. An emotion, a need, begins to bloom within her, but she can’t find her voice to give it sound.

“Something is happening to us,” Kylo whispers.

He’s so close now that she can feel his breath against her skin. Suddenly Rey is both too hot and too cold, wanting to pull herself to him for warmth but also wanting to… take off all her clothes. That’s… odd, isn’t it?

“Yes,” she manages to say, “something is.”

A buzzing sound begins to fill her ears. A low hum singing along her veins. In the distance she thinks she can see that glow, that familiar, insidious green glow of energy that seems to form the very being of this planet.

Then Kylo lets go of her arm to stroke her face and it’s all Rey can do to not gasp and arch into his palm.

Kylo’s touch on her bare skin seems to be the key her body was searching for. He simply cups her chin, doing nothing more than that, and still it seems like so much more. It feels intimate, almost sensual. The look in his eyes was one of shock.

Rey has to swallow twice, dryly, before she can find her voice.

“Something is very wrong,” she says.

She reaches out to him, towards his hand on her, but she’s unsure of whether she was pushing him away or holding him closer. Kylo stops her, wrapping her palm in his, and the contact is so electric that Rey shivers, every nerve within her coming alight.
“Scavenger, I think we are in trouble here.”

How can he be so calm when Rey’s practically losing her mind? Or perhaps actually? How is it that he can still speak when her own breath is being robbed from her lungs, each inhale coming as shallower a pant that the last?

“Kylo.”

Her lips tingle. His are so close. The glow and the hum increase and the background fades out of focus. All she can see is him.

Kylo leans down, bringing their bodies into further contact.

The air smells so heavenly. This isn’t right. She hates him. Kylo is her enemy.

“Scavenger.”

She was right. Something is wrong. Something is happening. Rey can’t even form a coherent sentence in her own head, let alone on her lips.

His touch trails down to her neck, leaving tracks of cold fire in its wake. An itch begins to form, a knot deep within her starting to grow.

It’s only when Rey realizes that her nipples are hardening and there’s a slickness between her thighs that she realizes the true nature of her delirium.

“The flowers,” she gasps, her eyes widening but never leaving his.

Kylo nods, his gaze focusing equally on her lips as it does from darting to her eyes.

“Yes. They are… I’d thought it was only me.”
Rey tries to let go of him. Tries to force her body to start moving and working itself free of his arms. No limbs budge an inch. Kylo drops his hand from her. He can do that much at least. Then he peels himself away from her clinging limbs, shrinking back to the far side of the room. As he does, the plants shake, many of their buds popping open to reveal brilliant crimson flowers so beautiful they take Rey’s breath away.

She scrambles to her feet, her moves ungainly and her limbs feeling like they’re buried in the deepest Jakku sands. Kylo holds her away from him with his hand in the air, sending a half-hearted push of the Force into his gesture.

“Focus Rey. Fight this.”

Yes. Fight it. Fight whatever this new development is.

Green light crackles around them. It last only for a few instants, but in that moment Rey can feel it. That presence from before, the one from her dreams and the one that had pushed her into the river from up above.

The whole room begins to swirl with it, the energy ripples around them and fanning over the flowers of this perverse subterranean garden. The plants shimmer, a fresh wave of their perfume rising along with it.

The movement is over in seconds, but it’s seconds too late. Rey remembers why she had ran away from Kylo in the first place. It hadn’t been purely an emotional choice; there was a very compelling physical reason as well.

Now, when she was surrounded by this air, he was all she could think about. The need she had felt for his touch since up on the Falcon had never gone away, it had simply transformed into something else. Gone into hibernation only to be fully awoken now when suddenly every sense was either him or the scent of flowers in bloom.

“Rey...”

She should run. Flee and hide from him forever.
Instead, her feet take a step towards him, not away. Kylo shakes his head, eyes widening and giving her a silent warning.

*Stay back, Scavenger. Stay well back.*

A whisper of a breeze picks up, bringing with it a compulsion. Need spreads out along her nerves, and Rey desperately tries to get a lock on her emotions.

“We shouldn’t do this,” Rey gasps, fighting her body with each stilted step it takes to her bondmate. “I want to. Gods do I want to. But we shouldn’t.”

Kylo closes his eyes, his upper lip curling into a snarl. Lust pools inside Rey, making her feel both hot and cold at the same time. Around them both, the plants shine, their ruby and snow striped petals shaking in the wind.

And she feels something else. Something in the darkness. Somewhere in the distance it feels like they’re being watched. A force, not The Force but rather *that* force, flickers in and out of her awareness.

Kylo breaks first. She should have known that he would.

His eyes snap open and he turns to her, stepping forward and closing the distance between them in one smooth move. His hand finds her hip and she gasps, every exposed part of her skin feeling hypersensitive. Her clothes are too constricting, too scratchy. She’s far too hot. Getting naked may be the only way for her to survive this heat.

“*Scavenger.***”

Kylo hisses his favorite name for her, his grip on her tightening as he draws them together. Then his hand shifts around, catching the bottom edge of her tunic and sliding it to reach the bare skin of her back.

“Oh gods!” Rey whines, electricity shooting along her spine.
The energy that had been flowing through her finally has a conduit. His hand on her skin was the circuit that she’d been seeking unknowingly. There was no controlling this now, no stopping it, and Rey didn’t even bother trying to fight it.

She throws herself on Kylo, wrapping her arms around him and pulling his head down to meet hers.

Their kiss is frantic. A clawing of hands, a messy, bruising connection of lips. She pants into his open mouth, blushing as her quickly hardening nipples rasp against his chest.

“Oh gods help me,” Kylo moans, his hands sinking into her hair to control their pace.

He picks her up without even the slightest difficulty, lifting her into the air. Once again, just like only a few minutes before in the other room, she wraps her legs around his waist, sucking in a deep gulp of air when she feels his straining erection pressing needfully on her inner thigh.

It’s a lucky thing that he’s strong enough to be able to hold her up, because otherwise her legs would have surely buckled underneath her. All the blood rushes away from her head, making her limbs quiver with such an angry need she couldn’t possibly have remained standing for much longer.

Finally she pulls away, gasping for breath. That only makes it worse. Her lungs fill with that sickly sweet perfume, and suddenly Rey is achingly wet. She grinds on him, writhing her hips against his hardening length.

Kylo kisses down her jaw, biting as he goes. When he gets to her neck he hoists her higher, drawing out a whine as their middle sections are no longer aligned. That’s not right. That’s not what she wants. What she wants is-

“Oh Kylo!”

She screams his name, the sound of it choked as his teeth sink into her neck. Every part of her, every inch of her, being seared with this strange, paranormal pleasure.

Green light. Green energy. That’s what she sees when she closes her eyes and gives into this.
Rey yanks on Kylo’s hair, not caring that she’s probably hurting him. If she is, he must be enjoying it. He hums happily, letting go of her neck to bite and suckle on the tight knot of muscles at the top of her shoulders.

She tries so hard to be quiet, but her willpower has quickly left her. When one of his hands slides to cup her breast, Rey throws her head aback and moans, holding him tight her with the strength of her legs.

“More,” she begs, nuzzling her face into his hair until she finds the tip of his ear.

Kylo groans when she bites down, marking him like he had done to her. His ears are surprisingly sensitive, she dimly notes, shelving that thought for another time.

She shouldn’t want him like this. Shouldn’t want him at all. But she does, and deep in her heart Rey knows that she always has. From the moment they were bonded or perhaps even before that, she’s wanted to both have Kylo and give herself to him.

The second she lets herself accept that as a truth, her mind becomes a puddle of nothingness. Her hips rock frantically to Kylo’s, and she only pulls away from savagely gnawing on his ear when he squeezes her neck, holding her chin so that his lips seek hers out.

“Rey.”

Her next moan is somewhat muffled by his tongue as he kisses her. His hand leaves her breast to dip into her pants. She’d knotted them again and again before, after he’d left her frustrated and alone. Kylo was never a man of patience, and he proves that to a fault when he simply grabs her waistband and pulls, nearly tearing the fabric open in his desperation to get to her.

Rey flinches, ripping her mouth away from his in an increasingly rare moment of clarity.

“Gods Kylo, that is my only clothing! Be careful with it or I’m going to have to walk around half naked!”

He scoffs, his breath hot and every bit as enticing as the perfume in the air.
“Fine by me,” he tells her, returning his head down to bite and nip at her shoulders again.

His hand slides between her legs, working its way inside the now torn fabric to stroke her bare skin. His other hand squeezes her ass, and Rey is only dimly aware that he’s still holding her as he drops to his knees.

When his fingers finds her slit she cries out, her voice echoing in the room and the hot breeze fanning against them finally slows to a stop. The damage has been done, though. By now she’s far too deep into the throws of lust, far too beyond the point of no return, to listen to the voice of reason in her head.

“You’re so wet,” Kylo purrs, his voice sounding reverent in awe.

She should tell him they should stop. But then he finds her nub and what she does tell is the voice in her head to shut the hell up, she wants to get fucked and who the hell cares about the consequences-

“Nope.” Kylo promises, following her thoughts so effortlessly. “There will be none. I absolutely adore you, Scavenger. I will take care of you, no matter what.”

Rey feels all the heat rush to her face at his words. She shudders as he strokes her, alternating rubbing her little button with pinching it. The ache within her blooms, demanding she take care of it and sooner rather than later.

The truth was that Rey had never completely allowed herself to think about what this would be like, what would really happen when they finally connect again for this second time. Somehow she had assumed it would be softer, sweeter, slower. Not this frantic and all-consuming need to feel him inside her as soon as possible. She remembers the full feeling he gave her during intercourse, how it was so overwhelming but so welcome all at the same time.

There are still several things getting in their way, though, and they have nothing to do with her own rapidly fading reservations.

“Clothes,” she pants, letting go of his broad shoulders to tug at his cloak. “I want you naked now, Darksider.”
He had denied her this the last time. The last half time, she should say. She’d wanted to feel him next to her then as he’d projected himself to her, but he’d been difficult in the way truly only Kylo could be. Now Rey isn’t going to take no for an answer.

She yanks on his cloak, the fabric creaking and probably choking him but she couldn’t care less right now. Serves him right.

“No, Scavenger,” he whispers into her ear. “Not this time. This time I want to see you. I want to watch your as you come undone for me.”

He wrenches his cloak off of himself, the clasp of it breaks with his forceful action and serving as another proof that he’s every bit as affected, every bit as wild, as she is right now.

Rey misses his touch as soon as it leaves her. He lays her down, the thick fabric of his cloak helping to keep the worst of the rough cave floor from cutting into her skin. Then he’s back on her in an instant, rolling the whole length of his body against hers as he pins her underneath him.

He holds her wrists above her head, both keeping her in place and the bulk of his weight off of her. Rey pants, watching with fascination as the struggle plays itself across his far too expressive face.

“No, Scavenger,” he whispers into her ear. “Not this time. This time I want to see you. I want to watch your as you come undone for me.”

She kisses him again, or tries to as much as her restrained position allows her to. Kylo groans, the sound of it spiking along her nerves and settling very low in her body.
He pulls away after a few breathless moments, and Rey can see that his lips are still swollen from her earlier assault on him by the river. She had bitten him then out of a mix of lust and spite, and now seeing the proof of her passions stirs something new in her. Beyond all the unnatural lust surging through her veins is a fresh desire to mark him. No, not just to mark him… Rey wants to really mess him up. Punish him for being such an utter prick to leave her like he did back there.

“You’re taking the words out of my mouth, Scavenger.”

Kylo shifts his grip, holding her with one hand as his other returns to between her legs. She struggles more for show than anything else until she feels a trace of pain come from his side.

Oh, it’s his injured hand. The one the idiot had broken or at least cracked during his tantrum after she’d fled.

Immediately she stills, allowing him to more easily draw open the front of her pants and begin to ease it down her legs.

“Clothes,” she repeats, this time more insistently.

The energy rises and falls through her in cycles, drawing with it an unsteadiness to her thoughts that make it impossible to consider any other notion but going forward. Things are beginning to get hazy again as he strokes her, nudging her legs wider with his knees to make room for his hand to play.

“Are you going to leave me again, Rey?”

The buzzing in her ears blocks out his words until repeats them again into her mind. Rey shakes her head, mouthing the words ‘no, never again’ to reassure him. It must be this coercion, because she’s not in her own mind at all, so much more than willing to tell him damned near anything and everything he could ask for as long as he just keeps going.

Kylo hums to that, his fingers picking up speed.

“You’re very lucky I’m not going to hold you to that, Rey,” he tells her, giving her now damp and
scowling forehead a soft kiss.

Then his hand pulls away and Rey shrieks, bucking and kicking him in a fear that he’s going to leave her while she in the throes of rising need rises within her.

“KYLO! Don’t you even-”

He lets go of her hands, shushing her impending tantrum with his palm over her lips.

“Be still, Scavenger. I’m not going anywhere.”

Rey sinks her teeth into his finger, trying to bite down hard enough to fulfill her desire but the tough leather of his gloves gets in the way.

Around them the breeze picks up, washing across the heated skin of her lower limbs and reminding her that she’s half naked and the arrogant prick above her has only lost his cloak. Kylo stiffens and blinks, shaking his head as he shudders lightly. Rey groans impatiently, finding herself filled with some sensation she couldn’t describe. Not need. More like desperation.

She reaches to touch him and Kylo flinches, yanking his hand away from her. Whatever this thing is, it’s effecting them in similar but different ways.

He seems torn. Rey isn’t.

She drags him to her again, sending their lips crashing together as she claws at his back, working her hands beneath all his seemingly endless layers of clothing until her fingers find him.

Chapter End Notes

2nd part’s up now! I just broke them up because they were too long! :)
Part Two

Chapter Summary

continuation

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kylo snarls as she rakes her nails into his flesh, scratching welts into the firm muscles of his shoulders. He kisses her with intensity, shoving his tongue inside her mouth and teasing her own until they were both absolutely breathless.

Somewhere along the way he must have removed his gloves because his bare hands cradle her face, holding her as he pulls away to glare at her. Even now, when she’s giving into him completely, Kylo finds a way to look angry. It must very difficult to be him on a daily basis.

His hand fists in the front of her tunic and Rey gasps, feeling the back of the fabric dig in as he rips it from her like he had her pants.

“Kylo!” she cries out, the breeze soothing her now superheated skin.

“Sorry,” he says with a smirk, sounding not at all apologetic.

Rey’s brief flash of annoyance falls then rises again as he repeats his move on his own upper garments, this time taking the extra care to not rip his shirts wide open. He has three of them in total, if you count the outermost layers, and this possibly explains his constant bad mood s.

“I’m taking one of those away from you,” she mutters, reaching for him again.

His hand dips low again, stroking between her legs and Rey’s eyes flutter as he immediately finds her spot and resumes rubbing it in circles. Everything ebbs and flows. Her consuming need for him, her clarity of mind, and her constant desire to put this cocky little upstart right back in his place where he belongs.
“You’re a quick learner,” she praises, allowing him a moment of arrogance as she bucks her hips into his hand.

“And you talk too damn much.”

He pushes her flat on her back, kissing his way down her neck to her chest. Rey mewls when he takes one of her nipples into his mouth, suckling on it and only enhancing the intense pleasure that’s starting to grip her.

So little blood is reaching her head that all Rey can do is stare at the ceiling high above them. The flowers grew right to the top of the room, too many in number to count and swaying with the steady wind.

“There are so many of them,” she says airily, a fresh wave of dizziness rolling through her.

Kylo hums absentmindedly, his full lips still working against the aching flesh of her breasts and not concentrating on where she really needs him. Her slickness runs down her thighs, pooling against the fabric of his cloak. His other hand fumbles between them, working himself free of his pants and ungainly kicking them off.

Rey for her part was barely able to contemplate reason or logical thought anymore. This wasn’t regular sex. Not the kind they shared before when he’d deceived her then inadvertently tried to kill them both. No, this was pure emotion enhanced to a razor’s edge. Everything, the flowers and the green light and her own consuming loneliness, made his touch feel like a high.

All that they were experiencing together becomes much larger the more they are in contact, heightening to an electric charge between the two of them through their bond. Everywhere he touches her, everywhere she touches him, tingles with a desperation for more. Rey didn’t feel like herself anymore. She needed Kylo to take this from her, and he seemed equally as compelled to give to her.

When he shifts her just so, adjusting the position of her legs and drawing them around his hips as he aligns himself, her soul flutters with breathless contentment.

Rey grabs Kylo by his hair and drags him to her. Preferring him to swallow her startled cry as he adjusts them both and finally, finally slides into her.
The pain of ti comes to a surprise to her. When she’d first given her virginity to him up on the ship, she had deliberately lost herself in her head. Intentionally blocked out all but the prettiest of details of what they were doing together.

Now though, she’s quite aware that it still hurts. Not especially sharply or for very long, but the pain of being breached by him for the second time is still unexpected. Her own fingers hadn’t hurt her, but… well, he’s a hell of a lot bigger.

Kylo laughs, panting against her lips as he lifts his head u to watch her.

“I’ll take that as a compliment,” he huffs, sounding both blissful and perhaps slightly embarrassed.

He keeps his hips totally still with his shaft only half buried within her.

“Shut up.” Rey grips his shoulders, sinking her nails into his shoulders as she struggles to adjust. “And stay out of my he-”

“No.”

Kylo holds her hips, lifting her up and sliding in a few inches deeper. Rey squeaks, blinking at him and trying to ignore the faint green halo of light that seems to surround them now. Her thoughts feel heavy, dragged down by both this her own emotions and the energy and now Kylo taking up space in her psyche as well.

He’s pushing himself into her mind and she knows damned well what he’s doing. He’s trying to make her open up for him, not only physically but in her soul as well. Trying to carve out a space in her heart where she can’t lock him out ever again.

This is far too much. She’s given him more than enough already. Intimacy isn’t what she needs right now. What she needs, what she’s absolutely desperate for, is to be made love to right here and now.

Even if it’s still hurts and she’s not completely ready for it, Rey brings her legs around his hips and shoves him forward, making him slide into her so deeply within her until there was nowhere left for him to go.
“Gods!” she cries out, tossing her head from side to side.

When he bottoms out in her, Rey’s mind immediately begins to clear, the deep fog of strange desire lifting. Kylo caresses her cheek, holding very still within her until she opens her eyes that she hadn’t even realized she’d closed.

Rey whimpers with each labored breath she takes, finding their second union so much harder than the first because the emotional stakes are so infinitely higher.

“Rey...”

His kiss is soft and sensual. A more slow and methodical purpose to his lips than he should rightly have right now.

He wants to know if she’s alright. Because... because he’s a little stunted at emotional growth and this poor, lost boy between her legs seems to think it’s only his cock that’s making her tremble like this.

Kylo holds himself over her, a look of shock playing across his features as if he can’t truly believe this is happening again. That she’s not only allowing but encouraging him to take her. To claim and fuck her deep.

“Move,” she gasps, trying to buck her hips but finding her body unwilling to relax enough to allow the motion easily for her.

Still, Kylo hesitates. He doesn’t want to hurt her. Maybe doesn’t want to hurt himself, because somehow this act has gotten so rapidly out of hand. They were just supposed to fuck. They were just supposed to-

Energy flashes all around them and Kylo looks up, distracted by the flickering disturbance to see the change in the trembling woman underneath him.

Suddenly Rey is absolutely besides herself with need for him. Pure desire burns bright and hot, sweeping away all traces of discomfort from their act.
She drags Kylo’s chin down again, kissing and biting at him in a near frenzy of lips and teeth. *That’s* all the encouragement her bondmate needed. He slides halfway out of her, wrestling with the tension of her legs fighting to keep him deep inside, before he thrusts all the way back in.

Rey moans, burying her face against his sweaty neck and savoring his scent. Her orgasm is already building, her inner muscles twitching with an itch that only he could scratch. He thrusts a second time, hitting that perfect spot along her front wall and Rey bites at him, struggling to hold herself back.

This felt so fucking *good*. Pure, genuine physical pleasure at its finest. Their first fuck had been tainted. It wasn’t everything that it should have been. This time everything was different.

Kylo pushes words of praise into her head, random and raunchy worship of her body and how utterly amazing she feels around him. And then he pushes into her again and Rey screams, climaxing against him so abruptly that her ears ring.

Warmth saturates her, bringing both tightness and release to her inner muscles. Her whole body twines around him, drawing him to her so she can feel as much of him as she can all at once. She squeezes him in luscious waves, pulsating in time with the rapid beat of her heart.

“*Rey.*”

Her name is choked, but oh how his ego swells. His innate cockiness that he must surely get from his father crowing through their connection that he made her come after only five strokes of him.

Rey hopes he won’t last much longer than she did. She wants to feel him spilling himself inside her. That’s what their Bond is demanding. That’s what this deep itch is leading her towards, the end goal of Kylo reaching his own peak right along with her.

To her infinite frustration, Kylo holds back. His hips still in their movements, slowing to an agonizing pace until she mewls, begging at him to keep moving.

When he picks her butt up, lifting her from the cold ground and the rough fabric of his cape, Rey secretly hopes that he’s about to flip her over and fulfill his fantasy. Instead, he hooks her legs over his shoulders, using his new position to thrust so deeply inside that she almost shouts.
He sets a rapid pace, gliding in and out of her until she can only hold on and try to keep her mind together as her second orgasm rips through her.

Kylo shouts short, crying out her name as he finishes. The contractions of her inner muscles only increase as he fills her. She holds him to her mindlessly, grabbing onto the strong muscles of his back and pulling him in deeper and deeper with each erratic thrust of his hips.

He collapses still buried within her, making her wince as some deep part of her insides twitches in protest. The fever of desire that had overtaken her simmers on, ebbing slightly from its highest peak but never fading far from her thoughts.

Rey...

Kylo moans her name in his head, though his physical voice stays quiet. Out of instinct she threads her fingers into his hair, comforting him as she holds him close.

Rey manages to stay silent as he pulls out of her. As soon as his length leaves her she can feel his essence leak out of her, but even like this her pulse is already increasing. The scent of the flowers wafts down on her, insisting without abating that two climaxes aren’t nearly enough. She easily has several more orgasms within her still, and all she needs is to cajole her bondmate into giving them to her.

It takes a few moments of her feverish squirming against him to make Kylo raise his head from her breast. He blinks at her, his pupils fully dilated and his deliciously swollen lips parted.

“We’re not done yet, Rey.”

His hand finds her hips and he pulls himself up over her as his words hit home.

“Gods...” she whimpers, biting down onto his shoulder as he flips them over.

Now she’s sitting on top of him, resting her weight on his upper thighs. His erection is half-swollen already, and he guides her hand to it when he notices her staring. Rey flinches at that first contact, the hum of arousal in her body dimming slightly with her embarrassment. His skin is soft and
smooth and slick with their shared fluids. It’s obscene and intoxicating at the same time.

His other hand falls onto the small of her back, guiding her forwards until she’d astride him at the necessary latitude.

Then he lets her go and allows the decision to be completely her own.

“Whatever you want, Rey,” he promises.

Rey doesn’t hesitate. She grips his length to steady and sink down onto him, allowing herself a breath to mentally prepare. His hands find her waist immediately, holding her in place to make it the easiest on herself.

Just like both times before, her body receives him beautifully, gripping him and tightening pleasurably as they both gasp when he sheathes himself deep within her.

“Gods you’re huge,” Rey moans, unable to stop herself.

Pleasure rolls through her again, the urgency of the pheromones demanding a fast pace. Rey begins to ride him, her movements jerky at first until he helps her find a natural rhythm.

Rey throws her head back, allowing his hands to roam all along her body. She can feel Kylo swell within her, sense his delight at how he can see her shaking over him with each deep thrust.

Once again instinct tells her what to do next and she clenches her inner muscles, savoring the cry that breaks out from Kylo’s lips as she tightens around him.

One of his hands leaves her hips to snake between their joined bodies. When he finds her clit she howls, desire cresting through her once more as she finds her third climax. Somewhere in the midst of her pulses Kylo flips her over, settling her onto her back while he thrusts erratically inside her as he chases his own orgasm.

Rey is only half aware as he finishes within her, her mind in too many pieces to register the threat of how risky they are being right now. Kylo wraps his arms around her, kissing her forehead as the
heat and frenzy finally begins to fade.

“We need to get out of here,” he rasps, his voice sounding every bit as ruined as she feels.

As much as she doesn’t want to leave, and truly so much of her would be perfectly content to spend the rest of her days right here under the horniest flowers in the galaxy, Rey knows that he’s right. Because the blooms are keeping her slick and swollen despite everything, despite the mild discomfort she’s feeling after their latest joining, and if they don’t leave now that there’s a brief respite they truly might never make it out of this room.

“Leave,” she agrees, the monosyllable about all she can manage at this point.

She slides off him carefully, wincing at the burn deep inside of her.

As they go, hurrying away hand in hand from the scene of their repeated crimes, Rey shoots one last reproachful look at the brilliantly colored foliage that had been surrounding them.

Rey should have guessed. Should have known. But she didn’t, and now there was no choice but to work this out of their systems no matter how long it took for them to come back to themselves.

* *

They had barely made it to the riverside room before they were on each other again.

* *

You learn a man best by fucking him.

Rey had heard that somewhere back on Niima Outpost. The vulgar words of the women for hire there had stuck with her for their crass pessimism if not any other reason. Now Rey realizes that, like all bragger talk, there was a certain ring of truth behind it.

She knew Kylo intimately now. Not only his body, though that was certainly a facet to her
revelation, but far more importantly she’s become acquainted to new a part of his soul. Piece by piece their extended lovemaking session had revealed a different side of him, one that she doubted even he knew existed.

Kylo is sleeping now, resting on top of her with his head over her breast so he could hear her heartbeat. He didn’t know that he was doing that, but she’d felt his intention better than he did. That was the first thing that she’d realized.

The second revelation she’d come to was that he’d more or less collapsed immediately after reaching his final climax. It was such a cliché but, for once, Rey found that she didn’t mind. The poor boy had exhausted himself hunting her down. While she had been sleeping, albeit not a restful sort of sleep, he had been prowling the seemingly endless network of caves looking for her.

And then, of course, they had argued for the millionth time. And then all the sex. All of that had effectively tuckered the great Supreme leader out and Rey couldn’t deny her own role in that.

Now Kylo was sleeping next to her. Not fully on top, he was far too heavy and all around massive, but a good sixty percent of her was effectively pinned under his unconscious bulk.

It was like he was still afraid of her leaving. Evening after making love to her three times straight and officially consummating their reunion celebration, Kylo was still terrified of her leaving him. Maybe even more so now because of what they had just done.

That brought her to revelation number three: the closer she and Kylo became, the closer still he tries to draw her in. Tomorrow they will need to have a conversation about boundaries. Or they should, at least. It would be infinitely easier to sweep this whole thing under the rug and pretend they hadn’t been swayed by Stripey Horny Plants into shagging like rabbits in the height of springtime.

That would be the preferable choice, though Rey is quite sure that’s not the road Kylo is going to take.

Time slips by pleasantly, but sleep alludes her. Too many questions that she doesn’t truly want to know the answers to. When she tries to roll over, finding his arm draped across her chest making it a little hard to breathe, but gods he even is pinning her in his sleep, his massive palm easily wrapping itself completely around her wrist.
It brings a frown to Rey’s lips. Boundaries. They will need them.

She wriggle her hand free, lifting her head to regard him before she reaches out and strokes his hair out of his face. It’s not quite long enough for her to tuck behind his ear, but she sweeps it aside as she feels him begin to stir out of his sex-induced coma.

There’s an odd sort of sweet happiness they share as his eyes slide open meet hers. Kylo seems exceptionally pleased to find her naked underneath him, as if he’d been afraid these last few hours had been nothing but a fantasy.

“Rey.”

She smiles at his sleepy, heavy voice. He looks so much younger like this, all blissed out on endorphins and no longer at war with himself and the galaxy. Or maybe that’s the sexhead and bedhead combo. That’s entirely possible too.

“You can sleep longer if you want to,” she tells him quietly.

Her touch trails along the side of his face to follow the outline of his jaw. Kylo hums an answer and dips his head down, lightly kissing her fingertips.

If nothing else, it seems like they’ve come to a treaty about their sleeping situation.

“Revelation number four,” Rey murmurs.

He raises an eyebrow and she blushes as he nips along her palm. Despite their recent oversharing, despite him literally still leaking out of her, this is the most intimate moment they’ve shared so far.

Number four: Kylo is an absolute fool for affection. He’s almost purring, his eyes half closed in contentment as she pets him. His mind is at the most peaceful that she’s ever felt it, and that makes it quite easy to sweep away the background warning that this can’t possibly last.

Then he must sense that she’s having trouble breathing under his weight because he exhales and rolls off, moving straightaway to her side. He pulls her in against him without asking for
permission, tucking her snugly along him and it’s such a natural fit.

He kisses her shoulder and her blush blossoms across the full spanse of her cheeks as her nipples harden from even that mild stimulation.

“Rey?”

Somehow, and truly it takes a man of Kylo’s endless dedication to the sport of groping her, but somehow he manages to simultaneously hug her, hold her, and cradle her face all with the same arm.

Rey hums a questioning response. Her eyelids falling as his thumb traces her lips.

“Rey… are you angry with me? For… this?”

Is she angry? She could be, if she wanted to. Only a mere two hours ago they were arguing bitterly. A day ago the idea of rolling around in blissful serenity on top of his cloak would have been unconscionable.

She sighs, shaking her head. He continues to play with her lips, pressing on the center of them like he’s testing their pliability.

“It’s… no. I’m not.” The words come to her hard because she doesn’t understand them herself. “No, Kylo, I’m not angry with you.”

He knows there’s more to it than that. He must. His hand pulls away then. Rey can feel his surprise mingle with relief to her words.

Then he starts to laugh and she frowns, turning her chin out of his grip to scowl at his from over her shoulder.

“What? I told you I wasn’t angry with you?”
“I know, Rey. I heard it myself. I would never have believed it otherwise. For the first time in our entire relationship, you’re not angry with me. Miracles can and do exist and herein lies the proof.”

Rey doesn’t try to hide how her eyes roll. *Idiot* she projects into his mind. His smile grows wider, a boyish glint lighting in his eyes.

“Ah, that’s better. That’s my angry, passionate Lightsider. There she is.”

Rey elbows him with a touch more than half her strength. The man simply can’t help himself can he? As sweet as he can be when he’s all loved up and Kylo *still* has to be just a little bit of an irredeemable asshole.

Then his hand drops to her hip, rubbing the protruding bone there in circles. Rey’s eyes widen as she feels him begin to stir against her thighs. The only briefly dormant urgency that had been necessary to bring them together rises in her again right along with him.

“Do you need me again?” she asks.

Kylo drops his gaze, his eyes raking across the curves of her naked body. She can see the tension that forms along his temple as he struggles to resist the coercion of the plants that still seems to run so strongly through them both.

Rey doesn’t want him to fight it. Not right now when she feels it too. There’s no point in resisting, not when the reward for giving into this is so sweet.

She turns onto her back, pulling on his shoulders and guiding him to kneel between her legs. He takes his hardening length into his hand, watching with awe as she strokes herself quickly. She’s already getting wet, and though her body is becoming quite used to this new form of use, but there’s still a slight sense of discomfort as he eases himself inside her. Still, his movements are eased by both her slickness and his own essence from only a short time earlier.

“Gods Kylo,” she pants, holding onto his shoulders and keeping him at a slow and steady pace. “This had better be the last time for tonight or I’m not going to be able to walk tomorrow.”

He kisses her cheek, that wicked glint coming back to his eyes.
“Then I guess you won’t be able to run away from me in the morning, will you?”

Rey rolls her eyes once for his cocky smirk, and a second time when he sinks to the hilt inside her and her inner muscles start to pulse in welcome for him.

Somewhere out of the corner of her eye, Rey thinks she can see a hint of a green glow, but she doesn’t care. Right now Rey doesn’t want to think about that. Doesn’t want to think at all. Right now all she wants to do is feel...

Chapter End Notes

Well… how was it? Worth the wait and all the near misses and cockblocking? I hope so, this one was strangely the hardest chapter to write for me even though I’ve written countless smuttier smut before. Dunno … ¯\_(ツ)_/¯

Huge shout out to Picarito for making this picture inspired by this fic: http://picarito.tumblr.com/post/172835632827/i-terribly-enjoy-stranded-on-a-planetics-and It’s absolutely wonderful, I die for things like this so THANK YOU so much!!!!!!!

Six chapters left now. Maybe seven. I think there’s absolutely no way I can completely wrap up our Duo’s ridiculously complicated love/lust/hate relationship so there will have to be a sequel “Book 2” at some point, but I promise to do my best to end this first work in as satisfying a manner that I can. Or try at least. Turn it into a trillogy maybe? There’s a big history for trillogies so maybe elt’s go and follow the tradition...

next chapter:

When you’re stuck in a cave and need to get out but your other half’s looking really fine and you’re probably both going to die in here anyhow so… (ie. your author had longer plans for this chapter but she also didn’t want it to be 10k of sex so gotta break it up into a two parter)

ps. someone asked me earlier in the comments if I’m a professional writer. Haha, sort of but not really. I have two degrees in computer programming which naturally lead to a completely unrelated job in advertising as a copywriter. Seriously, it’s completely and totally unrelated, but those diplomas do look spiffy on my wall. If you’re not familiar, a copywriter (not to be confused with copyrighter, who does something something legal stuff/infringement disputes etc dunno) is someone who writes promotional materials for a wide variety of companies. I specialize in small businesses and do everything from writing an add for their next weekly sale to ghostwriting a blog post or proofreading their existing content. Exciting stuff? Eh, it’s alright. I get by, but I surely hope to not be doing this 5 years from now, I’ll just say that much. One thing it’s helped me is to learn to write a lot all the time even when I don’t want to, so there’s that.
Focus, Kids, You’ve Got Work to Do

Chapter Summary

Where our duo gets clean, gets dirty, and then gets on their way.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Rey had woken up feeling sore in strange places and very, very sticky.

Kylo is spooning her aggressively, his knees tucked right up under her legs and his heavy arm slung over her side. He doesn’t snore, but his breath is deep and steady. It tickles the side of her cheek, bringing with it a brief memory of him panting over her as they lay entangled under the flowers.

Her hand flies over her face, hiding her burning cheeks from the world. They hadn’t just had sex again, they’d had it again and again. She’d climaxed five times in less than two hours, perhaps explaining her bone-deep relaxation that fills every muscle of her body right now.

She feels better, though. No longer climbing the walls with repressed need or boiling over with raging emotions. There is a fear still, but it’s a different sort of fear. Concern for their future more than for how they will get out of here alive. Of course they will find a way, they’re together now. Two of the most powerful Force users in the galaxy. They’re on the same side now, more or less.

Just for now, though. When this whole planet thing resolves itself, Kylo is still the Supreme Leader. That hasn’t changed. She’ll have to run from him, and this time it will be so much harder.

Rather than think about that, Rey begins to extract herself from her bondmate’s grip. He clings and holds tight, but she slowly manages to pry her sleeping captor off of her one finger at a time.

And his hand is healed. The one that he had been punching things with like a thoughtless git. It had been swollen and painful for him yesterday, but apparently somewhere during the throes of her ecstasy she had inadvertently cured it. It makes sense, she’ll reluctantly admit. The other times before when she’d Force healed him had been triggered by compassion and affection. What they’d shared last night had been many things, including those two profoundly Light sentiments.
Still, when Rey feels the sharp pinch inside her lower body as she stands, more than one choice word for her lover crosses her mind. She snatches her ruined clothing from where they had been tossed and shuffles unsteadily away, needing to get clean in body if not in mind.

Kylo had nearly full-on panicked when he woke up and found that she was gone.

Rey rolled her eyes, splashing water over herself as she senses his sudden burst of fear rippling through their Bond. Maybe it was endearing how much he needed her. Maybe, but it was also very annoying.

Then a spike of anguish hits her, making her wince and lose her grip on the slippery rock she had been climbing on. She slips back down into the pool, her head briefly submerging under the cool waters and reminding her of how far she is literally out of her element.

*Check the damned Bond, Kylo! I’m right here!*

She hisses the words into his mind, sputtering out the water she’d inhaled through her nose. Kylo is confused. Sleepy. Groggy. Not thinking straight.

And then he’s annoyed which, in turn, makes *her* even more irritated.

*I told you not to leave, Scavenger. I warned you if disappeared again.*

Oh? Is that how it is? Well she had been about to go out and comfort the spoiled overgrown baby, but if he’s going to be like that than he can just coddle his own ego.

Rey mentally gives him a slap upside the head, shoving him further out of her mind so she has a trace of breathing room. He huffs into their connection, having the nerve to sound offended. And then she can feel him moving, tugging on their tether harder than necessary as it leads him to her.

Their Bond has only grown stronger by all their sex. Now it’s a weight as heavy as his arm had been. Not dragging her down, in fact doing very much the opposite and holding her up, keeping her
spirits unnatural buoyed with unspoken promises. But it was still very much there. A new level of presence in her soul that she hadn’t given permission to become so invasive.

Rey hurries up, finishing her bathing ritual in one of the surprisingly deep pools of blue water that are scattered around the adjoining room to the riverside chamber. Behind her lies the flower room. Regrettably they will have to somehow pass through it as they continue on their way along the tunnels. This time she knows what to expect, at least, and can take the proper precautions as they traverse through.

Kylo stomps into the bathing room, his eyes narrowing as he walks in a stiff line to her.

“I warned you what would happen if you ran away from me, Rey.”

Rey sighs, shaking her head at the lurking menace, and sinks lower down into the water to hide her naked body from him. The room is intimately dark, only the light from the occasional crack in the rock walls to illuminate his face. There’s light below her too, coming from some glowing shell-shaped plants at the bottom of the pool, and filling the water with an incandescent blue light.

“You’ve got a real fetish for chasing me, don’t you Kylo?” she comments dryly.

Her other half, still half asleep and muggy with an adorable case of behead, scowls at her. She can’t tell if it’s a real pout or not, but she doubts it. Still, it sets an unfortunate precedent that she’ll have to soon address. Apparently being only one room away was to far for her other half to tolerate. No. She’s not putting up with that from him.

“We need to get moving soon,” she tells him, making a show of splashing in the shallow side of the pool. “Come on and get cleaned up with me.”

She hadn’t meant it in a sexual way, but she can feel a surge of excitement reach her. Kylo reaches out and she gives up her perch and push off deeper into the water away from where he can easily get her.

Kylo strips in a flurry of precise moments, shedding his layers of clothing as his sour mood immediately brightens with his perceived prospects. Rey finishes scrubbing herself, having nothing other than a clod of cave moss to use as a loofah but finding it better than nothing. Occasionally she sneaks a peak at her bondmate as each swath of skin is bared. Pale. Rippling muscles. Scratches on his shoulders and back that she knows would match the span of her fingers exactly.
Rey clears her throat, dropping her gaze as his lower garments fall to the cave floor. Curiosity pricks at her, tempting her to see how he looks when he’s not aroused. Shyness wins out in the end and she clings to the near wall of the pool, reluctant to go out too far into the glowing blue depths.

Kylo shares none of Rey’s uncertain squeamishness with water.

He dives after her, submerging himself below the foggy surface and disappearing from sight. Rey looks around, feeling oddly apprehensive. There’s light from the glowing rocks nearby, but most of the room is far too dark for her to see his movements through the water.

Then a hand seizes her ankle, and she barely has a chance to suck in a breath before she’s dragged under.

Kylo wrestles with her, grabbing and pulling her to him. His lips try and miss then try once more and find her mouth under the water. Rey bites him, feeling miffed at the return of his arrogance during these last twenty four hours.

They break the surface together, Kylo keeping his arms snug around her as she gasps in a lungful of air.

“I don’t like the water!” she tells him, pushing at his chest.

Kylo holds her tight, guiding them to a low ledge just under the surface of the water that he can rest her on.

“We were only down for a few seconds.”

“Well I don’t like it.”

She dodges Kylo’s next attempt at a kiss and, with great reluctance, he eases away from her enough that she can push up onto the edge and sit there with her knees dangling in the water.
He cradles her legs next and this she allows, his puppy dog eyes as he rest his chin on her knees being too much to resist.

“Sorry,” he mumbles, “I shouldn’t have ambushed you.”

Rey snorts and crosses her arms.

*Fine, but don’t do it again.*

She pushes the words into his mind testily, feeling her anger subsiding as the realization that the great Supreme Leader actually just apologized to her for being an ass.

He moves closer to her, his hands finding her hips and rubbing them in circles before drifting lower.

“Kylo...”

His palms fall onto the outside of her tightly clenched together knees. It was a simple touch, innocent enough in its gesture that Rey could almost mister it for being soothing... if Kylo wasn’t Kylo. Instead, there was that excited thrum through their Bond again. A pulse of both intrigue and growing wakefulness.

“Is something else wrong, Rey?” he asks. “You seem awfully… tightly wound.”

She tries to mask it with a shrug of her shoulders and a slight shift to her posture, Rey is quite certain that Kylo can sense the effect he’s having on her.

“It must be the flowers,” she says, “they must still be in our system.”

Kylo kisses her knees, his hands pulling them slightly apart.

“Perhaps,” he agrees, “we’re only one room over and the air does have a way of circulating down here.”
Rey has to fight hard the urge to squirm. The urge to drag him out of the water and ride him is strong, but she’s also not sure that she could handle taking him on again so soon after their last time.

“Would you like more, Rey? I can touch you more, if that would help. You seem very uncomfortable all of a sudden.”

If by ‘uncomfortable’, he means getting slicking herself and losing track of the time, then she’s guilty as charged. Still, Rey casts a critical eye at Kylo. His lower half is hidden beneath the mirrored surface of the water.

“Don’t tell me you’re not feeling anything either.”

Kylo smiles, his hand sliding between her thighs to rub them along the inside. With a will of almost their own they open for him, letting him spread her legs apart wide enough for him to move to between them.

“Maybe I’m just more used to it, Rey. Being so close to you but still so far apart for this last week together has been… challenging at times.”

He moves closer still, rising to kneel on that low ledge so they’re eye to eye.

Rey swallows, her blood heating from the look of pure desire in his eyes as he watches her. She looks down for just a second to see his erection firming up before her very eyes. His skin is wet with the water, shining in the dim lighting, and for a moment he looks too perfect.

There’s no point in fighting this, is there? Not when the only voice of protest is buried deep in the back of her mind.

Rey wraps her arms around his shoulders, drawing him up on top of her. Their tongues tangle together, both of them moaning into each others mouths.

When he pulls away Rey feels giddy. So happy and downright elated. It takes her a few shaky breaths to realize those are his emotions leaking into her, not her own.
“Go easy with me, Kylo,” she breathes. “I’m not… just be gentle.”

He grins widely at her verbal consent, kissing her again briefly before he starts working his way down the center of her body, leaving no inch of skin untouched by his lips. Rey arches her back, rolling her spine along with his movements. She could get used to this, she really could.

Kylo chuckles against her skin, his breath ticklish against her hardening nipples.

“That’s the whole idea.”

His hair trails behind him, covering her chest in a wave of blackened silk that protocol simply demands she run her fingers through.

*Stay out of my head.*

It’s one of her favorite lines to him. Right up their in frequency uttered with blaming him or declaring her current emotional state regarding his personhood. Kylo should be well used to it by now, so Rey finds it rather petty when he punishes her by sucking her nipple into his mouth and working it between his teeth.

Pleasure with an edge of pain blooms through her, making Rey cry out and grip his hair tighter. He doesn’t let go, though, instead keeping up his intense assault with his teeth on one breast while his hand finds her other and lightly pinches the tip there.

“Kylo!” she yelps, her lower body squirming as heat immediately starts to fill her.

She kicks out, splashing in the water below them.

Then he lets go of her, watching with a highly amused smirk how she grits her teeth together as her harassed flesh begins to throb. He blows on it, his saliva cooling with his breath, and Rey gasps, bucking her hips up against him.
“D-Damn you...”

Her voice completely gives her away. Her needy, uncertain, and perfectly throaty voice. Kylo apologizes by kisses the red, twitching peak of her breast. His other hand lets go of her of her other breast, moving up to cradle her face.

“If I kiss you now, will you bite me?” he asks.

Rey narrows her eyes, her annoyance at all things Kylo ebbing and flowing with the progression of their foreplay.

“Depends. Would you deserve it?”

He cocks his head to the side and seems to think about the question. Rey shifts under him, finding the hard heat of his erection thoroughly distracting as it presses against her stomach.

“I would,” he says with a nod, “I’m quite sure I would.”

“Then kiss me.”

Rey lifts her head up, bringing her face closer and baring her teeth at him. Kylo presses his lips to her forehead, quickly pulling away before she can tip her face up and nip at him.

“We should go soon,” he tells her, mirroring her earlier words. “We can’t spend all day here. Or night or whenever it actually is. We need to move on.”

She can feel how he wants her to argue with him. Wants her to convince him that yes, in fact, they can stay here as long as they both want to. Rey knows that he’s right, they need to get a move on before that green thing comes back and prompts them with gods know what next, but…

But his hand lets go of her face to slide between her legs, and all logical thought flies out the window as he strokes her. Rey moans softly, letting her head fall back and her eyes drift closed.
“You’re so wet already, Rey.”

He sounds almost in awe. Rey’s cheeks pink, reemerging the last time he had said something like that to her. It hadn’t been very long ago, had it?

“Pollen,” she whispers. “Got to be the pollen. It’s still with us.”

Kylo hums, his fingers parts her folds so that his thumb can work magic on her little nub. Rey bites back a whine as he circles it, teasing the bundle of nerves with quick touches.

“Of course it is.”

His hand shifts lower, and Rey bends her legs, spreading them wider to give him the best access to where she needs him the most. The ache inside her is growing greater by the second, enhanced by flashes of memories of their night before. Of how good he’d made her feel then, of how **full** she’d felt as he’d stretched her. Of how irresistible she had looked as she’d rode him, her breasts bouncing with each rise on fall onto his cock.

Oh.

That last one had been his memory, hadn’t it? Kylo had burned in into his mind, wanting to forever remember that moment because she had been on top of him. That hadn’t been just him taking her, it had been her offering herself to him.

“Kylo.” Her eyes open, looking at him to find his pupils fully blown as he watches her face contort with pleasure.

A finger pushes inside her, and time seems to still. She’s still not used to that feeling. The sensation of having something up there. When she would have her own private moments, she usually wouldn’t go inside herself because it was too foreign and her movements had been bumbling and uncertain. If Kylo had shared either of those traits, he hides it well. He keeps his thumb on her, his finger crooking to find that place on the top wall near her entrance.

It’s a bit too much. Rey whimpers, the thick intrusion feeling both welcome and uncomfortable. Her body grips him firmly, trying to adjust to the foreign sensation.
“Rey?” he asks, stopping his movements to watch her.

A blush begins to form, or maybe it had never left her face to begin with.

“Kylo… I’m sore.”

Rey blurts the words out, find it hard to express any situation that he has the advantage over her. Kylo blinks, comprehension slow to dawn across that thick brain of his.

“Sore?” he repeats, then he seems to get it. His smile draws wider, looking both proud and predatory. “Because of me, Rey? Was I too much for you last night?”

This is why those horny flowers were so diabolical. Not only did they bring about her and Kylo’s furious sequence of unions earlier, but they also made her stupid. Too dumb and wrapped up in lust for this man to be able to resist him even when he’s being his horrible old self.

His finger wriggles inside her, fluttering softly, and Rey nods.

“Yes,” she manages to gasp. “It was a lot for me to take.”

Kylo brushes into her mind and she immediately sweeps him right back out. Whatever he had been looking to find in there will have to wait for another time. Her need only grows as she gets used to this, the discomfort fading or perhaps simply being drowned out by more pressing desires.

“Kriff,” she gasps, her inner muscles beginning to pulse.

“More?” he asks.

“Yes!”

One finger isn’t enough. Her body now knows what he feels like. It knows what it’s missing out
on. The foreplay is lovely, but it’s taking too damn long. She wants to feel him inside her, filling her up just like he had again and again last night.

Then a second finger joins in, his middle and his index, and there more than just a faint pinch of pain. A dull ache right at her entrance, and Rey frowns, a soft sigh leaving her lungs and being only half-muffled by her closed lips.

Kylo immediately stops, studying her face. After a moment his hand withdraws, bringing a sense of loss when it leaves her. Rey looks away as he brings his fingers to his mouth, loudly sucking them clean.

She’d said last night had better be the last time for a while. Turns out she didn’t mean it. She’s resettled the clock to right now, willing to make an exception as unrequited desire wins out against the face of reason.

“Kylo...” Rey mewls as she waits, her hips rocking up in invitation.

She knows it’s going to hurt. It’s been too much too soon, but the urge to feel him is becoming overwhelming. It’s a different sort of desire than the heady and all-consuming lust the flowers had instilled in her. No, this is more of a cerebral passion. Through their connection there were no secrets between them during the act. She could feel every bit of his pleasure as if it was her own. She needs to prove to herself now that it hadn’t all just been in her head. What they’d shared had been real. It had to have been.

Rey whines when Kylo leans away, his body heat immediately being missed. He shushes her with a quick kiss, so soft and sweet that Rey momentarily forgets her earlier promise to bite him the next time he did that.

“I want to taste you more, Rey,” he tells her as he pulls back. “I will have you again later, but now I want you to melt on my tongue.”

Embarrassment mixes in with her high emotions, making her want to press her legs tightly together to shield herself. She knows that she’s slick. She can feel her own wetness dripping down her legs, making her twist and wriggle her hips in an effort to relieve some of the pressure building there.

“Try and relax, Rey. You’re so tense.”
She is, her whole body being pulled tight as his breath washes over her damp and heated skin. She closes her mind off from him by a fraction, needing a place to retreat to as he spreads her even wider and buries his face into her sex. Thank the gods she’d washed up before they did this.

“Oh fuck, Kylo...”

He laps at her, one of his hands letting off of her leg when it becomes clear she’s not trying to stop him. His moves his lips around her labia, kissing her in circles. Then he licks along her slit, sliding his tongue from her entrance to her clit and then back down again.

Heat fills her, making her lightheaded with desire. Dimly she hears him slurp, but she blocks that too-raunchy sound from her mind. It feels good. Very good. Different than having his shaft inside her. His tongue can penetrate her with ease, twisting and writhing against her fluttering inner walls.

“More,” she pants, her hands sinking back into their earlier perch in his hair.

Kylo obliges, easing a finger inside her to work in tandem with his tongue. It’s a teasing feeling, intense in its execution but not nearly enough direct stimulation to make her desire crest.

He must sense this, because his tongue leaves her and he takes her clit in his mouth, drawing out a shocked gasp as her nerves burn with intense pleasure. This, this was very different. He body is thrumming, pulsing with her racing heartbeat. A fresh wave of slickness slides out of her, coating his chin and making it shine in the glowing lights when he pulls his face away to look up at her proudly.

Rey stares at him from the valley between her breasts, her chest heaving because there’s suddenly not enough air in the room. Perhaps in the whole cave, even.

“Perfect,” he says, and Rey blinks. “You’ve never looked more beautiful than you do right now.”

Her head is ringing, and it’s all she can do to stare dimly at him, watching as he licks all of her taste off of his lips before diving down.

She howls when he takes her clit back in his mouth, sucking the nub in and very, very gently worrying on it with his teeth. One finger becomes two and there’s no pain at all, she’s so ready for him to touch her this time.
More?

He asks the question into her mind, clearly having deduced that she wouldn’t be able to answer him otherwise.

Not at all. She’s quickly devolving into a whimpering, gasping mess as a third finger eases in to join the others within her. Rey closes her eyes, surrendering completely to this moment. Her bondmate wants this. Her body really wants this. Just let go. That’s all she has to do.

Kylo starts to pump his hand faster, following along with the unspoken clues that she’s both ready for more and getting closer to her peak so he had better hurry. Every time his fingers stroke that inner spot, her body trembles. This is a very different sort of orgasm she can feel building. When she plays with herself it’s sharp and over quick. When he was fucking her all she could think about was how deep he was. Of taking him as far inside of her as he could possibly go and ensuring they both reach their finish at the same time.

This, however, is somewhere in between. The stretch of his fingers creates a unique pressure inside her, her inner walls grateful to have something to cling to. But his tongue keeps flicking on her clit, sliding against it or sometimes wrapping his full lips around her and making light sparkle behind her eyes.

The fact that the light has a faintly greenish tint to it should trouble her more than it does at this moment.

“Close,” she whimpers, tugging hard on his hair in an effort to keep herself back. “I’m so close, Kylo.”

His presence fills her mind at that, darting behind her partial barricade to read her thoughts. Possessive, lunatic boy that he is, Rey knows that he’s insisting on being right there with her as he brings her over. He wants to experience every facet of her pleasure. Confirm to himself that he’s the only one who’s ever made her feel like this.

His fingers bear down on that spot fiercely, never letting up on their pressure of it. So much slickness leaks out of her, making the filthiest of sounds burning her ears.

Then he hums, sending the vibrations directly into her clit, and Rey comes screaming for him. Her
Feet kick wildly as she thrashes, her whole back arching and she shamelessly grinds herself against his face.

Kylo draws out her pleasure, prolonging it for as long as she can withstand. She clenches on him in rhythmic waves, her inner muscles pulsing hungrily against his fingers as they keep bear down hard on her spot.

She whimpers when it becomes too much, her little nub twitching with over stimulation until Kylo lets go of his lips around it. He kisses it once and his face shines brightly with both her slickness and his own profound smugness.

“Good?” he asks, guiding her down to lay on her back.

Rey can’t answer him. She’s trembling, every nerve within her singing praises for the man who just did this to her. When his fingers slide out she closes her eyes, feeling sleepy and beyond content.

Kylo’s weight, warm and reassuring, settles next to her. She cuddles closer, nuzzling against his neck. His shoulder moves, rolling under her head. Rolling again and again.

Rey’s eyes snap open to that. He’s stroking himself. Cuddling her and watching her blissful, satisfied face as he jerks himself off.

“Kylo!” she squeaks, growing rigid with shock.

He smiles, bopping the tip of her nose with his free hand.

“Do you want me to go somewhere else, Rey? If you’re embarrassed I can-”

“No.”

She doesn’t want him to leave. Not after he’d just made her come so good. That doesn’t seem right. This second stage of their relationship is a chance for new beginnings. She doesn’t want to start that off on a selfish note.
Kylo pauses, his movements on himself slowing.

“I wouldn’t mind a helping hand,” he tells her after a moment.

Rey’s heart starts to pound in her ears. She reaches down uncertainly, having only felt him against her palm once before. His cock is hard and leaking, and she knows from their previous times together he’s very close himself. The proof of that emboldens her. The knowledge that he’d gotten so unbelievably turned on eating her out makes her quiet the voice of discord in her mind. Together they pump him, Kylo controlling both her pace and the pressure they use.

His shaft twitches, the vein running along the underside bulging and leading her eyes along the whole length of him. He looks… delectable. Rey wants to mount him. Ride him hard and have him fill her again.

Kylo moans, his throat vibrating against the side of her face as he shares her fantasy.

“Soon,” he gasps, and Rey doesn’t know if he means they’ll make love again shortly or the other sort of soon for him.

She kisses his neck, feeling a desperate urge to make this better for him. His next groan makes her heart flutter and the pace he chooses for their overlapped hands picks up.

He wants her to bite him. The need of it flows through her, and Rey couldn’t possibly deny him at this moment. Her teeth sink down, finding tight corded flesh right below his ear. She keeps her jaw locked tight, holding him in place as he bucks sharply.

Kylo’s cry as he finishes is short, guttural, and resonates throughout her bones. Liquid heat sprays across her body, splashing between her breasts and sliding down over her abdomen to pool in the curves of her sex. She holds Kylo through it, only letting go of her bite on his neck when the frantic rutting of his hips against her stomach slows to a halt.

“Good?” she asks, understanding a bit of his smugness from before.

He laughs, his chest heaving as if he’d just run for miles. When they kiss again, Rey remembers to
bite him. She’s not sure he even notices.

As he catches his breath Rey looks down, surveying the state of their bodies. Her skin shines with his essence, all messy and sticky once more. The curiosity overcomes her and she traces her fingers through it, swooping them in a circle over her stomach and before bringing her hand up to her lips.

His flavor is surprisingly mild. Salty and sweet and not at all unpleasant like she had been braced for. Kylo’s eyes bore into the side of her head, but Rey ignores him as she drops her hand back, going in for a second taste.

“Gods how I love you.”

Rey had thought she was beyond embarrassment right now, but Kylo’s sudden proclamation makes her eyes bulge.

She turns to look at him and shock is written all over his face. He opens his mouth to say something and she shakes her head, mouthing the word ‘no’ at him.

No. No, he didn’t say that. No, he meant to say something else. No. Just no.

Kylo seems to get the hint, his own mental walls politely pushing against her mind and prompting her to retreat back onto her side of their Bond. Their delighted, thriving Bond. At least one of the three parties in their sin is pleased with how quickly everything is progressing now that they’ve simply started giving into its whims for them.

The moment has changed, though. Rey gives Kylo what she hopes is a shy and understanding smile, and she eases herself out of his slack grip. She dips back into the water, washing away the evidence of their latest tryst, and allowing him a few moments of privacy to recover control of his emotions.

“Let’s leave soon,” she calls out over her shoulder.

He grunts an answer, his presence a little more distant from her mind than it had been before.
They don’t talk about it. Hardly talk at all as they pack up and get ready to leave.

Rey knew that she needed to have a serious, mature conversation with Kylo about boundaries. Those things, both small and big, that he did to grate at her. But that could wait until they were away from here. There were only two options that they could go: keep traversing the endless tunnels or swim in the river. The river which had almost killed her and she didn’t want to go anywhere even near it, let alone inside.

Tunnels it was, but that meant that they had to cross through the Porn Flower room.

Rey hadn’t wanted to return back there. The last time she’d gone there she had started off so angry and finished so well fucked. Kylo, naturally, was kind of okay with walking through the Bang Bungalow.

“Wrap your cowl around your face!” she hisses, tying the ruined wad of her tunic around her mouth like a bandanna.

During the heights of their coerced passions, Kylo had literally torn her clothes off of her. Rey had managed to salvage her pants, but her tunic had been a lost cause. This had left her with no choice but to commandeer Kylo’s own outer shirt for herself. To say that he had been pleased to see his once-again lover wearing a garment of his was quite the understatement.

“You look flawless, Rey. A shining jewel in the dark.”

That little line had earned him a sharp kick to the shin followed by a muttering of ‘I am of the light’ that made her frown with the lie of it all and Kylo puff out his chest until she longed to hit him in the solar plexus.

“Perhaps we should hold hands?” he offers.

Rey scowls and pulls away when he tries to grab her wrist. She reaches up and yanks his cowl back over his face, spinning him around and pushing at his shoulder blades to get him moving.
“You first, Lothario. And if you start pitching a tent I’m getting out of there while I still can.”

Kylo looks back at her with a raised eyebrow. Even with half his face covered, Rey can still see him being a smug bastard. He takes the lead, though, striding into the flower-lined chamber where only a few hours ago they had christened their reunion. Rey hangs back, her hand gripping the hilt of her lightsaber out of instinct. Just like she had gripped his-

“Rey? Are you coming?”

Kylo stands in the center of the room, pants notably flat. That makes it worse. That means that thought of her stroking his silky hard shaft had been all on her-

“Rey?”

“Gods! Let’s get this over with!”

Annoyance pricks at her and she charges head first into the space, breathing heavily through the many layers of stale fabric she has her face ensconced in.

The flowers are completely faded. Wilted. Their blossoming has passed and a heavy layer of pollen coats every surface of the cavern floor.

Or almost every surface. There, right against the far wall, is an imprint. To the corner of her eye it might look like a Rorschach print. Or a chalk outline of two mortal enemies doing the naked bunnyhop over each other’s privates. Either way. There’s even a wet spot in the center. A damp area where the pollen has beaded up.

“Oh gods,” Rey mutters, holding her hand tighter over her face-wrap.

She hurries away, taking the lead and letting Kylo follow behind her, trusting that he won’t let her out of his sights anytime soon.
The cave rooms lead on… to more cave rooms.

Did this system honestly span the whole underground of the planet? It felt like an eternity since she’d breathed in fresh air or felt the sun on her paling skin, but some instinct within her was telling her they were heading in the right direction.

“Left,” she tells him when they come to the next split.

Kylo’s hand drifts to her shoulder, half hugging her as they inspect their choices.

“Left?” he asks. “Are you sure?”

She nods, lightly patting his knuckles in reassurance before stepping out from his grasp.

“Yes. I can sense it. That energy. It’s saying go left.”

Kylo could feel it too, though not nearly as strongly. The pull of this energy was more focused on her, nudging at Kylo as a dim second choice.

Now that she was no longer alone, Rey was more willing to see it out to the end. Untangle this mystery for once and all. The specter, or whatever that thing in her dream was, had been leading them onward. Most of the times it would be a certainty that dawns in her head, telling her which way they needed to go. Then there was the light. A flickering shape blinking in and out of their vision from time to time, but now with rising frequency.

The caves were changing too. The rooms becoming wider and more brilliantly lit. Kyber would sparkle along the walls, shining like jewels as these two Force-sensitives walked past.

When they came to a bend in the tunnel, Kylo stops. He turns to face her and half his face is bathed in hues of green. Whatever is beyond this next turn pushes at them, illuminating the way and throwing a stiff breeze along with it for good measure. If Rey didn’t know better, she’d almost swear this green energy was getting *impatient* with them.
“Something is about to happen.”

Kylo’s declaration doesn’t surprise her. She’d been thinking the same thing for these last few hours. The pull in her head had been hinting it to her. Telling her that she needs to prepare herself, but for what she still has no idea.

Rey looks up at him, finding the strength and resolve etched onto his face reassuring as her own doubts begin to rise.

“I know,” she finally answers. “Do you think we’re ready?”

He smiles at her, the skin around his scar wrinkling. The breeze grows stronger, ruffling his hair around his face in a halo of black.

“Ready as we’ll ever be, Rey.”

This time when he takes her hand, she holds onto it. Together they continue on, rounding the bend of the tunnel as the wind begins to pound at their backs.

Chapter End Notes

Whooo! Only six chapters left to go now! Next chapter marks the end of the middle and then 19 is the start of the home stretch ACT III. Big events ahead, so these two need to get all their backlog of swapping fluids in while they can!

Next chapter:

Can’t tell you, it’s a secret.
The Tomb of Varn

Chapter Summary

Anyone who gets where the title of this chapter is from before I explain it in the post-notes has just won the internetzzz and my eternal love.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The winds guided them forward, ushering them into a grand cavern.

No, grand wasn’t even the right word for it. It was enormous. The ceiling was dazzlingly high, arching up with great stone pillars like buttresses several hundred feet above their heads. Below them was the river, the sounds of its powerful waters rushing through the cave system set Rey’s heart racing as it echoed around the walls of the chamber.

Rey couldn’t help but feel in awe. Kyber glittered on the walls, tiny jeweled flickers that catch the green light from every angle. The effect was rather like being caught within a great planetarium, surrounded by the open sky they hadn’t seen in so long and an ocean of stars.

Even Kylo seemed taken aback by the sheer grandeur of the space. He held her hand tightly as they both turned in a circle, taking it all in. The whole room, if such a massive open space within a cave system could even be called that, was tinged with green.

All the light, all the energy, seemed to pulsate through this space. This had to be the source she had been feeling for so long.

“Do you feel it?”

“Yes.”

She does. In fact, it’s almost all that she can feel right now. This compulsion to keep going. It’s been hovering persistently at the fringes of Rey’s mind, but now it has never been stronger.
For everything that this place is, for all of the mysteries and alarming levels of power practically resonating through the air, Rey is oddly calm. A deep sense of stillness overcomes her, bringing with it a sense of curiosity more than concern.

Kylo doesn’t seem to share in her detachment. He tries to hold her tight to him, starting to draw back to the edge of the chamber. Rey fights him, stepping forward and having to use her free hand to pry his off her first.

They are on a raised central walkway. Below them runs the river, not too far, perhaps twenty or thirty feet down. It flows from where they had entered to a dark tunnel on the far lower wall. Being suspended above those deadly water on a narrow spit of rock would be enough to put her nerves on edge even if it wasn’t for the strange aura of this space.

On edge yes, but not enough to stop her from walking on. Ahead of them is a glowing twist of light. A sprawling aura of green that takes on the appearance of tree roots fanning out from a central core. It’s pure light. Pure energy. This can only mean one thing.

“That light-

“Kyber.”

Rey hadn’t even realized that Kylo was still with her, though his voice does little to pierce through her rapidly fogging mind.

The Kyber crackles, sending out waves of the Force but of a nature she can’t fully comprehend.

Kylo catches her hand again, this time yanking on her arm as he turns her to face him. She blinks at him, surprised by the concern etched onto his face.

“Kylo?”

“I can’t feel you, Rey. I can reach you, but I can’t feel you.”

It’s true. She can’t feel him either. His side of their connection is simply a blank space in her mind.
“Like with the cats? Or...”

Her voice trails off before ‘or after I ran away from you’ can slip out. Kylo swallows, squaring his jaw.

Rather than bring up an argument right now, they both turn their attention back to the Kyber core, watching as it seems to change in facets the longer they look. You shouldn’t stare into the sun, every child of Jakku knows this from the youngest of ages, but Rey finds that she can’t look away. It’s mesmerizing, beckoning her forward with its sheer, unnatural brilliance.

“Why does it look like that?” she asks, stepping closer again despite Kylo’s efforts to hold her back. “Kyber isn’t supposed to look like that, is it?”

She’s seen pictures of Kyber crystals and they’re supposed to be just that: crystals. Jagged geometric shapes with sharp angles. This is more of a fluid, twisted form better comparable to flowing ice than a hardened rock. And it flows out with radiating tendrils that extend to the rocks around them, rooting the structure in its place.

“No,” Kylo finally says in answer “it’s not. I didn’t know that Kyber like this existed.”

Such a mystery. Such a beautiful sight. Beautiful, and yet so terrifying. Something has gone terrible, terribly wrong here to transform it like this. Rey knows it in her bones. This has to be what the light wanted her to find, but now that she’s here it leaves her with more questions than answers.

And that’s when she sees him.

At the bottom of the Kyber core is a pile of bones.

No, not at the bottom, inside of the crystal itself.

A skeleton wrapped in Jedi rags is suspended in the clear, green casing of stone. In a morbid way it reminds Rey of a display piece she once saw of a moth preserved in amber at an exhibition fare. Except then it had been a curiosity. This is... what in all the hells is this thing?
“I don’t like this, Rey. This isn’t right. Something evil has happened here.”

Rey agrees with him, but she can’t express how. Beyond all the energy and the coercion it took to bring her here are dark undertones. When she closes her eyes she can sense more. Nuances that her conscious brain couldn’t quite pick up on with her eyes open.


Suffering.

That is what comes through the most. This crystal is infused with suffering.

Suffering that… she is supposed to end.

The crystal vein beckons to her, glowing brighter as the distance between the two of them draws to a close. Kylo follows her, his hand never leaving hers but she pays him no attention. She simply can’t take her eyes off the Kyber.

The light grows. The brilliance fills her, pumping through her blood and resonating within her bones.

When she reaches out to touch it, the whole cavern starts to glow. Starts to hum. Kylo’s voice, echoing and deep, is but a distant memory. He’s saying something to her. She ignores him completely, focusing only only the sight of her fingers edging closer and closer to the clear and smooth surface.

Suddenly she’s upside down. Right side up. Confused. Lost. Weightless.

Every possible emotion hit Rey all at once: joy, elation, panic, fear, anger, despair. Rey finds herself frozen in place, her limbs completely unable to move.

And the ghostly figure of her dream stands before her. it’s him. The corpse who had latched onto
her and demanded that she find him.

She did. They’re here together finally, except that he’s not dead now. His bones are full with his body, his tattered clothes are restored once more, and he’s staring through her as he walks along a rocky passage that seems oddly familiar.

“Who are you?” she asks.

Her voice resonates strangely, sounding more like a meek little child’s then the woman she has become.

The ghost looks at her, and she knows without knowing.

Varn. That had been his name. He was a Jedi from long, long ago. The old order, and he had to have been one of the first human visitors to come to this planet.

Rey reaches for him and he shakes his head, his own hand passing right through hers.

*Follow me.* The order is clear through her head despite him speaking words she has never learned.

He turns and they’re no longer there in that great room. Instead they’re in the tunnels, another part of this vast and inescapable cave system. His clothes are dirty now, starting to become worn and threadbare in spots.

“You were here?” she asks, keeping well back as he stops and sways. “You were here in these caves?”

He buckles to his knees then, his whole body shaking with tremors. The compassion within Rey demands she go to him, but when she gets too near he waves her away.

Two weeks. That was how long he had been here. He had come for the Kyber, and then became lost. Trapped in the maze of passages so far below the surface he had begun to give up on seeing the light of day. Had begun to fear this would be his resting place. His *tomb.*
“Oh.”

Rey kneels next to him, looking down at her own palms clasped in her lap out of respect of his wishes for solitude as he curls around himself and sobs. To see a Jedi reduced to tears, so close to giving up hope...

Rey can’t stand it. It’s a mistake, but she touches Varn’s shoulder. Tries to offer his memory whatever sense of comfort she can give.

He becomes thinner before her eyes. His clothes, now dirty and torn, sag around his body. His beard has grown out, longer than Master Luke’s now and his face is gaunt with both starvation and sadness.

These had been his last few hours. Varn was so weak that he could barely stand up, and when he did he swayed and stayed half hunched over. Still, he beckons her to follow him. They’re by the river now, and he eyes it warily.

Just like she, he had always been apprehensive about water. And he’d spent his final hours by the shore, thinking about perhaps ending his misery a little earlier.

How bad could drowning really be?

Horrible, he assures her. And this time his hand, bony and rough will calluses, finds her shoulder. He uses her to pull himself upright, and that’s when Rey can sense something else within him. Something more than familiar. Something familial.

Rey blinks, staring at his sunken face. There are traces of herself in there. Tiny traits like the shape of her nose or the dip of her jaw. Even after so long, Varn’s bloodline still runs through her.

He smiles. His lips are cracked and pale, but he still smiles.

And they’re back in the Kyber room. The great cavern glittering with tiny gems and that one menacing vein running through it.
Varn had finally broken completely when he’d seen it. This was why he had come to this planet: to find this great and powerful source of Kyber. Unlike Rey, he had deliberately gone down into these caves seeking it, but then their fates had followed a similar path. Varn had brought her here to warn her. This was where he had died, here when he had finally found what he’d been looking so hard for. But what good all the Kyber in the world do if you’re trapped forever?

So he had climbed. Climbed as high up on the buttresses as his weak and failing body would allow him. Then he had jumped.

Mercifully the vision ends before the final impact.

Rey snaps back to reality forcefully, her bones rattling as Kylo shakes her so hard that her teeth rattle.

She pushes him away as soon as sensation and control comes back to her limbs. Kylo looks absolutely panic stricken, pacing around her half bent over body in a tight circle as winds lash at them both.

Rey gets the distinct feeling she had been under the influence of her vision for quite some time. She’s no doubt going to have bruises on her skin from where Kylo had been gripping her in his efforts to bring her back around.

“Kylo.”

Her breath comes out in a wheeze almost as if she had been screaming. That would explain a few things about Kylo right now, how he’s hovering over her, half defensive and half neurotic and traumatized parent to an unruly child.

“I saw him,” she manages to say, her heart racing as the memories of what she had just witnessed play out in her mind.

Even though he’s disconnected from her, Kylo must still be able to sense that she needs compassion from him right now. He kneels next to her, hesitantly reaching out and pulling her to his chest.
“What happened?”

His voice is reassuring even as the winds and a haunting sense of purpose bubble up in her.

“I think… I think he was someone in my family. Many generations ago. That must have been why he chose me and not you.”

“Or maybe it was because he was a Jedi and your kind have a way of sticking together.”

Kylo sounds bitter. Even when he’s hugging and trying to soothe her, he can be such a difficult man to be around.

“He wanted me to find him,” Rey continues. “He died here, and he wanted someone to find him.”

Rey squeezes Kylo tighter, wrapping her arms around his bulky torso as a sadness that’s not truly her own overcomes her.

She sobs out the rest of the story, how this great but foolish Jedi had become trapped down here and eventually starved to death. Or… or how he had killed himself, truthfully, before starvation claimed him as well.

“So he did it on his terms,” Kylo says quietly. “I can respect that, I suppose. But why are you so upset by this?”

The glow, the green light, is all around them now. Circling and swirling through the air in a phantasmal mist that the gusting winds leave untouched even as it buffets her clothing and dries the tears off her face.

“That’s him there,” she points at the skeleton. There’s nothing more to Varn now but bones and decayed fabric. He must have been here for a very, very long time. “Somehow, instead of passing on… I think he’s still here. The Kyber has trapped him. He’s been suffering for all this time.”

Kylo frowns, staring at the suspended remains encased within the crystal.
“What does he want from us? He’s been polluting this planet, infecting it from the ground all the way back up to the surface.”

Something changes when Kylo says that. The winds stop but a dangerous sounding crackling takes their places. Static. Rey can feel her hair stand up, snapping and popping when she runs her hands down through it.

“Rey?” Kylo repeats, “We should go. This isn’t our concern. This pile of bones is nothing. The remains of a foolish lightsider who came here, became trapped, and then laid down and died.”

Rey respects the dead. There were few traditions at Niima outpost, and even fewer that she had followed, but one thing that seemed to unite all of rural Jakku was a respect for the dead.

She is a hair’s breath away from telling her bondmate off for being so rude when another interpretation of his words hit her.

“Say that again,” she says.

Kylo sizes her up. She wishes she could read his mind right now.

“He came here and laid down and died. This was the biggest waste of our time, Rey. Even you have to admit that.”

Laid down and died.

*Laid down and died.*

Rey strides forward, shoving Kylo out of her way as she approaches the Kyber core. She stares at the bones for a long moment, gaining up her courage.

“I’m so sorry this happened to you,” she murmurs.
She lays down on the ground next to it, edging as close to the remains of Varn as she can without touching him. Kylo is pretty much appalled as he watches her, she doesn’t need to be able to feel his mind to know that.

“What in all the hells are you-”

“I saw salvation as I lay dying.”

Those were the words she had seen written on the wall of the cave. Kylo had said it was all in her head, but now they are beginning to make sense to her. It’s all coming together. Varn had wanted her to not only free him, but also find something else as well.

“Come up off the floor.”

Kylo says it like an order, so Rey ignores it completely as such.

She closes her eyes, calming her breaths and remembering her dream and her vision. A new element is added onto it now. Varn had seen the light of the afterlife after his fall. The tunnel of darkness as his spirit had tried to transcend to become one with the Force.

But he hadn’t made it. He had been caught, as he still is now. Trapped between two worlds.

He had not seen salvation. Or not that metaphorically poignant sort of salvation that comes with one’s last thoughts.

No, he had seen something else, and now Rey does too.

High above her, high high high at the very top of the ceiling of this great room, was a white spot. A tiny dot of white light.

A white light surrounded by a tunnel of black.

“I can see the surface,” she says quietly.
Kylo is watching her now with that same thoughtful, guarded expression that he had had on his face when she’d shipped herself to him in a coffin, and just how ironic was that last detail?

“Rey.”

“Come here, Kylo. I can see the outside.”

Kylo kneels next to her, staring down at her face with a faraway look to his eyes. Until Rey snaps her fingers in front of his face.

“Look up, Ren. Look straight up.”

He does. His expression grows dull.

“I see nothing. The ceiling of the cave.”

“Keep looking. *Feel* it.”

The green glow of the room parts, or perhaps that’s just Rey’s imagination playing tricks with her. But when Kylo swallows, she knows that he can see it too.

“We… can’t get up there.”

“We can climb.”

“…not that high.”

Kylo stands, offering Rey his hand up. Now that she’s seen it, the literal light of their salvation, she can’t look away. Hundreds of feet above her head. Maybe more. But there it is: salvation.
“Rey.” The stress in Kylo’s voice finally draws her attention down to him. “You’re glowing.”

She is, the green energy now wrapping itself around her skin. It starts to seep inside her, leaching into her muscles until it courses through her bloodstream.

For an instant Rey feels superhuman. More powerful and full of the Force than she could have ever conceived. Then she understands. Varn is speaking to her and her alone. He is using whatever power within the Force to guide her.

Rey stares at the suspended skeleton. The Kyber that he’s trapped in is… is like a piece of blown glass. The longer it’s been holding onto him, the more stretched and brittle it becomes.

It looks *breakable*.

“Salvation.”

Rey knows what she has to do, and she also knows that Kylo *really* won’t like it.

Tough. This isn’t about him.

Or her, really. It’s about righting a wrong. Setting free a tormented soul who has been imprisoned for far too long.

Kylo thinks that she’s cooperating. As the whole room beings to shake he takes the lead, pulling her back towards the entrance. Rey had been counting on that. Counting on Kylo’s macho sense of needing to always be in charge to take advantage.

The Kyber core must be destroyed. Varn’s prison has to end. There’s only one thing that she can think of to destroy something so old and powerful: another Kyber crystal.

Rey pretends to stumble, losing her balance as the ground rattles and bounces. She knows that her malleable, protective Kylo will stop to steady her. And when he does, she grabs his lightsaber, snatching it from his belt.
Rey shoots him an apologetic look. Kylo simply seems confused, staring at his weapon in her hands. When she ignites it, the room glows red. All the smaller Kyber gems along the walls reflect both colors now, neon green and brilliant blood.

It’s a pity, really. Kylo must have worked so hard on his saber to restore it and use it, but it seems like a fitting end for such a wretched device, doesn’t it?

Because Rey is about to slam it straight into the heart of the Kyber core and she’s not very well about to sacrifice her own blade for that, now is she?

Without a second of hesitation, Rey aims and throws it, channeling the magnificent scope of the Force now nearly bursting through her to make her mark hit home.

Kylo shouts a protest, reaching out to stop her but he’s one second too late. The lit blade flies out of her hand, hurtling right to the green-encased skull that had once been Varn.

What happens next is instantaneous. The Kyber core shatters, exploding both in and out of itself with an ear piercing boom. Rey cringes as the ancient energy trapped within slams against them, knocking her face first to Kylo’s chest.

For a second all Rey can see is green. For half a second she wonders if this isn’t about to be their tomb as well.

What has she done?

How did she think that was going to end?

A second wave, stronger than the first, lashes out, knocking them both off their feet. Kylo lands on top of her and he wraps his arms around her, shielding her from the brunt of the meltdown exactly like he had from the storm that first drove them to these tunnels.

Then it’s done.
Over just as quick as it had started. So eerily similar to what had happened before on the Falcon.

When Rey opens her eyes the room is dim nearly to the point that she can’t see Kylo’s stunned, speechless face.

“Kylo?”

He gapes at her, eyes wide. He’s breathing. She’s breathing. They’re both alive.

Alive and, in her bondmate’s case, very, very annoyed.

*WHAT THE HELL DID YOU JUST DO??*

His squawk of indignation pierces through her mind, ringing across her mental walls until she abruptly shoves him back out.

Oh. She can read him again. The static, the interference, it’s all gone. So is the weight in the back of her head that had been steering her here. The Force within her is still eclipsing her own, natural powers but even that is fading now with each breath.

“He’s gone,” she whispers.

Sadness fills her, mixing with relief. Varn, the foolish Jedi from the days of old who had wandered in here on a quest for more power, has finally become one with the Force. He is finally at peace.

A shiver runs along Rey’s spine, melancholy threatening to overwhelm her as she trembles under Kylo.

Wait… that’s not melancholy at all, that’s the actual *ground*.

They both realize it at the same time, Kylo pushing himself off Rey and leaping to his feet as a new and stronger line of tremors shakes them.
The Kyber core is gone, where it had been is simply a gaping black void of nothingness. Each of its tendrils, each of its roots snaking out into the rocky walls, are fading. When the last wisps of the green energy drains out of them the crystal fractures, cracking and crumbling to dust.

A large piece of rock falls off to the side, detaching itself from the ceiling above them. The white light, that tiny pinprick from up above, becomes a little bit wider.

“This is going to cave in on us!”

Kylo says it first, shock rising in his voice, but Rey’s already onto her feet. The rocky bridge they were on is crumbling before their eyes, chunks larger than she is tall falling off to the raging river below them. Another root of the Kyber shatters, sending pricking shards of crystal dust into her eyes as the grand chamber grows dimmer without its light source.

“Run!”

Kylo yanks her, snatching her arm and roughly dragging her out of the way of a falling boulder. The roof is fracturing in, shaking itself apart as the waves of energy ripple out along the edges of this chamber and beyond.

They break out in a full run, racing back to the tunnels where they came from before.

Then a wind, that same breeze she had been feeling before, pushes them both back. Varn doesn’t want them to go that way. No, he wants them to-

“Up!” Rey shouts, pointing straight above.

The surface is so close but so far. She can see sky now, that vivid electric purple she had come to both love and hate. It’s such a welcome sight after so long of nothing but darkness and green light.

*It’s gone!*
Kylo shouts it into her mind when he sees that the tunnel back is buried under the falling rubble. They’re trapped here now, but they won’t be for long if this bridge gives away. It’s crumbling all around them, large fissures forming before dropping to river.

“Climb?”

She spins in a circle. Their only options are the stone buttressed pillars holding up the walls of the cave. They look like they could give at any moment, but they have no other choices left.

“Climb,” she agrees.

They leap onto the nearest pillar, scrambling and sliding along the roughened surface until they both find a hand and foot hold. Behind them Rey can hear a great rumble as the bridge finally collapses, crashing down into the water and rocks below.

“We were almost in that!” she shouts, looking at Kylo. The light of the Kyber core is fading, another booming round of pops echoing throughout the chamber as one of its final roots begins to break.

UP!

They don’t so much climb as leap, running whenever the angle of the stone turret allows. The shaking only increases, making them fall part way down again. The collapsing chamber both hinders and helps them, the shape of the walls constantly changing so that when one route to the top closes another cracks open nearby.

Rey slips and Kylo catches her. Kylo stumbles, stunned by a piece of flying debris he hadn’t managed to dodge. Rey slams him back into contact with the rock through the Force, latching onto his signature and using his own powers to enhance her own and make the rescue possible.

They climb.

They scramble.
They crawl, hand over hand and foot over foot.

Jump when the can. Hold on when they have to.

Up and up and up they go.

The ground implodes all around them. Their hands lose purchase and then find it again.

They call on the Force to help them.

Rey calls for Varn.

At first he answers, giving her a push forward when she needs it the most.

Then he stops answering. They’re on their own now, but they don’t give up.

Somehow they make progress. The air smells less stale. The tremors below them fall further away.

Little by little.

Finally, after what must have truly been an eternity, after every muscle in their body is burned raw with their effort, they begin to see the light of day reflected in each other’s eyes.

Kylo and Rey escape the underground.

Chapter End Notes

Aaaand they made it! We have officially crossed over into the final 3rd act now. Act 1 was when Kylo and Rey were reunited and chased by the kitties into the river. The river which at that time they had no idea would have so much significance as it later
on held for them. What’s going to happen to them now on the surface? Well, they have to find a way home. How? When? And whose ‘home’, Kylo’s or Rey’s? All of these to be answered very soon, so hang in there with me!!!!

Next chapter:

Fresh air… aint it a wonderful thing? Our duo take a moment to catch their breaths, but that moment may not last too long so they’d better hurry up and start celebrating being alive and not a mole person anymore while they still can...

ps. Since I like to put in insiders jokes in these things and little references that I know no one but me will ever get, this time I’ll clue you all in. this chapter we went old school baby. Like really old school. VGA early 90s anyone?:


The final line: Jill Goes Underground: http://www.bestoldgames.net/eng/old-games/jill-goes-underground.php
Sun in Strange Places

Chapter Summary

Where our duo get frisky in the water part 2 and Rey gets to live out a questionable fantasy during which she has a lightbulb over head head when she’s on her back. Oh, and they have their “talk”. It goes… yeah, good talk...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The last few meters of the climb out were the worst.

Daylight burned down upon them now, the sun hurting her when it had once been her soul’s element. Even after such a short time away, Rey’s eyes had become highly sensitive to darkness and the direct light seemed almost blinding. It made traversing the rapidly widening pit into an epic challenge. So much of the ground had collapsed down into that great cavern below that it felt like they were scrambling through thick quicksand: the more they struggled to reach anything solid, the more their ground under their feet gave way.

By the time Rey first claws her way up onto solid ground, she’s shaking, breathless beyond belief, and pretty much as filthy as she’s ever been. Dirt in strange places. Dirt in her lungs. Don’t even get her started about under her fingernails.

“We-” cough cough- “we made it.”

Rey literally chokes on the words, her lungs burning with all the dirt she’s just inhaled.

Kylo grunts in agreement. He sounds like he just swallowed a Pink Pincushion.

The first thing she saw of the surface had been the sun. The second was the welcome return of the blue grass. Rey flops face first into it, savoring the sweet perfume of life and fresh air. She can still feel the rumbles of the ground below them as it shakes with the final aftershocks of the collapse.

Kylo immediately drops next to her, limbs sprawled out wide and he faces up instead of down. All falls silent other than the labored sounds of their breathing and the occasional odd groan of settling
Rey feels absolutely exhausted, filthy, and still in a state of fundamental disbelief. Did any of that really just happen? *Any* of it?

“Varn...”

“He was such an asshole, Rey. Tricked you. Stupid, stupid Jedi.”

Fatigued though she may be, Rey still flops her arm up and drops it hard on Kylo’s stomach. He grunts, annoyance echoing back into her mind.

Nobody, not even her bondmate, gets to shit talk her great great great… whateverth grandfather.

Scratch that, *especially* not her bondmate.

“He helped us get out, didn’t he? Showed me the way and what I needed to do to get us to freedom?”

When she speaks, Rey gets a mouthful of grass. She’s recovered enough to flop over again, laying on her back and staring up at the sky. It’s purple and neon blue. And that green fringe is still there, a hue tinting the edges of the horizon. So that answers that question. The air feels different, though. Clearer. Less of the fog of strange energy that had seemed to saturate all things planetside.

“It’s beautiful,” she hums, savoring the unexpected sensation of being both alive and outside again.

It is. This planet is *beautiful*. The most beautiful sight she’s seen for… forever, maybe. The sight of clear skies and open freedom.

Kylo seems less awed by the majesty of nature. He lifts his head up to glare at her. Rey crooks an eyebrow at him. If he’s covered head to toe in dirt and plant bits like an inexpensive halloween costume of a ghillie suit, then how must *she* look?
“My kriffing lightsaber, Rey?” Kylo’s voice is thick was accusal. “You destroyed it. What do you have to say about that?”

Oh… right… That.

It takes a big person to say that they’re sorry. Rey is pretty sure she tapped out her grandness down by the crystal.

“Well I wasn’t going to use my own, obviously, but I thank you for your sacrifice.”

Kylo makes a choked noise. Rey looks over again and he’s turning a very strange color under all that muck.

It brings her to a very convenient change of topic.

“Where the hell even are we?” she asks quickly, sensing a litany about to be unfurled her way.

Kylo growls, easing himself slowly up to standing with all the speed of a man who has been through some things and needs to take his time attaining the vertical.

It was mostly a rhetorical question since one place on an uncharted planet is every bit an unknown as anywhere else. They’re in a different sort of jungle, one where from Rey’s unusual vantage of laying flush with ground level, seems every bit as strange as ever before. Here the trees are narrow with huge, shooting leaves stretching pretty much their entire height of at least two or three stories. The grass is that same vivid blue from before, but now tipped with pink occasionally. Other than that one familiarity, wherever these cave systems finally disgorged them is someplace entirely new.

“My saber, Rey. We’re not done talking about this.”

Oh but she is. Whether he is or isn’t really doesn’t bother her too much either way. Still, she sticks her tongue out at him when he refuses to help her come up to her feet.

“Left or right?” she asks.
Reluctantly she lets Kylo take the lead and drag her away from the cave’s newest entrance by her wrist. Maybe she’s just a little bit in the doghouse. Maybe that’s why she let him do that. Or maybe it’s because he so obviously gets off on controlling her and she’s too tired to fight him right now.

Boundaries. Gotta discuss those soon. Damnit.

Kylo tips his head in her direction, eyebrow raised.

“What is it?”

“Do you hear that?”

Rey hadn’t been paying much attention to their surroundings. It was so bright. Too bright. The sun felt superheated on her skin and her mind was still reeling over the fact that they had almost died yet again.

Then she does and there it is, they have their direction.

A river. The river, maybe?

Perhaps. Even if it’s not, right now it’s exactly what they need. Fresh air and fresh water. Limbs all where they should be and her bondmate by her side. They need a plan. They have no plan. Go to the river it is then.

*

Getting cleaned up is a priority.

The river was wide and pebbly, with few of the sharp rapids or deep water that Rey had come to expect from it. Still, she absolutely hadn’t wanted to go anywhere near it, having enough negative associations of those raging currents and certain death to last her a lifetime.
Tired of her procrastinating, Kylo had simply picked her up and slung her over his shoulder, striding quickly towards the pebbly banks and all the while dodging Rey’s attempts to ‘accidentally’ kick him in the junk.

“Macho jerk.”

She squirms her way free of his hold before he can toss her in, opting instead to carefully dip a toe, boots and all, into the dark teal waters.

“Current seems slow enough,” she comments warily.

Kylo is well ahead of her and shares none of her reservations. He strips off his clothes rapidly, peeling them back when necessary and sending dried bits of mud splattering through the air all around him. Rey looks down quickly as more and more of his body comes into her view.

Is this their new thing now? Her getting randomly turned on by something as simple and natural as bathing? Because, if so, that’s kind of a problem. What with this being a sweaty jungle planet and all.

“Rey.”

A yank of the Force against her ankles sends her stumbling forward before she snaps his control on her. When she glares at him, she’s rewarded by the sight of his perfect, pearl white backside as he dives into the water.

Gods.

She clears her throat, turning away from where her other half is splashing about in the waters to begin to disrobe herself. Rey can feel his eyes on her, and his stare is loaded in more ways than one. He’s still pissed off, she knows he is. Maybe he’s justified in that, maybe not.

Still, it takes more than one steadying breath to remove her last few layers. She places them in a low pool to soak, then hurries in, kicking up as much water as she can to hide herself.
Kylo moves in quickly, sidling up to her and dragging her deeper than she would normally want to go. She expected nothing less from him. They need to have *the talk* soon, don’t they?

Strong hands turn her by the shoulders, one holding her in place and the other splashing water over her skin, washing off all the deep tracks of dirt from their exodus. Rey sighs, perfectly content to be served and doted upon, until he steps closer behind her to growl into her ear.

“My saber, Rey. You stole it from me.”

Just hearing his voice so low and dark is enough to make her feel flushed. It must be all the residual adrenaline. All the stress and tension is still in her system, giving her body a whole new set of ideas about how to burn it off.

If she was in the caves still, Rey could blame the pollen or the energy. Now, out here in the open air, it’s—

“Just you, Kylo. Just something about you.”

She turns to face him head on then, her cheeks tinting at the altogether lewd look he gives her exposed chest. When she reaches out to touch him, he snatches her hand out of the air and drags her close.

“I’m very angry at you, Rey.”

Oh, he is? Well then… Time to up the stakes.

“I did what I had to do, Kylo.” She tries not to squint despite the harsh glare of the overhead sun. “I did it and I’d do it again. I’d throw your bloody sword into that crystal a thousand times over if it came down to it.”

He frowns, his lips pulling tight into a grim line. Rey’s pulse quickens. He looks so… enraged. She loves it. She absolutely loves it.

“You just had to pick *my* karking lightsaber, Rey? What, will spreading your legs for me bring it back?”
Gods, is he still on that? That was ages ago, and Rey’s horny now!

“Oh that stupid blade of yours, gods Kylo.”

Rey wriggles in close, pressing her naked and wet body up against his naked and wet body. Kylo’s glare intensifies, the lump of his Adam’s apple bobbing up and down in front of her face. His resistance, though token, makes her feel actually a good bit silly for being the naked gyrator of their relationship instead of him filling that destiny-appointed role.

“Rey, I’m warning you...”

She breaks out into the widest of grins. He’s warning her, huh? That’s good. That’s perfect. That means she has him right where she wants him.

Rey pulls on his arm again. A compliance test. It wraps itself around her back, holding her tightly to him. She’s not even sure if he knows that he’s doing that.

“Kylo? I did it. I stole your precious lightsaber from you and destroyed it. And, you know what?”

She drops her voice low and her eyes to his lips. His grimacing, frowning, plush, delicious lips.

“What?”

His arm tightens even more, now beginning to squeeze the breath out of her.

“I don’t regret it for a minute. Not even one.”

She can hear Kylo suck in a lungful of air at her admission, vibrations rolling from his chest and into her bones. How funny that barely a week ago she would have been terrified to be held by an angry Kylo at all, let alone while naked and sopping wet.
“You’re trying to provoke me.”

A fantasy begins to play out in her mind. Not her fantasy, but his. One she has seen before.

“I’m trying to provoke you.”

“Lightsider.”

His hand shifts down, moving to possessively grab her ass. Next to her stomach his arousal begins to twitch and swell. Oh yes, she likes the feel of that. Her body remembers what they had shared again and again the night before.

Rey’s arms wrap around his neck, trying to tug his head down closer to her own.

“Supreme Leader,” she purrs, savoring every nuance of emotions she can feel through their connection.

Kylo growls, the sound of it low and rolling through her straight to between her legs. He doesn’t like her calling him that, how fun!

Their kiss is messy and passionate, escalating from zero to beyond so fast that Rey can only hold on and go with the surge of desire that rises within her other half. Kylo bites and suckles her lips, nipping at her harshly and stealing her breath away on his path to absolute dominance. Rey gives him that, feeling how that ego of his is being stroked with even the slightest glimpse of submission from her.

You’re impossible, Lightsider.

If you’re angry, Kylo, show me. Take me like you’re angry.

Gods, the words even sound needy in her head. She’s getting dizzy with desire, her hands clawing at his arms for stability as her legs grow too weak to support her own weight.
“Grass. Now. On your back.”

Kylo’s eyes roam over Rey’s body without a hint of doubt or shame to them. His stare is so heated that she can practically feel it, a light hint of sweating breaking out across her skin in anticipation of the vigorous physical connection that was hopefully soon to come between them.

“I don’t want to be on my back, Kylo. Not this time.”

Rey presses that image back into his mind, the one he had shared with her before. The vision he has of taking her when he’s angry. Rough. From behind. Pounding into her with a fury.

When she opens her eyes, Kylo looks ready to eat her alive.

*You liked that, did you?*

He growls low in her mind, the sound of it setting every nerve inside her alight. Even without his real voice, he sounded furiously annoyed with her.

Rey bucked her hips forwards, grinding herself again him. He was already hard. She was already wet. They were even clean now, too. This could be the start of another memorable few hours for them.

“I am angry, Rey. And why in the kark should I give you what you want? Give me one good reason after you destroyed my blade?!”

She’d meant it when she said she wanted him. This new lust is altogether foreign to her, but there isn’t a single soul in the universe she would rather celebrate being alive with more than Kylo.

“Kylo?” She looks deep into his eyes but can only see herself reflected there. “Take me again. Have me any way that you want.”

He drops low and pulls. Rey jumps and wraps, tangling her arms around him as they kiss again, this time no amount softer or sweeter than before. Kylo lifts her out of the water, her legs dangling from bent knees as he stomps them back to the shore.
Rey bites his shoulder. She doesn’t know why, but that sweet fleshy piece of muscle connecting it with his neck was just right there in front of her. Absolutely tantalizing.

The growl he gives her in response makes it so worthwhile. His muscles of his back are tight and corded underneath her fingers as she rakes them over his skin, and then they’re on land and he’s holding her up on her tiptoes while his hands roam along every part of her skin they can find.

“You were very unwise to provoke me, Scavenger.”

She gasps as his hand presses between her legs, one holding her thighs apart and the other cups her mound possessively. One of his fingers, his middle finger, finds her little nub and begins to rub it in slow, steady strokes. He normally… he’s not wasting any time, is he?

“The question is, Rey—” his free hand grips her ass, keeping her still and driving both his arousal against her skin and her own expectations surging “—is whether I should prepare you or not? You seem hell bent on breaking my control, so maybe I should let you?”

“Kylo!” she squeaks, her eyelids fluttering.

His hand dips lower, the finger leaving her clit to push inside her. Despite his words, she’s plenty wet enough that he can slide it in with nothing more than a pleasantly cool burn to accompany it.

“Gods!” she cries out as he begins to pump.

Her legs shake, her body weight suddenly becoming harder and harder to support as he toys with her. Their previous foreplay had been a little more meticulous than this, even during the height of pollen raining down on them and making them sticky in more ways than one. This time it’s different. Something more honest between them.

“Do you like this?”

It has to be obvious that she does. He sounds so cocky. Smug. She shouldn’t allow this. Absolutely not.
Then one finger becomes two and her pleasure spikes, her legs threatening to give out from underneath her and making her weight sink down on his hand and his fingers abruptly press deeper inside.

“On your back, Rey,” Kylo orders, removing those lovely digits from her.

She collapses to the ground, her head swimming with confusing desire. The cool blur grass pools around her legs, tickling her bare and sensitive skin. Rey supports herself on her elbows, looking up at him with wide eyes.

“First your back, then on your knees from behind. That’s how I want to take you this time, Rey.”

Kylo presses her down flat with a palm over her sternum. She fights him when he wrestles her hands above her head. They both seem to be getting something out of her token show of resistance. His arousal is already firming, poking at her naked stomach as they thrash about.

“Careful, Rey,” he warns, holding her wrists with one hand. “You keep this up and you’re going to get exactly what you wanted. Could you take me now? Take me inside of you without any care? Or are you still too fresh and innocent for that?”

His free hand dives right between her legs once more, making Rey gasp and arch her back at the bold move. He shoves her thighs apart, kneeling between them.

His fingers find her slit again, stroking her in rapid-fire bursts that snatch the air right out of her lungs. Rey can feel how wet she is already, and it had nothing to do with just being submersed in the river water.

“Is that what you want, Rey?” he switches from rolling to flicking and slapping her little button, and the pain of it adds a whole new element to her growing arousal. “You have to tell me it, or I’ll stop.”

She can’t help herself. Rey knows that she should, knows how dangerous working him up like this could be, but she can’t stop now. Not when things are getting so interesting.
“Why don’t you just go into my head again, Kylo? Find out what you’re- oh kriff!”

His fingers slide inside her again. Two of them and they trigger an immediate wave of inner flexion in greeting.

Kylo smirks above her, and Rey has seen that look on his face before but never when it came to her. Prey. She’s his prey right now, offering herself up to him to be devoured.

He pushes in deep, all the way down to the last knuckles, and Rey completely forgets that he hasn't answered her yet. He’s not hurting her, far from it, but he’s also deliberately not giving her body enough time to comfortably adjust. She can feel his intent to discipline her radiating through their connection. But, when he tries to add in digit number three and she shakes her head, he stops. Settles for aggressively fingering her G spot until Rey is reduced to a shaking, trembling, gasping mess.

“You wanted to talk about that, right Rey?”

She’s close to coming already, just from him teasing her with two of his fingers. So close to coming, in fact, that Rey doesn’t even recognize he had said something to her until his hand slows and he repeats his question.

“What?” she gasps, bucking up.

Kylo cocks his head to the side, regarding her and Rey doesn’t trust that sly expression on his face. He’s up to something. Even now, when she’s giving him free access to her whole body, her bondmate is up to no good.

“You wanted to talk about ‘boundaries’, was that it? You kept thinking about them but were waiting for the right time. Now it is. Start talking.”

To prove his point, whatever the hells his point may be, his fingers begin to work her again, spiking her pleasure with each roll of his hand.

“Now?” she manages to squeak out. “You want to talk about our relationship now?”
“Relationship? Since when do we have a relationship? I thought it was just meaningless need fueled by the energy of the caves? Or have you changed your mind about that again?”

When he scissors his fingers Rey’s eyes widen and she thrashes, then he crooks and pumps them Rey starts to feel so close. So desperate for more more more.

“I… we need… you…”

Rey can’t think. This feels so good, but so unfulfilled. Emphasis on filled. She wants so much more than his fingers. She wants-

“It’s fine, Rey. Don’t worry. You just take your time and find your words. What was rule number one? What was the first wall you want to put up between us?”

He’s not teasing her. Not trying to draw out her orgasm or leave her at the brink like he did before. This time it appears he’s working her with a purpose, and Rey knows that once she gets off on his hand he’s not going to be done with her yet at all.

“One, Rey,” he reminds her, “what was rule number one?”

“Ah!” Her walls clasp and release, priming themselves for a very focused orgasm. “Stay out of my head! You’re always- fuck! You’re always prowling and listening innnn…”

She has to grab and claw at the grass underneath her to hold herself back. He’d better fuck her properly after this, or she won’t ever forgive him.

“Listening in when you don’t want me to?” he offers, completing her sentence for her. “That seems like what you’re trying to say. You’ve said it before, of course, so maybe that was just my lucky guess. What about two? Surely you’re got more than one in you?”

The double entendre of his final words is not lost on Rey as she crests, crying out and trashing harder and harder in his arms as the waves of pleasure crashed over her. She wanted more godsdamnit! She hadn’t wanted to come yet! Not like this!
“Kiss me!”

She pleads the words in a near sob, and Kylo immediately complies. He lets go of her wrists to cup her chin, holding her head from tossing from side to side as his lips find hers.

She’s still clenching on his fingers as their tongues tangle, and now that Rey’s arms are free she wraps them around his back, marking him with her nails. Every cry she makes, every moan and whimpers, is swallowed by his mouth over hers.

Finally she falls slack, her head rolling back dizzily. Kylo begins to kiss her neck then, his hand still and unmoving within her.

“Two?” he asks.

Rey’s ears are ringing. She’s sweaty and breathless and so, so, so horny still.

“Two… two is—” his fingers leave her, her oversensitive flesh confused by the sudden lack of sensation down there. “Two is that you can’t cuddle me.”

Kylo slowly stiffens in her arms. His head lifts from her now thoroughly-nibbled skin of her neck so that he can regard her with a testy expression upon his face.

“Oh? So should I leave, then? I suppose since you’re done I might as well just go off and—”

“Gods, Kylo! Don’t be such a karking ass all the time!”

As weak as her post-orgasmic limbs are feeling, Rey still forces herself to wrap her arms and now her legs around him tightly to hold him in place. Kylo grunts when their lower bodies meet, but he keeps his own arms locked straight, holding most of his weight off and away from her.

“Don’t just cuddle me all the time,” she continues with an annoyed huff. “Like, after sex is wonderful. But don’t just… fondle me randomly whenever you want to. Got it, you karker?”
Now that she’s come down enough to be able to count from one to two, Rey’s starting to feel rather bothered. Not only was that a dirty trick of Kylo’s making them have The Talk now, but he’d rather ruined what could have been a ground-shaking orgasm for her by being a prick.

Kylo shakes his head at her, one corner of his mouth twitching slightly, and Rey rather gets the impression that he’s already broken rule number one and hasn’t let onto it yet.

“I hear you, my beloved foul-mouthed Scavenger Queen, I hear everything you say. Will there be anything else you desire?”

His weight shifts, rocking from one side of her to the other as he makes himself more comfortable on top of her. Rey’s gaze flickers down to his erection before looking back up in the blink of an eye.

“Don’t stand so close to me all the time. Personal touch bubble, Kylo. Think about it.”

She peels her hands away from his back, placing one on top of his shoulder to pull him a little closer and the other beginning to trace its way down his chest. Kylo watches the movement of her fingers and Rey finds herself quite annoyed that his mind is so closed off to her right now.

“What else?” he says darkly as she reaches his abs. Just a short distance below her hand is his length, and Rey can’t quite build up her courage to full on touch him there just yet.

“Ummm…”

She’d had something else. She can’t remember. Can’t recall anything but the memory of their last time together under the effect of the pollen. After that he had used his mouth on her, but that had been the last time they’d properly fucked.

“We should have sex more often.”

Now it’s her turn to prove her point. She skims her fingers over his length, testing the weight and firmness of him. She wants him to help her. Wrap his palm over her and show her exactly how he wants to be stroked. He doesn’t though. Rather he watches her face, hardly paying any attention to the curious but uncertain hand stroking his most sensitive of parts.
“I think that last one I can live with,” he says finally.

His hands leave her skin, and Rey feels somewhat neglected. His gorgeous, perfect shaft, that thing that brings her so much pleasure, is already leaking. If she had any doubt that he was as turned on as she was at this moment, the sight of his arousal now banishes them without a trace.

“Turn around,” he says, “go onto your hands and knees.”

It’s an order, not a request. In any other time, Rey would never allow him to get away with such an assumption. But they’re roleplaying now, or at least she is, and so she’s going to make a one-time assumption because he just sounds so damn sexy at this moment.

Rey starts to turn, sliding her legs out carefully from underneath him, and she squeaks when Kylo roughly grabs her hips and flips her over himself. The grass is soft and smooth against her skin, their twin shadows casting a deep darker shape from the sun high in the sky.

“You shouldn’t have broken my lightsaber, Rey. That was a very, very stupid mistake.”

Despite knowing now for a fact that he would never, ever intentionally hurt her, Rey’s heart still starts to beat faster.

“You’re angry, Kylo? Then punish me. Show me.”

In his fantasy, he had been rutting into her with passion. Sloppy, messy, pounding movements. Rey knows that, if he were to really take her like that, it might hurt. Or it might feel amazing. She wants so badly to find out which one it will be.

Turns out that, no matter how angry he may be about his lightsaber, Kylo still has plenty of Ben Solo in him. He holds her hips firmly but not too hard, and guides her backwards to him.

Rey bites her palm, stifling her mewls of anticipation as he adjusts himself between her legs. She knows for a fact now how good this will feel and her bondmate, as always, does not disappoint. He presses at her entrance and it still take him a good bit of effort to breach her again. But when he does, it’s bliss. Worth every bruise she’ll have on her arms and knees tomorrow as she feels that
first delicious stretch.

He pulls on her hips then, pulling her onto him rather than push forward himself. Rey whimpers, rolling her hips to ease his way inside her. It serves as a welcome distraction, the sensation of taking him inside of her is much sharper now that her mind isn’t fogged over with chemical lust.

“Ready?” he asks.

She nods, clutching the grass firmly and closing her eyes as she focuses on the sensations starting to bloom within her.

Kylo slams his hips forward abruptly, taking her deep and drawing out a long, ragged moan from her. So much so soon. She has to will herself to relax and give into this, but as soon as he sinks in to the hilt he pulls back. His hands grip her hard, holding her in place as she instinctively tries to buck back against him with each powerful thrust.

Her clit aches, longing for the same affection the rest of her is getting. Kylo must sense that, just like he senses every other part of their lovemaking. One of his hands lets go of her hips to stroke her nub and Rey chokes out a shocked scream as he pinches and holds it.

“More, Rey?” he breathes against her ear.

“More!”

She wriggles her hips in a circle now, discovering quickly that if she arches her back as he pushes inside her that’s when he stimulates both her G spot and that hidden bundle of nerves at the deepest parts of her passage.

The pace picks up again, Kylo grunting with every slam of his hips against her. Every now and then he hits something that makes a dull ache, but everything else is overwhelmingly pleasurable. She’s getting closer and closer with every stroke, her walls tightening and clinging to him as he empties and fills her.

“Rey?”
His voice is broken but insistent. She rolls her head, trying to look back at him but it’s not easy with her hair in the way and her body shaking with his every movement within her.

“What?” she manages to ask.

“Five, Rey: you stop telling yourself this doesn’t matter. This doesn’t mean anything. We both know it’s a lie.”

How can he talk at all when she’s falling apart? He’s right. It’s awful, but he’s right.

“Give!” she gasps, her body starting to spasm again.

He seems to accept this, giving up on tormenting her with his mind games to focus on getting down to business. Rey drops her head down, closing her eyes and surrendering to this moment. Sex like this with him is… perfect. Maybe better than other positions because here he can really lay into her, or maybe it’s just because she’s getting fucked now and the pleasure is building so quickly.

“Kylo...” she whines.

Three more thrusts and a pinch of her clit send her over. Kylo fucks her straight through her second orgasm, his rough and deep movements only enhancing her ecstasy as her body clings tightly to him with every stroke.

He doesn’t let her come down, though. His hand pulls and presses against her clit, drawing out every possible wave of pleasure from her nerves as his own movements take on an unsteady pace. Rey starts to moan nonstop, her orgasms mingling together so effortlessly with every slam of his hips.

Then he stops short, picking her up and roughly flipping her over. Purple sky instead of blue grass fills her vision, followed immediately by Kylo’s lips on her own. Bliss sings along her nerves as he pushes inside and starts thrusting again, a question shoving itself between her incoherent thoughts into what’s left of her rational mind.

“Yes,” she whimpers softly.
Kylo shouts short, his whole weight collapsing over hers. Every part of him holds her tight: his hands on her shoulders, his legs wrapped along the outside of her own.

Rey can barely breathe as he fills her, a round of tight and intense spasms gripping her inner muscles to accompany his own orgasm. This feels so right. Their bodies were made to do this. Do this with each other and no one else.

She loves the heat of him inside her. She loves everything about it, honestly. Even feeling him slowly soften as he nuzzles her.

They collapse together, limbs and lips intertwined. This time it’s her turn to nod off, closing her eyes for a few moments and feeling perfectly content to let him hold her and watch her.

* 

The afterglow is such bliss.

Rey is hard pressed so decide which parts of their new ultra-adult activity she likes best. The foreplay where Kylo teases her until she’s a needy, panting, whimpering mess and somehow she’s okay with this because it just feels so karking good? That lovely, full feeling when he first pushes inside her and her body beckons him deeper so beautifully? When they climax together or apart? Well, yes, obviously that last one is a big hit for them both.

Still, there’s something about the afterglow when they’re a tangle of limbs, sharing both breath and heartbeats, that makes Rey think things. Dangerous things.

Rey could spend an eternity like this: tangled up in Kylo’s strong arms and basking under the dazzling sun. This would be a good life. Freedom from everything. Alas, it was not meant to be her life.

“Kylo?”

He’s laying astride her now, his heavy head resting over his heart and the hand of the topside arm drawing lazy circles around her stiff nipples.
His eyes flick up to hers, a soft smile playing on his lips. There he is. There’s her dopey, lovey other half.

“Wanna go again?” he asks. “I’m still horny.”

She snorts. Mr. Romantic.

“Yes, but… I had an idea. No, not about that—” Kylo hand had begun to wander as she spoke. “About what you said to me when we were- a few minutes ago. About how freeing my relative at the trifling expense of your wretched blade was a stupid idea.”

Annoyance twitches at the bridge of Kylo’s nose and Rey jumps when he pinches her nipple in retribution. She slaps his hand away and holds it in place as she continues with her line of thought.

“That wasn’t the first time you told me I’d had a very bad idea. Do you remember the other one?”

Kylo’s still pouting. Pursing his already overfull lips out over that kriffing saber of his. He shrugs to Rey’s question, going back to amusing himself with her responsive breasts. In this case, blowing on her nipples and watching as the skin there twitches because his hands are still being held off.

“Kylo...” she clears her throat. “DO you remember the other time?”

Kylo pauses for a second. Then he rolls off her and lays flat on his back.

“No, Rey, I don’t. When you ran away from me? Dumbshit move. When you cracked the kyber with my blade and collapsed a whole damn cave on top of us? That was also.”

“No then, Kylo. Shut up. Much earlier, when we were separated after we crash landed here?”

He shrugs, seeming to think little of it.
“You mean the first time you ran away from me? Is that it?”

“Shut up. Yes, then. I’d had an idea of using the energy of my lightsaber to power the transmitter. You told me it was really stupid. Then we had that whole thing of you getting the power cell out of the crash pod.”

Kylo looks up at the sky, a frown forming on his brow. When Rey had first had that idea, it had been a plan of desperation. Now they’re back full circle to stage one.

“So… what do you think?”

He swallows. His frown grows. Rey wriggles her arms under his head, lifting it and sliding under him so he’s resting on her lap and she can stroke his hair.

“I think...” He clears his throat and Rey kisses the space between his eyebrows until that frowning line disappears. “I think that we haven’t anything left to lose, do we?”

She shakes her head. They really don’t. Nowhere to go, a lifetime to get there, so they might as well really ruin their transmitter cause why the hell not?

“It’s worth a shot,” she agrees.

He pushes off of her, both of them sitting up and Rey wraps her arms around him from behind so she can rest her head against his back.

“Do you still have the crystal from the cave? That little piece of kyber that had been leading us through the tunnels?”

Rey blinks. She’d forgotten all about it. It’s in the pocket of her pants which are currently soaking in a pool of muddy water.

“You want to try it first?”
It’s less powerful Maybe they’ll get two shots at this instead of one.

“We probably should get dressed first.” He kisses her palm. This time he helps her up to her feet.

“And we’re splitting laundry duty,” she tells him. “If you think I’m playing homemaker and washing your karking clothes for you… Dot dot dot.”

Kylo snorts, walking ahead of her back to the river banks. The sight of his perfect ass reminds her that her engine is still rumbling.

Maybe… maybe they have time for another round. In fact, they have nothing but time now, don’t they?

Rey doesn’t try to hide it. She breaks out into a full run, catching up to her very surprised bondmate and tackling him to the ground.

Chapter End Notes

Oh how this chapter fought me. End of story jitters perhaps? I’m really not happy with how it turned out, but it is what it is I suppose. I was sick off and on all week so I’m going to use that as my excuse.

Only 3 chapters and an epilogue left now so I wanted to give our duo a lowkey moment before shit goes down. I’ve set the personal deadline of May 24th to complete this fic because, on the 25th, I’m going camping in Croatia for 2 weeks and I want to start working on new projects when I’m there (plus I may not have internet access). I’m also starting to really doubt the ending I have planned, but I’ve just got to remember that it’s all going to work out… somehow...
Chapter Summary

Where our duo swap fluids throughout the night, Rey senses a disturbance in the Force (dum dum dee dum), they try their hand at reaching out into the great beyond, and a certain nemesis rears its hungry head again.

Chapter Notes

Super tired today so it’s rough and possibly error-y, but I’ll tighten it up tomorrow when I’m fresher :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It must have been all the fresh air.

Ever since getting out of those caves, Rey absolutely couldn’t keep her hands off Kylo. The open spaces were playing tricks with her mind, making her think and feel things that she really shouldn’t.

She couldn’t even blame the pollen of horniness. No, this time it was all her. Regrettably.

Point of fact, Rey had never been hornier before in her whole life. Something was happening to her soul, and she doesn’t want to name what she thinks it might be.

Their plan of climbing up high and trying the signal charged with Varn’s stone had initially been to leave on this same day, shortly after they finished bathing. But then Kylo had been hungry for food and Rey had been hungry for him. Both needs were met with gusto, and they made love twice more, first before a fresh fish and berry meal and then again after.

By that time, of course, their dalliances had brought them the onset of night. Before, when they were going over the boundaries and ground rules of their new association, Rey had forgotten to mention a very critical rule regarding their sleeping arrangements. This omission ended up hardly mattering since very little sleep had taken places during those hours of darkness.
Now she lays there, curled up next to his chest by the first in flagrant disregard of both that and rule number two.

“Tell me when you’re done cuddling and ready to kick me to the curb,” he murmurs into her hair.

Rey flicks at his chest, aiming for one of her bite marks she gave him earlier during the throes of things.

“Shutup.”

She’s been saying that a lot to him recently, though it lacked most of the bite of their earlier squabbling. It had become somewhat of a necessity since she discovered that Kylo liked to talk during their lovemaking. Potentially this could have been fine and even stimulating, except he did more than whisper praises or sweet nothings. He would talk in the future tense, of everything they could or would do soon.

It brought up too many questions. Too much presumptuousness and things that Rey isn’t ready to face. Pretty truths. Ugly lies. A mix of the two.

Instead of continuing their little back and forth, Rey snuggles in deeper. Buries her face into his neck and listens to the steady rhythm of his heart. He’s already on the early stages of sleep, and Rey is half inclined to let the man rest and half to manually work him up so he can pleasure her again.

Rule number four. The only one they could both agree on, though now she highly doubted he’d planned on keeping his side of any of them. In short, though, their sex was phenomenal. So so good. Turns out they did have one thing they did better than fight with each other.

The memories help her make up her mind. Rey kisses his neck, savoring the heat of his skin and the gentle sheen of sweat that she had given him. Kylo grips her a little tighter, his head lolling to the side as the battle with consciousness begins to leave him.

They’d both had their own favorite ways of making love. She can think about that, let the memories of the satisfaction they’ve so recently shared lull her into hopefully a continuation in her dreams. Kylo liked her to be on top, riding him while he controlled the rhythm and motion of their hips with his hands on her. He could kiss her like this, and he did often and well. Or take her breasts into his mouth and tease that erogenous zone as well as her lower half. Together they had
discovered that she could have quite spectacular orgasms this way, often more than one right after each other. And Kylo would hold her through it, bucking his hips up into her slack body until he found his own release as well.

Rey liked that position. Liked it very much. However, if she had to choose because honestly they were all very good, but her favorite was being taken from behind. She’d had it in her mind ever since he’d shared his fantasy with her, and there was just something about him holding her down and bending her over while he claimed her. He would try to go gentle, not take her too deeply, and that made Rey have to resort to dirty tricks. Call him names or taunt him as the Great Supreme Leader before he would finally give in to his primal side and really let go. She could come the hardest then, when he would hold her with her head to the ground and her rear in the air while he moved within as deeply as he could go.

Gods, at the memory of that, of how karking blissful their latest coupling had been, Rey begins to feel very much awake. Fresh air indeed. Finally making it out of those beautiful but grim caves had done something to her. Flipped the switch in her head from ‘run from your enemy’ to ‘gotta have him now’ mode.

So Rey wakes him up by sliding out of his arms, an action that alone would rouse the possessive and dominant side of him. Then she settles herself astride his legs and waits for him to rise to greet her.

Very little sleep indeed is had for the first half of that night.

* *

Dawn greets Rey with a spectacular light show of all the colors of the rainbow greeting her eyes and Kylo’s hand between her legs, bringing its own set of fireworks to her morning.

“K-Kylo...”

She’s already soaking wet, swollen and aching, leading her to believe that he must have been teasing her for quite some time before she woke up.

“Morning, beloved. Did you sleep well?”
His other hand strokes her inner thigh and she automatically parts her legs for him, her body taking over what her still half-asleep mind hasn’t fully processed yet.

She nods, reaching out and drawing him to her. Their lips meet just as their bodies connect, and Rey never cease to marvel that it doesn’t hurt her anymore. Not even in the slightest. They’ve been having marathons of sex, constantly tearing at each others clothes and using lips or hands or tongues pr more on each other, but really the number of days of this sort of activity have been limited.

She shouldn’t fit him so well, receive him so perfectly. She shouldn’t come so damn much, because she’s already reaching her peak and Kylo is hardly even breaking a sweat.

He bends down to kiss her then, his hips keeping a fast pistoning motion that he’s learned she enjoys the best. When she peaks Rey doesn’t bothering holding her voice in. Kylo loves hearing her screaming his name. Shout out her pleasure so loud that any remaining forest friends of hers give her a reproachful look before taking off from the screaming madwoman being pinned to the ground by her bondmate.

Kylo works her expertly, using their bond as a cheatsheet to keep her peaking and purring throughout his vigorous thrusts until he’s ready to joining her himself.


Kylo falls on top of her this time, and Rey holds him to her breast, soothing his until the tremors of pleasure leave his body. His breath tickles her skin, ghosting over her heard nipples and making her squirm despite the full repletion filling her body.

“Kylo.”

She doesn't know why she says his name, other than she needs to say it right now. Her fingers rake through his hair, and she smiles inwardly as she takes in the sights of how his inky dark waves part and smooth around her touch.

Kylo comes up with a soft groan, leaning over her and kissing first her lips and then her forehead.

“Good morning,” she says with a giggle.
This is perfect. It truly is. Especially if you quint and let the edges get fuzzy.

He kisses her mouth again. Then her chin. Then her neck before working his way around each curve of her clavicles.

“I feel like I’m on honeymoon,” he breathes, his voice almost dreamy with desire.

This isn’t them. This isn’t their life. Neither of them were born to feel this way.

“We’re not married, Kylo,” she corrects. “To be on honeymoon, we have to get married first.”

He lifts his head up. There’s so much of his father in his eyes.

“Is that a dare, Scavenger?”

“Shutup,” she says instead, not unkindly.

Kylo smiles at her now very familiar phrase, resting his head against her shoulder and reminding her how heavy he is.

A silence falls and Rey can feel an odd shift between them. When she pokes at their Bond, it’s even stronger than before. Hardly even a tether now, but more of a continuous flow of connection between them. Thoughts and feelings and impulses usually pass freely now, so much so to make their shared pleasure even more volcanic, but this time… right now, Kylo has shut himself off from her a little. Numbed a piece of their Bond so she can’t sense what’s on the other side.

“Hmm?” she asks, stroking his hair in the way that she knows he likes.

Kylo sighs. The sound is wistful. She wants to soothe him. Wants to claim him. Wants him to take her and claim her as well.
“Rey?” he lifts his head up, and his eyes are deep and far away. “Do you ever...”

His words fall off. Rey frowns. Her Kylo Ren is a man who talks first and thinks hardly ever. His silence is concerning, especially considering the perfect afternoon, evening, night, and now morning they’ve been having.

“You can tell me, if you want. You might as well, there’s nobody else to talk to but some Pineapples and Squiggles.”

Kylo shakes his head, tired but still bemused over her insistence of naming the planet’s fauna something ridiculous. He clears his throat and her hands slow to a still, her attention pricking as she waits for him to continue.

“We don’t have to actually leave, Rey. We can stay here on this planet. Let it become our home.”

Rey falls still. His words are… tricky for her.

Home.

Home.

“Is that what you want?” she finally asks, kissing his forehead since he’s practically broadcasting his want for her to do so.

“Maybe.”

Maybe means yes. Maybe means maybe.

Rey swallows, a feeling building within her despite her best efforts to subdue it. Truth be told, his idea isn’t a new notion to her. This planet, for all it’s cruel surprises, hasn’t been all bad. In another world with a completely different context, she could have been very happy here. Maybe she could still be?

She doesn’t hide the bite of scorn to her words. Kylo buries her face in her neck, and Rey immediately wraps her arms more fully around him.

“They are nothing to me, Rey. We will be safe here. In time they will forget about you and I and then… and then it will be just the two of us.”

An image fills Rey’s mind. Kylo has it all figured out. He would build them a house somewhere high on what he imagines the mountains they’ve yet to reach to be like. When those horrible chemical storms come, they would be prepared. Maybe there would be another cave entrance, or maybe they’d build their own. A haven for them. A place with no one and no more debts. No Last Jedi. No Supreme Leader. Them together until the end of their days.

“Gods,” she whispers, her throat tightening up, “you’ve really thought about this, haven’t you?”

He nods, his arms closing around her until they approaching the point of crushing.

Rey kisses him again, feeling how part of his soul lights up with every drop of attention she gives back to him.

What he is saying is appealing. Very. But it’s still a fantasy. Dream home with her other half or not, she is still the Last Jedi. It’s her title, and she has made a promise to far more than just Master Luke to live up to it.

“The signal, Kylo. We have to at least try it, even if we both know it won’t work.”

Kylo doesn’t seem moved at all when she says the words, but Rey knows they’re not what he had been hoping for her to say.

“It’s impossible,” she tells him quietly. “It can’t possible not fail. The odds of it working, of it not just blowing up in our faces, are beyond slim to none. It won’t work. But… we have to try. I can’t live here with you in paradise if we don’t try.”
And if it works. *If it works...*

How can Rey leave him now? Not too long ago it was all she wanted, but after these last twenty four hours especially… it will destroy her. Ruin him. It will be hell. She doesn’t want it to work, but-

“But we have to try. Or we’ll never know peace because of what might have been.”

An odd change ripples through her mind. It’s a very strange feeling, like being somewhere very very far away.

She looks at Kylo and he frowns, dropping his chin.

“What-”

“There’s still so many mysteries to this planet, Rey. So many thing we haven’t discovered.”

But we could. We could if we stayed here.

He doesn’t say it, but gods he’s stubborn. Rey supposed she is, too, but not like him. Rey has been blessed with the gift of reason, thank you very much. Enough to know that they have to get away from here somehow, even if maybe that’s not what she wants. Perhaps.

Kylo flexes his arms underneath her, picking her body up and pulling her into a deep hug.

“We’ll figure something out, Rey. You shouldn’t have to worry about anything. I don’t want you to.”

His hair tickles her face. She kisses him, just because it seems like the right thing to do to bring their morning waking back full circle.

“It’s still pretty dark out,” she tells him, we should wait a little while until the sun comes out before we get moving.”
She wriggles underneath him, mindful to twist her hips along his own in a mirror of how he had writhing not so long ago.

Kylo huffs.

“Woman, you are insatiable.”

“I want you.”

“Aren’t you tired? I’m tired. We didn’t exactly get much sleep last night.”

“And whose fault was that, Kylo?”

He raises an eyebrow. It makes him look like a real prick.

“Your’s pretty much. You just kept groping me when I was innocently trying to sleep and-”

She shushes him with her lips over his before pulling back to see her victory in his eyes.

“Are you hands also tired, Kylo? What about your mouth? I know it can’t be because you just keep talking...”

Kylo sighs, nuzzling her before pushing himself up to make some room to work between their bodies.

“Cheeky little thing, aren’t you?”

“Mhmm...” she hums in agreements, pushing his shoulders downward to get him moving.
He’d wanted to get an early start to their day. Mid-morning is still close enough, right?

There was a tone of finality in the air that Rey couldn’t place.

Somehow she felt like something big was about to happen. This was a very different sort of notion than when it had been Varn leading her forward. Rather than a nearly uncontrollable pull, this was a feeling of both restlessness and deep foreboding.

Rey would like to sorely believe that it was nerves about her half-cocked idea of sending a distress signal. Fear and hope all tangled together within her that maybe, somehow defying all the odds, it would actually work?

She didn’t think so, though. This felt different. Like a disturbance in the Force lurking over every horizon as they journeyed up the hillside.

Haven’t they done this before? Same plan, different mountains. So much can change in just a few days and yet stay completely the same.

“You’re very quiet, Rey.”

Kylo squeezes her hand, and when she looks up at him there’s honest concern in his eyes. She can see all the colors of the slowly fading daylight reflected there, and it brings a smile to her face.

“I don’t know if I want this to work,” she admits, turning away from him so he can’t see the truth of her feelings in her eyes.

She pulls her hand free of his, since Kylo hadn’t kept his promise on rule number two even for a moment, and crosses her arms over her chest. They’ve been getting higher slowly but surely, and with the advancing evening there’s not a faint hint of a chill to the air.

“I’ll keep you warm,” Kylo offers, a slight lift of flirtation in his voice.
Rey smiles, snorting and kicking at the ground. He’s hopeless, isn’t he? But oh so sweet right now, for her. Only for her.

Kylo follows behind closely as she turns to keep going on their way, and she again feels his presence fill her mind, searching as deeply as she allows.

Except they only go a few hundred more meters before something catches her eye, and that feeling of malcontent surges up again into the forefront of her mind.

“Do those look like claw marks?” she asks.

Kylo frowns, staring at the deep gashes right at kitty-height on the trunk of the tree.

“Kark.”

Well that pretty much summarizes it. Without the green energy pumping itself into the planet, it’s harder to sense things. She can’t feel where her little jungle friends are so closely until she stumbles across a Squiggler literally in their tracks.

And naturally, of course, Kylo wanted to kill and eat it. So, by the time she’s stopped him, the critter is gone without a trace.

Which means that other things can’t be traced as well.

“Let’s just get out of here,” she says, tugging on the elbow of his sleeve. “Keep going. Nothing for it.” We don’t want to go looking for a fight so let’s not.

Kylo shoots her a sideways pointed look, traces of annoyance clear on his face.

His lightsaber. He’s still salty about that. Rey’s pretty much over it completely, oopsie shit happens, but she has to reluctantly admit that fighting off a hulking jungle beastie with only one blade between them is something best avoided.
They hurry on, pushing their way quickly through the sparse but scratchy underbrush as they head uphill. Nothing for it. After all, the best either of them can do is hope and pray to the gods that the Force will be merciful and cut them a karking break for a change.

Given all the distractions and drama that had taken place while in the caves, Rey had not bothered to take the time to assess the state of the broken signal.

Yes. Still broken. Very.

However, it seems like the extent of the damage had been largely contained within the shattered fuel compartment. Her first adaptation of it from a computer terminal to a transmitter had been an ugly thing, but now its future purpose had been saved by the simplicity of her initial repair.

Kylo hovers over her as she works, fretting silently like a nervous parent as she tweaks and adjusts the housing to try to fit something as comparatively small as the Varn Stone. He’s annoying her in the way that he always does, but he’s also serving as a useful windbreaker so there’s that. And he hands her tools and offers tidbits of encouragement when it becomes obvious that the only piece of advice he can give her is a hearty good luck.

“There,” she says, snapping the remnants of the housing back into place.

She picks up the transmitter carefully, not wanting to risk dropping it as she carries it over to the clearing. They’re up about halfway on a smaller mountainside, and despite the lack of significant elevation, they chose this spot for their first test run because it was relatively clear. No more tall trees to get in the way of whatever signal they could send, if there would be any one at all. Perhaps they could have found a better spot elsewhere, but it was already getting to late afternoon and Rey desperately needed to know if this idea was even remotely feasible.

“Wanna do the honors?” she asks, setting the makeshift transmitter-slash-possibly-bomb down on Kylo’s spread coat as the wind whips at her hair.

“Do you just want me to do it in case it blows up?”
Yes.

Honesty. The cornerstone of any successful enemies to lovers relationship, right?

Kylo seems less than impressed with her candor, but he complies nonetheless. Rey shows him exactly what to press to turn it on, and what to frantically yank out if this goes the way it so easily could.

And the second he activates it, Rey immediately feels the pull. The green energy that had been so subdued rushes back through her. It’s almost reassuring in a way, now that she knows what it is.

“Is it doing something?” Kylo asks.

Well, it’s glowing. Lighting up both them and a good twenty foot radius around them with that familiar electric vibrancy. When Rey looks at the dials, they’re sort of bouncing. The energy of the Varn stone is technically powering it, but in a very unfocused way.

“Turn it off,” she tells him. “I have another idea.”

The transmitter grows still again, but that feeling of power remains. Good news so far, at least in the sense that the device is still in one piece and so are they.

“This is powered by the Force literally, right?” she says, her fingers stroking the housing over the suddenly precious stone.

“Right.”

Kylo seems more unnerved by this development than she, but of course Varn’s energy had always reacted more favorably to her than him.

“Well, here’s what I’m thinking: we meditate. Do that thing we did before where we try to ‘see’ the planet, except this time we try to amplify it.”
Kylo frowns. He looks up at the sky. Rey can feel a pull there, as if the Force is telling them that her mind is moving in the right direction.

“Amplify it?” he asks, looking not especially impressed with her idea. “You mean we use the crystal to... boost our own abilities? Rey, I know you’re excessively attached to this idea of your great great grandfather, but this is pretty far fetched.”

If Rey was feeling petty, she would bring up the obvious contradiction to Kylo deriding her for grandfatherly attachment. But arguing wouldn’t get them any steps forward and right now the clouds are literally the only place her head is at.

“Us, you and me, our powers, the stone, the transmitter. What’s the worst that could happen?”

That obnoxious eyebrow of his raises again.

“Do you really want me to answer that one, Rey?”

Oh she doesn’t. Not remotely. But what she does want is his hands, and he doesn’t fight her when she takes them both in one of her own as she draws him down to sitting on the cold, hard gravel of the ground.

Finding the meditation calm is challenging, especially with the erratic and unpredictable flickering energy coursing through them. Rey wants to believe that some part of Varn is with them now, watching over their last ditch attempts at escape. She focuses on remembering him. Remembering what he had looked like as he had guided them to their ultimate freedom from the caves.

Ah, there it is. The focus that she needs. From behind her closed lids Rey can see the crystal begin to glow. Immediately her scope of perception broadens, fanning out laterally first. Trees below them. Life further. Kylo closer.

His soul burns brightly, their connection bringing her mind into a perfect synchronization with his own as the mental view begins to rise under their command.

“It’s stronger now between us, isn’t it?”
In the flesh Kylo may be innocently holding her hands in his own as they both attempt to clear their minds and reach out. In their shared headspace, however, he’s stroking their Bond almost reverently. Their connection is thriving, and the only thing holding it back from transforming into something unknown and alarming is Rey’s reluctance to permit it.

“I can see us,” she says.

High above them. A bird’s eye view. No, higher than that. Above the winds. Above the mountains.

There’s something there. Something. There.

She can almost see it, almost understand it. That strange feeling of incredible significance that had been fluttering through her throughout the day. It’s coming from the sky, but this isn’t at all like that horrible storm. This is-

“Ungh… a little more, Kylo. Push a little harder.”

She has to grit the words out through her teeth, so much of her efforts spent extending her mind far beyond the scope of their tiny spot in the vastness of the open universe. She’s not sure if Kylo’s helping or hindering her. He’s the dark to her light, which can be very powerful at times, but now is also holding her back.

A little more. She can almost-

“A shape. Somewhere out there. It’s unnatural.”

“Yes. I… I feel life.”

Kylo’s hands squeeze hers, their shared perception wavering in echoes.
She sees it for one second only, but it’s enough. Her eyes spring open in shock, mirroring her bondmate’s expression perfectly.

“\textbf{A ship.}”

That’s what she had felt. What she had been feeling since they’d left the caves. There’s a ship out there, somewhere far far away but still within their solar system.

“We have to climb!” she shouts, leaping up to her feet so quickly that Kylo has to scramble to catch the transmitter before it clatters to the ground.

“No, Kylo! This is it! This is our only chance!” She starts to tug on his arm, more than willing to drag him step by step uphill if that’s what it takes. “We have to get up as high as we can and do it now before it leaves the system! We’ll use my lightsaber, that will make a bigger signal boost!”

His reluctance is obvious, but so much be her insistence. Kylo hesitates only for long enough to summon his cloak back into his hands and obnoxiously yank the transmitter out of hers so that he can gallantly carry it, and then they’re off. Dashing, running, gasping and panting up the steep, rocky sides of the hill. Time is of the essence, and Rey will still need enough daylight to make the necessary modifications to both the device and her saber.

The slope just keeps getting steeper, but Rey is driven with a purpose. They may never get another chance, or at least not for a long, long time. Her inner panic seems to energize them both, reflecting into Kylo through their bond and giving them both a boost of energy as they race higher and higher.

But her panic also makes them reckless.

They round a bend, climbing a sharp corner of the now treacherous hillside, and stop stop dead in their tracks. In the distance, the near distance, is a tiger. A big, big goddamn jungle kitty, far larger and faster than the ones they had faced before.
Without the aid of the kyber saturation coating the cats, Rey hadn’t sensed him until now, but he had certainly noticed them. This king of beasts must have been the one she felt before from down in the caves. Even then, when she was hundreds of feet under the surface, it had been stalking her.

And now it found them, lured by the shining glow of the Varn’s stone they had so carelessly activated. Behind it are three others, all leaping and bounding over the boulders in a path straight towards them.

Chapter End Notes

Well we all saw the kitties coming back, right? Are they going to be friendly? Nope. No, indeed they are not. Good thing our duo can both fight back with their… oh crap…

Next chapter: Tiger king tiger king, burning bright… in the jungle forests under the green sunlight… what do you know, what do you see… but two lost tasty treats, and a perfect opportunity…

(and can you tell why I never ever tried to write poetry? One of the two times in middle school I had to do a poem, I got my sister to write it for me in exchange for doing her drawing assignments. But don’t cheat in school kids, you go ahead and take your D-grade like a champ, Negan style)
Find a Way

Chapter Summary

Our duo reach the Dark Moment of fiction. Then comes the dawn.

Chapter Notes

Do you know what the worst thing in the whole wide writing universe is? Writing fight scenes. They’re the worst, Jerry, the worst! FML why did I put jungle kitties into this story? WHY????!!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There was no time to brace themselves for this fight.

The cats charged in lightning quick, bouncing over the boulders that made up the uneven landscape with a frighteningly elegant ease. Rey and Kylo stood their ground where they were. The field was rocky and sloping, with rocky spires and boulders surrounded them on all sides, offering too limited visibility against the incoming threat. It was hardly an ideal place for such a vicious battle, but there was little they could do about it now.

And, just to make everything that little bit worse, time was running out by the second.

“Kylo, we need to hurry,” Rey hisses, gripping her lightsaber tightly. “We need to send that damned signal before its gone and too late.”

The ship could already be out of the system. Or it could be looking for them, but on the wrong planet or the wrong side of the right planet.

Kylo bares his teeth, his eyes never leaving the massive lead tiger, a King Tiger really, that was heading the charge toward them.

“Focus Rey. Think of nothing else but our decisive victory.”
Rey shoots him a pointed look at the excessively Kylo Ren thing he just said, but matches his fighting stance with her own as she ignites her saber. He’s right, loathe as she is to admit it, this fight is going to take all the powers and skill they have if they want to end it quickly.

There are four of them this time. *Four.* Three smaller ones who dart off to the side, sending Kylo and Rey standing back to back to protect themselves from any sneak attacks. The Tiger King, however, stomps directly towards them. His strides are fast but with a cocky brashness to them that Rey can’t help but draw comparisons to her bondmate.

“*Focus, Rey.*”

His hand grips hers tightly before letting go. Rey breathes, pushing aside her nerves and instinct to run, and summoning the Force into her. In front of her one of the smaller tigers darts past, leaping out of sight behind a boulder where she can sense it lurking.

The Tiger King stands before them, cocking its head to the side with its ears pressing flat down against it head. This creature even more than the others is a true beast. Absolutely massive, and Rey realizes with alarm that it’s not afraid of them at all. This isn’t good.

“My damned lightsaber, Rey,” Kylo mutters. “Sure would have been useful right now, wouldn’t it?”

Oh not now, Kylo. Now isn’t the time. Even if he’s right.

“*Focus,*” she repeats right back at him.

Rocks crumble behind them. Kylo and Rey turn slowly in a circle, keeping their backs pressed to each other and. It’s just them and the King now, the other three smaller tigers are gone.


And then a jerk of the Force and Kylo snatches Rey’s saber right out of her hand. Before she can stop him, he charges forward, racing toward the King and starting the opening salvo.
The King leaps, throwing itself through the air in a path straight toward him. Kylo falls low, drawing the lightsaber up to gut him. Rey braces herself both with the Force for support and her mind for the presumably gory aftermath.

Until one of the smaller tigers pounces out of its hiding spot, almost faster than her eyes can track, and striking the back of Kylo’s legs. He falls to his knees, the Tiger King landing in its pounce nearly on top of him and shaking the whole ground with its massive weight.

“Kylo!”

She shoves at the King with a blast of the Force, stunning him for just barely long enough for Kylo to roll out from under and jump back to his feet. One of the smaller tigers makes itself known, leaping into the circular field that is their battleground and trying to flank Kylo.

The King slashes out it her, trying to use its superior strength to pin her but Rey still is faster. She uses the only weapon she has, a simple wooden walking staff, to push herself off its hide and leap backwards, giving herself a small window of opportunity.

Behind her Rey senses movement, and through the grace of the Force alone she manages to dodge a sneak attack from the fourth cat as its tries to tackle her and knock her off her feet.

To the sidelines Kylo is darting and parrying now with the other two smaller cats, managing to fend them off with rapid strikes of her saber.

Fine. They could have really used two weapons for this. Provided they live, Rey will have to tell Kylo that. She’d fucking up bad.

The Tiger King swipes at her again, surging forward and then back with dazzling speed. Rey falls, tripping over her own feet in her messy attempt to dodge, and the forth tiger is on her in an instant. She slams the staff against its hide, snapping the thin piece of wood into two jagged shards. The cat howls, jumping off her, and Rey sees the edges of one of the staffs ends is tipped with bright red.

The cat whimpers, a wound on its shoulder, and the King sniffs at it before leaping at her again in retaliation.

“They can be hurt!” she shouts, rolling out of the way of its striking claws.
“I know!”

One of Kylo’s two attackers is ribboned with red. Multiple wounds where Kylo had managed to get a strike in, but none enough to kill to even seriously wound the beast. If anything, injuring one of them just seems to make all the others even angrier.

“Why are they attacking us?! There has to be a reason!”

The King tries to pin her down, it’s little accomplice flanking behind her. Rey shoves as hard as she can with the Force, slamming one of the two broken spikes of her staff at the head tiger’s eyes.

It bites the piece of wood cleanly in half, spitting on a chunk and shooting her what can only be described as a mocking glare.

Gods, this creature is having fun with them. Literally playing with its food.

Rey tries to close the distance between her and Kylo, running from her enemies as the need to get the hell out of here, the need to somehow send that damned signal and escape these monsters, starts to overwhelm her sense of reason.

Claws strike at the back of her legs, cutting through both fabric and flesh effortlessly.

Rey howls in pain, spinning around. Her saber flies back into her hands, either thrown by Kylo or summoned back to its owner by the Force itself.

The fight dissolves then into a messy sequences of charging and counters, Rey striking the King or one of the smaller beasts when she can but more often barely managing to hold them back herself.

Above it all, in the back of her mind, Rey can still sense that ship. They have to hurry. This could be their only chance.

The cats change tactics then, as both sides seem to reach a standstill. The Tiger King trades places with the two beasts menacing Kylo. Now Rey has three of her own to deal with.
They’re fast. She’s faster. Barely. Blood is drawn, both hers and there, but this can’t continue. She simply is outnumbered.

The tigers circle her, diving forward or leaping and swiping. It takes every bit of her concentration to hold all of them off, then she feels a sharp pain through her shoulder. Not her own pain, but a reflected hurt.

“Kylo!”

The great cat, the giant Tiger King, has Kylo pinned underneath him. His massive paws are scratching at him, trying to slice right though her bondmate’s throat but Kylo is so far able to hold him with the strength of the Force.

Around her the three cats circle hungrily, watching and waiting for the moment to finish this fight.

Kylo cries out, the Tiger King’s claws finally breaching through his Force defenses and leaving a bloody wound on his shoulder that sinks through fabric and skin and muscle nearly down to the bone. Rey feels it like it’s her own, and Kylo’s pain sharpens her connection to the Force. She channels it inside of her, pushing it out all at once like a tidal wave that physically throws her three circling attackers back several meters.

Kylo tries to match her move, shoving the King back but barely enough for him to scramble backwards from underneath the temporarily stunned apex predator.

This may be their only chance to get away. They need to end this now.

“Kylo!”

Rey deactivates her lightsaber and throws it through the air for him to catch in perfect symmetry. Deja vu indeed. The lightsaber flies, arching straight into his reaching palm.

Only to be snatched out from mid air by the Tiger King.
The great cat leaps up, catching it in its jaws. And then he swallows.

For a moment all time seems to stop. Rey gapes, watching as the physical lump of her weapon passes down the beasts throat.

The King shivers suddenly, his whole upper body trembling violently and his tail lashing from side to side. The other three tigers freeze, watching their leader intently.

Then he belches, burping with a loud roar, as Kylo and Rey stare at him in open-mouthed astonishment.

Did- Did he just-

“Did he just eat my lightsaber?!"

It was the end of all things. The worst thing that could have possibly happened. It was simply impossible.

“Hey!” Kylo shouts as the King straightens and starts to leap away. “Get back here so we can kill you!”

Using the force, he picks up a skull sized boulder and hurls it at the retreating monarch. He misses completely, the other three tigers growling parting insults as they follow their leader, bounding and jumping over the boulders.

Rey is still frozen to the spot, gaping at the retreating tiger butts until all four have disappeared from sight.

Kylo mutters a long, pain filled litany of insults. He rests his hands on his knees, crimson red tricking down from his wounded shoulder. Rey hurries over to him then, her own battle injuries flaring up painfully now that the immediate fight or flight chaos has ended.

“Rey… we’re doomed.”
He looks up at her with far more than physical pain in his eyes. That’s when the full weight of what just happened hits her.

The cat ate her lightsaber.

*It ate it.*

That was their only weapon. Their only way to make the signal powerful enough to maybe, *maybe* be heard by that ship.

It was over. He was right. They were doomed. This can’t be fixed.

Rey falls to her knees, all the will leaving her body in an instant.

They were trapped here now. *Forever.*

Rey was moping and Kylo was angry.

That was the way they had both chosen to handle their feelings. Everything they had fought so hard for had been taken away in an instant, and nobody, Jedi or aspiring Sith or not, could have possibly predicted things would have gone down that way.

For those first few horrible moments, everything had seemed lost.

“I’m going to die on this planet.”

Rey shrugs off Kylo’s attempt to wrap his arm around her as they hurried down, away from the cats and away from what might have been. The sunset is beautiful, shading the sky with a brilliant rainbow of glow. This was supposed to be their last one, not just the first of many more.
“No, Rey, you won’t.”

Her rejection of his touch hurts him. She can feel it. They match, her everything hurts.

“I hate this planet. I hate it here so much.”

“You’re being a child.”

That earns him a dark glare. Kylo swallows and looks down, consoling himself with holding her hand and not letting go even when she tries to wrench it away.

“I hate it here,” she repeats, stumbling over rocks and sticks as stumbling slightly as her vision starts to get blurry with unshed tears.

Kylo catches her. Steadies her. In this light he almost glows with battle fever. She doesn’t know how he still has the energy to fight.

“No, Rey, you don’t.”

“He ate my lightsaber. How did he eat my lightsaber? This sort of thing shouldn’t exist.”

Kylo doesn’t answer her, but he does sling their satchel of their remaining supplies down hard against the ground. Rey winces and wants to reprimand him, but what would be the point? It would just lead to another fight between them, and what good is that worthless piece of metal if they have nothing to power it with?

“We should toss it,” she says, collapsing against a moss covered rock and not caring that it’s making the butt of her pants damp. “It’s dead weight now.”

“Keep it. We might use it still.”
Kylo paces tightly. She can feel the anger within him, coiling inside him like a serpent ready to strike.

“How?” she asks quietly.

They had ran from the tigers, hurrying into a deep canyon that ran alongside the hill where the fight had taken place. Now, without a proper weapon beyond the pointed spears Rey was making, their odds at another attack had tipped very much out of their favor.

“Kylo?” she asks again when he doesn’t answer. “Are you mad at me?”

If he is, she gets it, reluctantly. If he had kept his saber… the crystal in it was cracked. It wouldn’t have been stable enough to use int heir transmitter. Crying over spilled milk, that would be, to quote her master’s master.

“You’re upset.”

“So are you.”

Kylo stops pacing. He stands still, staring up into the sky. There’s a ship out there somewhere, but that makes their loss all the more cruel.

“Rey… they may still find us.”

It’s her turn not to answer. Rey closes her eyes and reaches out. Tries to feel out and above. It’s quiet. Too far away.

“Our ships, Rey. They’re dead in the water but they’re still up there somewhere, presumably floating slowly through the depth of space, provided they didn’t hit anything. Maybe someone will find them.”

A tightness fills her chest at the thought. Someone else taking the Millennium Falcon… it’s a piece of junk, but not to her. They’d probably just scavenge it for scrap metal.
Kylo’s hand comes to her shoulder. He tries to rub her reassuringly, but Rey refuses to open her eyes or she might start crying.

“You’re upset,” he repeats.

Rey feels a change in him. He’s pulling back on his own anger for her.

Oh. So that’s what that was about. He was angry that she was so devastated. That’s rather unfair of him, but she supposes true to his character.

“Rey.”

She feels the air move as he kneels next to her. His gloved hand touches her cheek, his thumb wiping away the proof that she’s losing this battle within her as well.

“Rey… we’ll be alright. Everything will be alright.”

He’s trying to pacify her. It’s all such a lie.

She opens her eyes to look at him and her vision is blurry. She hates that too, on top of everything else.

“How, Kylo? We’re trapped here now. No one’s going to find us. Maybe they find our ships, but not us. They don’t know where we are and they probably wouldn’t care either.”

This Kylo doesn’t deny, because he can’t. Rey frowns when a dark look crosses his face and he shuts her out of his side of their connection.

“What are you thinking, Kylo? I don’t trust you when you look like that.”

He bows his head, then, taking his eyes away from her as well. Guilt. He’s blaming himself for
The wind picks up, sweeping his hair across his face. It hides the outline of his scar and Rey has to fight hard not to reach out and embrace him. They need each other now, but they also both need their space. It's a conundrum cruel irony.

"Rey," he says quietly, "there are worse things than spending a lifetime here with me, aren't there?"

Rey almost whines, his pain reflecting into her so strongly that she has no choice but to give in. She threads her fingers through his hair and slides it back off his face in the way that he likes. He still won't look at her. A well scolded child and no, this wasn't his fault. It was the fate of the universe itself that did this to them.

"Everything happens for a reason."

Another pearl of wisdom from Master Luke. Judging from the deep frown etching itself between his eyebrows, Kylo knows just as well where that sentiment is coming from.

"Kylo," she tries again, sliding off the rock to sink down onto her knees next to him. "You were right. We'll be alright. Somebody else will come some day. We weren't the first visitors to this planet and we won't be the last. Let's hold onto that."

Keep the faith alive. Keep the hope alive.

"So you're not going to leave now?"

He looks so damn young when he stares at her like that, all big eyes and open feelings.

Rey huffs, shaking her head at the ridiculous man she's become so entangled with.

"Where the hell am I going to go? Back into the caves. Never ever again. We're in this together now, Kylo."
His eyes brighten up at that. His whole expression perking up like a loyal dog that’s just been praised.

No. Too far. She still needs to set her boundaries lest he gets any more ideas about declaring things at her.

“We’re together at least until you piss me off, I should say. Than it’s vamoose with you, you can go be kitty kibble for all I’ll care.”

There’s no bite of truth to her words and they both know. Kylo snorts, nodding, and pulls her into his arms. He rest his chin on top of her head and Rey snuggles close. Strictly to prevent the chill from the evening, of course.

“About those cave… I had a thought.”

“Oh gods,” she huffs, bracing herself. “Don’t ever think Kylo. You’re so terribly bad at that.”

His breath tickles her forehead and she snuggles deeper into his chest in case he has some idea about kissing her right now. She’s not in the mood. Well, maybe she is in the mood, but her sudden constant need for him is inappropriate right now.

“We will need a lightsaber,” he says. “There is still a wealth of Kyber down there. Maybe, tomorrow or soon, we could find an easy to access source. Go in, mark out way well, and get a large piece. Use the components of the transmitter to make a housing for it and turn it into a new blade.”

Rey isn’t really listening to him. Her focus is on the rhythm of his heartbeat against her ear.

“You’ve thought about this, too, haven’t you?”

He hums, kissing her temple before pulling away.
“It’s an idea. Maybe it will work, maybe it won’t. But at least it gives us something to do.”

Rey pauses, then nods.

“Sure. Why not? It’s a lot better than my plan.”

“You had a plan, Rey? Are you sure? Because you’re terribly bad at those.”

“Kriff off. Asshole. But, um… my plan was to… follow the tigers.”

“Was there a second part to this plan I hope?” he asks, offering her his hand to help her to her feet.

Rey blushes. She rarely does, but sometimes when she gets embarrassed enough the warmth and color peeps through.

“Yeah, we would follow them and… wait till they poop and get the kyber crystal back that way.”

Kylo stares down at her, his expression flickering between amusement and almost cartoonish disapproval.

“Rey, that was-”

“Yeah yeah, I know. Your’s is the better idea. Fine. Let’s go make camp, it’s getting cold.”

It is. The sky is turning into that deep, imperial purple it does at the early onset of night. Without their lightsabers, they won’t have a way to make a fire.

“Guess we’ll just have to keep each other warm then,” Kylo offers, a hint of that Solo swagger making its way into his step as they search for a suitable place to roll out their bedding.

Rey rolls her eyes, fully aware that he was once again in her head. This time however, just for this
time, she finds that she doesn’t truly mind.

That night, despite being safely wrapped up tight in the arms of her other half, Rey can feel something in her bones.


She can’t describe it or define it, but she can feel it. it’s there and it’s not going away. It hovers over her mind like a miasma. A cloud of fog that won’t let her shut it up no matter how hard she tries to tell herself that they’re safe. They’re fine.

There is no boogeyman beyond four hungry tigers and the rational fears in her own head.

Kylo is on edge as well. They don’t talk much, but not because there isn’t anything to say. With so many threats mounting forces against them, the fear of the unknown has to be the worst of all.

“It’s going to all be okay, Rey. I meant that.” He holds her close as her thoughts she must have been broadcasting start to make her shiver.

“Do you feel that?” she asks.

“Yes.”

This new part of the jungle where they had emerged is cooler than the sweltering damp from before. Last night they had kept each other warm through vigorous sex. Tonight they’re swaddled in all that they have to swaddle with. If they’re going to stay here and make this planet their home, they’re going to have to figure themselves out. In more ways than one, actually.

Rey reaches out with the Force, trying to find the root cause of her unease. All she can sense is Kylo. He’s blanketing her mind protectively, somehow both comporting her and suffocating her
with his need to protect.

“Do you think that ship is coming? Is that what this is about? Maybe it sensed us when we used the Varn stone?”

Rey doesn’t try to hide the blind, stupid hope in her voice. Kylo in turn doesn’t try to hide his curious aversion to getting the hell off this rock.

“You really want to leave so badly, don’t you?”

His arms tighten until Rey has to elbow him to get him to let up. So needy. So clingy. So hers.

“I hate it here,” she repeats, dropping her head back onto the crook of his bent arm that had been serving as her pillow.

“No you don’t, Rey. I know you. You don’t hate it here, or at least not really.”

“Presumptuous much?”

Ass.

“Truthful.”

She breathes. He breathes. They don’t speak again for many minutes. Sleep comes to neither of them.

Then Kylo kisses her temple and a smile curls on her lips.

There he is. Kylo Ren, the great Supreme Leader in the flesh. Except he looks nothing like that at all, does he? He looks like Ben, a scarred, hole-hearted rendition of the man who once was Ben.
His eyes are closed and he’s still reaching, still trying to do what they’re supposed to do which is think of a way to get out here. Rey takes advantage of this moment, of his distraction, to really reflect on how they both came to be here.

Kylo had crashed into her ship, then destroyed it. Livid hadn’t even been the right word to describe how she had felt about that. But then, if he hadn’t been such a cocky, arrogant, short sighted little shit… they would never have had these recent moments of bliss between them.

He had brought them together. This planet had been the catalyst. In spite of everything, these last few days with him have been the happiest in her whole life.

That thought makes it a little hard to breathe, her chest not wanting to untighten enough to allow her to take in air properly.

*Rey?*

“It’s nothing,” she whispers, dropping her stinging eyes back down to their interlocked hands.

Gods how she doesn’t want to leave him. She wants… somehow. Impossible. It doesn’t stop her, though.

“What’s wrong?”

His fingers stroke her knuckles. Rey grips the Varn stone that she had fashioned into a pendant. She holds it to her chest as she steadies herself.

“Maybe we’ll get rescued,” she says, her voice as soft as the moment they’re sharing. “Maybe this will be our last night here.”

Kylo’s emotions burst through a crack in his mind like a sunflare, surprising her with just how strongly he’s been feeling everything but hiding her from the brunt of them.

His mind is reeling, and Rey doesn’t get it. Why? Why is he suddenly so upset?
He clears his throat before he speaks and Rey draws in a breath and holds it while she waits.

“Rey, I haven't asked very much of you.”

She shakes her head. It’s ludicrous. He’s such an irrational man.

“Kylo, you’ve asked everything of me.”

And she’s given it to him. Piece by piece, she’s given him almost all that she has to offer.

“I suppose. But now I’m going to ask you for one thing more.”

Rey turns her head to look at him. His face is hidden in shadow and tinted blue with reflected moonlight. She pushes a beat into his head, letting him know that she’s listening and waiting.

“Rey, don’t leave me alone. If it comes down to it, if we are going to be separated, kill me if you have to, but don’t ever leave me again.”

A day ago there had been hope. Hours ago there had been despair. Now Rey doesn’t have a clue what she’s feeling, but his words are bringing up something very deep in her.

“You’ve been hearing my thoughts,” she says quietly.

“I told you Rey, I know you. You keep thinking it. Wondering how you’re going to leave me. How you can make me let you go. You can’t. It’s that simple. So don’t even try. Don’t put us through that. Promise me that you won’t leave me, Rey. Please.”

It wasn’t until right at this moment that Rey had realized just how far he’d worked his way under her skin. It should be an agonizing decision. It should tear her apart.

But it doesn’t. Rey can answer him with a clear mind and absolute certainty.
“Yes, Kylo. I promise.”

He turns her so she laying on her back and his arms form a cage around her head.

“Say it again, Rey. Swear it to me.”

She swallows. As deep as this moment is, she can’t help but think that here she is, pinned underneath him. It can be a fun place to be.

“I swear. I won’t leave you. We’ll find a way to make whatever happens work.”

“You’ll turn your back on the Resistance then?”

Rey shakes her head. Only a few days ago she would have gotten angry at him for that. Thought that he’d been setting her up all along. Now she knows *him*, too. He’s talking without thinking. Hoping without reason.

“Will you leave the First Order for me, Supreme Leader?”

His turn to shake his head.

“No.”

An impasse as always.

“Then we’ll find another way. Or maybe we’ll be here forever and grow old and die together on this planet. Maybe, if a ship comes for us, we’ll tell them to go to hell.”

He smiles. She smiles back.
“You like that idea, don’t you Kylo?”

“Maybe I’ve been waiting for you to say that too.”

Despite the threat hanging in in the air, Rey feels weightless with happiness. This is all she needed to say. It’s done now.

Or maybe not quite.

“Do you know what else I want, Kylo?”

She reaches up and strokes his face, her fingertips finding the line of his scar which crinkles under her touch as his smile grows.

“For me to shag you silly, you insatiable jungle wench?”

She flicks the center of his forehead.

“Okay, now never call me that ever again. That’s for starters.”

“And for the main course?”

If the air around them is cold Rey has absolutely no idea, because shes’ starting to feel pretty damned warm down here underneath him.

“Now you shut up and get to work.”

She yanks on his hair, bringing their lips crashing together and letting their passions take over.

This time their lovemaking is more tender. She lets Kylo undress her at his own pace. Take his time to unwrap her and sample her. Please every inch of her, using his mouth or his hands or both
to worship her body from head to toe.

Then he uses his mouth on her and Rey can’t even remember her own name, let alone why the hell she had been so upset just a few minutes ago. Who cares if they’re trapped here forever? That just gives them more time to have sex and cuddle. Best of both worlds.

“I only want to make you happy,” he tells her as she recovers from her first climax.

And it’s true. Rey knows that it is. He’s always been an open book to her, she realizes, but only now has she taken the time to read it.

“Make love to me,” she moans, opening her legs for him and guiding him to settle between them.

Kylo kisses her deeply as he takes her, barely pulling his lips away from her own long enough for her to take in a shaky, needy breath. Her fingers sink into the flesh on his back, only half being mindful of the injuries the great cats had caused him.

He doesn’t mind at all, not in the slightest. While Rey would have been perfectly fine with a pounding pace leading up into an explosive climax, literally in his case, he chooses a deeper rhythm like he’s trying to fuck her very soul.

Maybe it’s working.

She can feel him in her heart now, a connection being forged far deeper than their bond through the Force. She’s not going to call it by the only thing it surely must be, but she can show him with her body how she feels about him tonight.

“Look at me,” he tells her, both his hands cradling her face as they rock together.

Rey has to force her eyes open, so wrapped up in the spirals of pleasure he was coaxing her down.

His eyes tell her everything he said to her once before. Rey leans up and kisses him because she can’t offer him her own heart in return. Not yet, at least. Maybe some day.
“I can live with that,” he murmurs.

One of his hands moves down and Rey grins, eagerly bucking her hips up and sinking more of his length into herself. Her mind starts to spin as he strokes her nerve-filled button, pleasure so sharp it threatens to overcome all her senses beyond what he’s making her feel.

“Why is it like this?” she gasps, her body starting to climb to a peak again. “Why is this so good? Is… is it because you were my first? Is that why I can’t get enough of this?”

Can’t get enough of him, she means to say. Not at all, but feeling this much pleasure at the hands of her enemy is so much better than she could have ever imagined.

“No, Rey.” He pinches her nub and she has to bite into his shoulder to hold back her scream. “I may have been your first, but I’m also going to be your last.”

Rey nods, not sure of what she’s agreeing to, but it all sounds so nice, doesn’t it?

She tries to keep her eyes open for him then, because it’s what he wanted. She wants to give him everything he wanted. A thank you for putting up with her just like she’s had to put up with him.

When they come, they come together. Rey is first, the tight spasms of pleasure rolling through her body bringing him with her only moments later. She loves the face he makes as he fills her. Parts pain, pleasure, devotion, and worship all rolled up into one.

She doesn’t want this moment to end, so she holds on tight to him even when they’re both done. Their arms and legs tangle together as they kiss, both their bodies sweaty and sticky but neither of them care.

Rey feels the second their baby is conceived, but she doesn’t fully understand it until a moment later.

She knew that something had happened, but it took her mind two complete thoughts to realize the full impact.
The first thought was very much one of confusion and an alarming sense of “what is that strange feeling?”.

The second was spontaneous recognition. She was pregnant. This concept flowing seamlessly into a sudden and all-consuming need to hide it at all cost from the father.

The father who just so happened to be still inside her and had caught onto the edges of her revelation by the time she’d reached thought three: what the hell is she going to do now?

Kylo pulls away from her then, his eyes wide and full of absolute shock.

Rey tries to cover it up. Tries to slam the barricades to her mind shut but of course it’s far too late by then.

“Rey!”

He doesn’t so much shout it as choke it.

She was pregnant.

That didn’t just happen. She was mistaken.

But she wasn’t and it had.

Oh... gods.

“You didn’t want me to know.”

Kylo’s stunned voice is laced with sudden pain. Rey pushes at his chest, needing to get him out of her as her mind skips steps and threatens to stall completely.
He stares at her, unmovign and grasping at their suddenly quiet connection.

“Get off me,” she says, pushing harder until he gets the hint.

“What didn’t you want me to know?”

He sounds so hurt. Rey grits her teeth as he slides out, a warm trickle leaving her along with him.

This shouldn’t… this…

“What have we just done?” she asks out loud.

Kylo doesn’t answer. He watches silently as shock rolls through her. Rey can’t think. Can’t even form a sentence in her mind.

Out of pure natural instinct, her hands come down to press against her lower stomach. This wasn’t a dream. This was real. This really just happened.

“Rey.”

His hand falls over hers and she looks at him. He feels it, too. She knows he does.

Panic is the next, natural emotion. It hits her hard, making her scramble to her feet.

“Kylo!”

She doesn’t know what she’s trying to say to him. She doesn’t know much of anything right now other than they should have been more careful.
She may be a wreck, but Kylo seems oddly calm about all of this. He watches her quietly as she struggles to put on her clothes, fumbling in the near-darkness with the intricacies and clasps of his shirt which she still has to wear.

Then she comes to a standstill, her brief panic-laden tantrum running its course. She even lets him embrace her, though it’s hardly a sweet or romantic gesture since he’s naked and still half-hard and she’s a teary-eyed wreck who’s probably wearing her clothing on backwards.

“You’re smiling,” she says, spitting it like an accusation as she twists around in his iron grip.

“I’m astonished, Rey.”

“Put some clothes on,” she says, trying to draw away.

“Why?”

Rey yanks her hands free of his and snatches up his clothing. She shoves it against his chest and backs up, hugging herself. Kylo still is smiling, watching her with open-eyed wonder as he dresses.

“Stop that,” she snaps, starting to pace. “Stop looking so happy.”

This is a dream. This has to be a dream. Maybe this whole thing. Maybe none of it had really happened.

Kylo laughs then. A foreign and purely happy sort of sound that she’s never heard from him before.

“But I am happy, Rey. And so are you.”

Happy? How can she be when she feels so disconnected? It’s like she watching herself when she meditates, except now it’s the first foundations of a new life that she’s seeing.

Kylo seizes her from behind, hugging her again and this time Rey grows limp as numbness sets in.
From Kylo’s side of the bond she can feel his surprise give way to rising excitement.

“Kylo.”

Stop being you. Just stop being you.

“Rey… be happy along with me. Please.”

Rey sucks in a shaky breath. The planet must be running out of oxygen. She must be hallucinating. That is what’s really happening. She’s just losing her mind, that’s all.

“How the hell can you be so calm about this?!”

Yes. Losing her mind. That would be fine. Infinitely better than having a… than going through this alone on a jungle world.

“Rey, my girlfriend is pregnant. I’m going to be a father. I’m happy but I need you to be too.”

Rey can’t even contradict him on the obvious oversight of him calling her his ‘girlfriend’. She places her head in her hands, choking back another erratic breath, then claws her fingers through her hair in an effort to ground herself.

“Maybe it’s not yours,” she mutters through tightly clenched teeth. “Maybe I’ll make you take a paternity test.”

Kylo laughs then. Rey isn’t sure whether she wants to scream or cry or join him.

This has all happened so fast.

Too fast. She need space. She needs to clear her head and come to terms with this.
“I need a few minutes alone.”

His arms tighten and she feels him shake his head.

“Kylo… Please.”

“You’re going to run away again. You’re going to take my baby and run away.”

*Baby.* Gods, that word sounds so strange. Rey much prefers to think of what’s going on inside her body with of the abstract and medically correct terminology that appropriately distances her from the truth.

“Don’t be a karking idiot, Kylo. I meant it when I said I was going to stay with you, no matter what. I’m not going *anywhere.* Except… over there.” She points at a dark spanse of shadows where she can cry and freak out and he won’t be able to see her. “Let go of me.”

“You’re upset.”

He sounds surprised. His arms slacken, though, enough for her to step out of them.

“Of course I’m upset, Kylo. This wasn’t planned. This is a… what if there’s a problem? What if I need help? We’re trapped here, Kylo. Anything could happen.”

She turns to face him and any trace of his previous joy is gone. Replaced by deeply etched concern.

“Oh you hadn’t thought about that, had you? You’re already picking out baby names and you hadn’t even thought that I’m going to have to go through something, have you?”

Rey can’t help but lash out even if she knows she shouldn’t. They’re both handling this in their own ways, just that his happens to be the most obnoxious and unsupportive way she absolutely doesn’t need right now.

Kylo bends down to kiss the top of her trembling head. Rey’s mind is ringing with a million
different thoughts but she allows him this. His hands go to her shoulders than up and over her head.

“Don’t go far,” he whispers, stepping back.

Rey turns and walks to the edge of the canyon where the shadows are the deepest and waits for the tears to come. They don’t.

Deep inside her she can feel… something. Something different and terrifying and powerful. Something that she will have to make peace with very quickly. A fission that will so soon become a living organism she has to somehow care for and find a way to keep alive.

And she has to do it here. Here on a planet that changes with every breath. A planet that fogs her brain with its pure energy. It’s not safe to have a child here. There’s so much they will have to do. To prepare for.

But what if this is the best place? Truth be told, the fruit of the union of a Jedi and the Supreme Leader will never be safe anywhere. Perhaps here, on the very ends of the universe, it might be the best place after all.

And yet… what if something goes wrong?

It could happen. Easily. And she would never forgive herself and neither would Kylo.

So… what does that leave her with? The decision is clear after all. She has to get them out of here. All of them.

Find a way. There must be a way. But does she even want it? Does she even want any of this?

These are the thoughts that keep her pacing. Keep her mind swirling and swirling until the heaviest, most oppressive of aches fills her head with pain and her soul with such weariness.

But, true to her word, she comes back to him. Goes back to Kylo, ready to crawl back into his arms and sleep forever. If she never has to wake up, she never has to face the truths that await her.
Except Kylo was up to his own plans while she had been prowling in the shadows.

When she returns to him, the stone of Varn is in his hands, glowing bright green. He had taken it from her, slyly pulled her necklace away and her mind had been in too many pieces for her to even notice such a trivial thing.

“Kylo?” she asks, her suspicions rising. “What in the hells are you doing?”

He opens his eyes. Meditating, it would seem, but she wants to hear it from his own lips.

“I will take care of you, Rey. Both of you. You made a promise to me, and now I’m making this to the two of you.”

The pressure in her mind suddenly lifts and Rey realizes too late that it hadn’t been her shock at all that had been fogging her brain. It had been him. Kylo had been hiding something from her and hiding it so well she hadn’t had even a clue.

“What are you-”

“Look up.”

He stands, closing the distance. Rey snatches the Varn stone out of his hand and drops it over her head, cradling it protectively to her chest. This is hers, godsdamnit. Whatever he’s up to now, he doesn’t get to just take one of her only mementos and do whatever he pleases with it.

And then she feels it again. That disturbance in the Force. She had forgotten completely about it, but now it’s suddenly gotten louder.

Kylo’s hands fall onto her yet again and Rey turns in his arms to look up at him. He is staring at the sky, his face completely emotionless.

For a moment Rey doesn’t see it. Then she does. A glow in the clouds. A light beyond the moon
and it’s getting bigger.

“The ship. You called it.”

Her voice is thin. Confused. Lost. His hands tighten.

“Yes.”

“...but I thought you wanted to stay?”

Instead of answering, Kylo pulls her tight to him. His hand steadies the back of her head and holds her down so she can’t see the light as it comes closer. It’s then that she can feel wetness against her temple.

“Why are you crying?” she whispers, suddenly caring far less about their impending rescue then she had moments before.

“I love you, Rey.”

Something is wrong. All she can feel from him is agony. Why? Why is he acting like this?

She tries to make herself grow stiff in his arms. Tries to make herself reject him in some way. But she can’t. Her soul won’t allow her to when he’s once again being torn apart, this time right within her very arms.

“Kylo-”

“No, Rey. I mean it. I love you so much. I can’t be without you. I love you both so much.”

Rey’s heart stops beating. Or at least she feels like it does.
Her throat tightens as her mind races, trying to solve the puzzle that is the suddenly desperate man hanging on to her like it’s for dear life.

“Kylo… we can talk about this-”

“I’m going to hold you to it, Rey.”

His voice is harsh and choked, and it’s making her own strained just as well.

He’s more than afraid. She knows him better than that by now. He’s terrified. This isn’t like him, not at all.

The true meaning hits her all at once, striking her mind with such an impact that her legs almost buckle out from underneath her and she would have fallen if Kylo hadn’t been there to catch her.

“The ship,” the pieces snap together almost painfully. “You know who it is, don’t you?”

Kylo nods, spreading shed tears messily into her hairline.

“I suspected yesterday before… before everything. As soon as we felt that ship I had my doubts.”

Feeling starts to drain from her limbs with the weight of his words.

“It’s them, isn’t it? It’s your side. The First Order.”

Kylo presses his hand to her forehead and Rey is suddenly too weak to fight back. She begins to slump in his arms, consciousness fading softly into the distance.

She fights it. Fights him.

“You’re going to take me back,” she whispers as she grows weaker. “You’re going to make me
your prisoner.”

Nothing could sting worse than his betrayal. *Nothing*. She hadn’t seen it coming. How could she not see it coming? He was *Kylo Ren*, after all. She had been a fool to ever think he could be more.

“No, Rey. I’m taking you back to make you my Empress.”

The world starts to grow dark. She hadn’t been ready to defend herself. Hadn’t been ready for him to turn on her like this.

“Kylo...”

In the distance she thinks she can hear the roar of an engine. Or perhaps it’s the blood rushing from her head as the Force Sleep begins to overtake her.

“I will take care of you, Rey. I promise.”

He picks her up in his arms, lifting her like she’s nothing. Rey feels like nothing. Dullness and dimness and the Force so muted she might as well be shut off from it.

His last words stick with her, though, echoing through her mind until she completely falls under his spell and everything fades to black.

*Forgive me* .

Chapter End Notes

:P

Yay, Reylo baby on the way!

By far and leaps and bounds, Rey getting oven-bunned was the absolute most requested trope for this fic, so how could I leave it out? And yes, Spokane, I’m putting
this in here for you. If their gray Reylo baby takes after Anakin and tries to destroy the galaxy when he or she grows up, we all know who to blame ;)

But, seriously, I had to do it. I’d been hinting at it since the sex pollen scene. Formula of nonstop sex, not pulling out, and more nonstop sex = had to happen sometime, right?

But now what’s Rey going to do? Her studmuffin baby daddy just turned on her and kidnapped her. Take mommy and baby back to the First Order? Yeah, not going to happen without one hell of a fight from Rey. Only one more chapter to go now, too, so I’d better get to work figuring out how this is all going to get resolved quick!!

next chapter: Kylo done fucked up. What’s his shiney, brand new baby momma gonna do about it? The answer’s simple: fight tooth and nail for her new family.
Exodus

Chapter Summary

Where Rey makes it or breaks it.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Six months later…

It was so hard at first for Rey to accept that this was her fate. Kylo had kept true to his word, she was the Captive Queen of the First Order now, but it was a role she had never asked for or wanted.

And yet here she was, here they both were. Kylo so desperate for her, and she filled with bitter resentment for him. A full circle right back where they had started from.

For the first few weeks he had no choice but to keep her under lock and key. Rey had tried to escape constantly, and came damn close several time. To keep her safely by his side, Kylo had buried her deep in the prettiest prison he could make for her. She had everything she could need or want. Clothes, food, his company regardless of how unwelcome it was. Everything except for her freedom.

Gods how he had fawned over her now that she was here with him. The finest of everything, any present or favor she could possibly want was at her disposal. She had told him she couldn’t be bought. Told him to leave her be, she was sick of seeing his lying face.

Rey knew that she was doing nothing but hurting him with her coldness. Hurting them both. And, as the days went on, she came to realize one all important truth: nothing she could do or say, absolutely nothing at all, would ever drive him away.

Away is exactly where she needed to go. Rey had a notion, and it was quite a half-formed notion, but if she could only escape… she could disappear. Run far enough to the furthest reaches of the galaxy and have her baby in safety and privacy.

Maybe, if he had not resorted to any methods too cruel to retrieve her, she would call to him when
it was time. Let him comfort her and be with her when their child was born and then, perhaps, they would work out the three of their futures together.

But she couldn’t escape like this. He had hidden her too deeply within the ship or space station or wherever it was he had taken her to. And Rey grew tired of turning him away. Tired of fighting him for the sake of fighting and not to ever accomplish anything.

By the third month Rey was starting to feel needy. A primal instinct to nest was starting to fill her, and it made it harder and harder each time she chose to send the father of her child away in a fit of silent pain.

She finally told him she wanted them to move on past this. Get back from this dark turn in their relationship and start to rebuild. But first he had to let her out.

Astonishingly, he did. He kept her watched closely always, but her cage grew bigger with each day she remained with him voluntarily.

Yes, her cage grew, and so did her body. Their child showed up to the party earlier, only a few months after it had been formed. First manifesting as a hard and firm lump that baffled her because it shouldn’t have been physically possible to form in such an odd way, and then as an overall swelling that brought new curves and needs to her.

It took nearly four months into her pregnancy before they made love again. Rey had told him that they never would, but then her own body had made a liar out of her. As she progressed and the hormones developed and changed, a desire that nearly rivaled the effects of the cave flowers had overtaken her resolve.

Every night. Sometimes every morning or in between as well. It brought them closer together, back to where they had been before his fateful betrayal on the planet that now seemed so long ago.

This closeness and her advancing condition made her more open and content. Maybe this was for the best, after all?

Content, yes, but she firmly kept him locked out of both her head and her heart... because she was still going to leave him. She had to find a way, before she was too big and useless and then it would all be too late.
Rey didn’t try to hide her intentions from Kylo. He grew so desperate, trying and saying anything, and that meanly pleased her as much as it drove her to private tears.

She wanted a freedom of choice, not freedom from him. Kylo seemed so absolutely unable to separate the two.

Then, five months on now, Rey started to feel movement within her. The window of opportunity was closing, and she had to fight to keep reminding herself why she had to go from him at all.

Kylo had always been exceptionally clingy, but now he was damned near literally driving her crazy, but only in the sweetest of ways. His duties as the Supreme Leader were suffering, and now all he seemed to want to do was be with her, spend time with them both. His hands were always on her, supporting or cradling their child through her skin. Secretly, it made her stupidly happy.

He started to beg again, then. Her will to leave hadn’t changed, though. To fall to his knees and hug her stomach while pleading for her to promise to stay, no matter what happens to stay.

She didn’t promise. She didn’t say anything.

So Kylo changed tactics. It was the dirtiest of dirty tricks.

He started to reach out to their child for support. He started regular communions with their baby, doing everything possible for it to feel his presence. He would talk to it through the Force, fill its steadily growing soul with all the attention, affection, and constant devotion that the child basked in.

Rey had stayed strong until that moment, but nothing could disarm a mother to be faster than the father doting on their child with such an open heart.

It was too much for her to take. Her willpower could only resist him for so long before- Before she gave in and accepted this. Stopped fighting and instead starting planning for a future that at one time had seemed so impossible.

And then her old Master had called to her, right then when her conviction was starting to shatter.
Rey. *You need to wake up now.*


There she was, laying on a bed of black satin with Kylo curled around her, cradling her now heavily swollen belly even as he sleeps, when she hears her Master’s voice.

It doesn’t make sense. She had been hoping one day to see him again, but now his words seem more like a warning than a reassuring message.

*Rey, please. Wake up.*

This time it’s someone else’s voice that she hears. Varn, her long lost and deeply foolish relative, who to this day she still wears his talisman around her neck. She feels his unique signature rippling through her head, settling on her upper chest where his pendant hangs.

Both of them are trying to talk to her. Neither of them are pleased when she tries to shush them away before they wake her bondmate up.

*Rey. Get the hell up.*

Master Luke again. He pokes at her mind more insistently, mentally nudging her with that staff of his.

She tries to resist. Tries to understand what he wants and why now...

He snags her. Catches her dream and spirals her back up. Draws her mind circling and spinning until her thoughts are a dizzying whirlwind and nothing, no matter how hard she tries to hold on to the strange and perfectly vivid fantasy her psyche had concocted, can keep her from getting pulled back to a harsh reality.
Rey wakes up.

Her head may be murky from Kylo’s forced sleep, but she knows exactly where she is and how long it’s been. Not long at all, it would seem. She’d been able to break the sleep while she’s still on the planet. The feeling of kyber hangs in the air, that green glow she’s come to know so well that she can practically feel it in her bones.

And she’s bound and fettered. Tied gently, but unquestionably. Well padded manacles on her arms and ankles and around her wrists is the greatest affront of all: Force suppressant cuffs. Nothing is hard enough to hurt her, or weak enough to free her.

She can feel him, and he’s close but not on this parked ship with her. Outside, in the very dim stretch that she can reach with the Force, she feels him. He’s doing something, scheming like he always is, and he’s left her in here by herself.

She’s still on the planet. That’s the only good news. But now time is ticking by and with it her chance at freedom before her prophetic dream becomes a reality.

Rey shifts at her restraints. They’re soft, padded, and unbreakable. Perhaps if she had the Force, but that has been taken away from her as well.

“Can you help me?” she whispers, calling out to her Master and ancestor.

They’re there with her. Two elements of the Force, and while one is more familiar than the other, it’s Varn who comes to her first.

The crystal around her neck begins to glow, filling the dimly lit space that she’s in with flickering green facets.

She’s not truly alone. She can do this.

A new determination is sharpening itself in her mind, breaking through the last of the brain fog. Rey gets the feeling she hasn’t been under for very long. Force sleeps usually last for several hours, but the heaviness of her limbs and slowness of her mental responses tell her that while her vision may have spanned the time of months, in reality it’s been at most an hour since Kylo swept her under with the Force.
Rey sucks in a deep breath and begins pulling at the well of power deep inside her. The cuffs attempt to block her, but she can slip around their walls if she tries hard enough. She has to be careful. Has to be secretive. Kylo can’t know about this until she’s free and ready to face him.

Face him how? Well… Details are pending. Pending really karking soon.

“Help me,” she implores, calling the ghosts of the Force to her again.

*Make him pay for this, Rey. Give him hell.*

She smiles, grinning even as a fresh line of tears streaks down her face. That has to be Master Luke. She can’t see him but she can feel and hear him.

Or maybe it’s all in her head, but either way she’ll take it. Pretend guidance is absolutely as good as the real thing if she believes in it enough.

“Oh I will, Master. I promise. Not a day will go by when I don’t remind him of this.”

Amusement. Tired hands clasp at the tops of hers.

The Force cuffs clatter to the ground, bringing with it a wash of fresh energy rolling through her.

For a second Rey can feel many things. Kylo in the near distance, nervous and yet seeking something. Ah, the Kyber beneath the ground. Wherever on the planet they are now has a vein of it near the surface. That’s why he has stayed here, to excavate it like in his plan from before.

She can feel more than him, too. That sensation of other life and sentience. Human soldiers, Stormtroopers most likely, and at least a dozen of them. Two of which are stationed right outside the doors to her cell.

And the tigers. Last but certainly not least are those nasty fleaball banes of her existence here. There’s a large pack of them, perhaps a dozen or even more as well, and they’re circling around in
the periphery of the landing site. They’re pissed off. They were born pissed off, as Rey has come to assume, but now they’re extraordinarily angry that so many interlopers have arrived into their territory. They’re not attacking yet though; all are waiting for the lurking Great King to make his first move.

Well, this place sure is inhospitable, isn’t it? But now that Rey has the Force returned to her, it’s time for her to be a woman of action.

Taking off the rest of her shackles is easy. Child’s play. She slips out of them silently, her next moves already playing out in her head.

Kylo really hadn’t secured her cell well. Almost as if this was just some room he’d placed her unconscious body in and then hastily barred as quickly as he could. How long did he think she would be out for? Obviously much longer, or they wouldn’t still be here planetside.

The door opens with a strategic and refined pulse of energy. The two stormtrooper guards barely have time to see her coming before she seizes them with the Force and slams them head to head against each other.

They were unarmed save for a single stun baton. Rey frowns at the low power level of it. Kylo must have learned his lesson not to have her guards be given weapons in case she… well, in case she did exactly this.

The ship is a small sized vessel, probably an Upsilon-class command shuttle similar in capacity to the Millennium Falcon. By Rey’s estimations there wouldn’t have been space for more than, at the absolute most, twenty occupants.

So that’s how many she would have to go against if she stays and fights them off. Not good odds, especially since she’s effectively unarmed except for the nearly drained stunner. Any notion she might have had of slipping away and disappearing into the jungle has been rendered impossible with the lack of a proper weapon and the heavy, lurking feline presence surrounding them on all sides.

Which brings Rey to her other final option: she can simply fly off. There are troops outside, though most of the life signatures are located somewhere below her, confirming Rey’s suspicion that they’re doing a quick down and dirty kyber mining right now.
It gives her both time and opportunity. She could close the bay doors and fly off before they stop her. She would have her freedom.

But she wouldn’t have Kylo.

Rey sighs and rocks back on her heels, struggling with the weighty decision. Her eyes fall to the long distance radar. It’s showing Kylo’s own ship out there in the space above the planet. Of course, that’s how Kylo knew it was the First order that had come. The Millennium Falcon was designed not to be tracked, Kylo’s vessel as the pompous Supreme Leader was designed to be more easily secured in case of crisis.

Supreme Leader Kylo Ren. Asshole extraordinaire. Father of her child.

Maybe it’s stupid and sentimental and a distinctly female weakness, but Rey needs to see him one more time before she runs away, baby in her belly and First Order hot on her tails. She needs to see him in the flesh and look at his face once more before they are enemies again.

“What is the right thing to do?” she asks to no one.

Master Luke and Varn don’t answer. She doesn’t feel them anymore, but that doesn’t mean they are there, watching and waiting for her to make her decision.

This is all on her, now. Finally a choice that is completely her own.

…

Well… alright then...

Rey turns around, leaving the cockpit.

Her eyes fall to him first before anything else.
Kylo towers above the rest of them, a commanding figure swathed in black. He’s wearing his cloak and gloves again, Rey notes, and the heavy coating of dust and grime on them barely showed under the bright moonlight.

Truly he’s in his element. The Supreme Leader, clad in black, surrounded by darkness. How perfectly fitting for a man who has betrayed her trust so badly.

She was right about her estimates, there are fourteen stormtroopers that she can read, and most of them are hacking away at a deep pit they’ve dug into the ground. Kyber radiates from only a little below, meaning that her time to make the decisions has nearly come to an end.

Another man, a rather uptight looking redhead in impeccably dressed military attire, paces the perimeter of the pit. He points at certain areas and barks order but seems far from inclined to get his hands dirty and do something to actually speed up the process.

Kylo stays silent. Foreboding. His face is set into a hard line of authority. Every bit of him looks like a true prince of darkness here, but now Rey knows its all an act. She’s seen his soul. Felt the light of him within her heart just a clearly as she’s known his gentle touch to her body.

He doesn’t want this. He doesn’t want to be Supreme Leader. But he chooses this path because he feels he has no other choice. That’s where he’s wrong completely.

Rey could leave now. She’s had her poignant last look, memorized every nuance of his face and mask into her mind.

But she won’t. What they’ve had, what they’ve created is something worth fighting for.

It hurts. What Kylo did to her hurts.

She had trusted him. He had betrayed her. But she had also meant what she had told him and at least one of them needs to keep their promises.

Rey had been right all along. Kylo was a monster. What else would shackle the mother of his child? What else would make her fall for him and fall hard, only to turn it all into a lie?
Except…

As much as she wants to well and truly hate him and be done with it, Rey can’t. Because there had been truth in his eyes last night when they were making that pact with to each other. When she had told him she would stay by his side and he had sworn to cherish her in return.

Their baby was conceived out of love. Absolutely unplanned, but loved.

Yes, Kylo may be a monster, but he’s also a man. A man who acted thoughtlessly without a single consideration for her feelings because he had just become a father and she was already starting to push him away.

A man who would do anything for her, in his own shortsighted way.

How could she leave that?

It’s simple. She won’t.

But she needs to get him away from the others. Separate him and then make her final, last-ditch play for Ben Solo to come back from the ashes.

A moment like this certainly calls for a Grand Gesture, doesn’t it?

And Rey can’t think of anything grander than nature’s perfect killing machines breaking up the show.

This is a terribly stupid idea. Let the record show. It’s risky, but it’s also so crazy it just might work. Those are the best kind of ideas, aren’t they? The ones that could as much get everyone killed as they could be the instrument of her freedom.

Rey takes a steadying breath and wraps her palm around her necklace. Varn’s energy begins to glow, and she tries to hide the light of it as best as she can. Don’t want to give the game away too
soon.

Her mind fans out, spiraling through the air past the landing site. Beyond, but she doesn’t have to go too far. There they are, those angry beasts of hell and the proud Lord.

Perfect. This is going to be one hell of a mess.

She targets him, the Tiger King, and taunts him. Come and get us, fleabags, we’re made of meat.

His attention pricks. She’s reaching him.

Rey pushes harder, turns the green energy into a beacon. Here there be humans, she tells him. Come on kitty cats, get yourselves some tasty, juicy humans. If you dare.

The King roars to life, his infuriated cry echoing through the jungle. Kylo looks up then from his brooding reverie and several of the stormtroopers freeze in their tracks until the redheaded man yells at them to continue.

They’re coming. Oh they’re coming. They’re not hesitating at all, and only Rey and Kylo know the true depths of the dangers about to arrive.

Of course, if the kitties can hear her call to them through the Force, so can a certain someone else.

A pulse of shock comes from her bondmate as he senses not only is she very much awake, but what she’s trying to bring crashing down upon them.

*Rey.*

He looks at her then, their eyes meeting from her place on the only ship’s landing bay.

He thinks she’s going to leave him. Abandon him and leave him to his fate here on the planet. Stupid boy, he’s hers now. She’s not letting him go, but he doesn’t need to know that quite yet. Make him suffer and give him hell for being such a selfish, shortsighted, and foolish man.
Shock and sudden fear take over as he watches her take a step back. He even tries to hold her in place with an extended arm and grasp of the Force. Pathetic. Now that she’s fully aware of his intentions, it’s easy to throw his influence on her off.

He steps closer, still hundreds of paces away. Plenty of time for her to bolt and run to the cockpit. She stands her ground, staring right back. All around them the troops begin to stir, worry and concern radiating through them as a great cacophony starts to rise from the dark nighttime jungle around them. None of them pay any attention to the moment happening between her and Kylo. This great, silent battle of wills taking place between mother and father and child.

Kylo’s force signature washes over her, his energy imploring her to reconsider. She has nothing to reconsider, but her resolve is strengthened all the more when his focus settles on her belly. Already so protective and obsessed with it. He’s going to be an intolerably devoted father, isn’t he?

And then they come, the tigers all but fly into the clearing, literally crashing their party.

There are so many of them that Rey can’t even count, or maybe it’s because they move so damned fast. Every feral body is a blur of white and black, blending in with the darkness and streaks of moonlight as they surge forward in a wave of teeth and claws.

Chaos erupts immediately. The shocked stormtroopers scramble out of the mining pit, blindly following the shouted commands of the General to get into formation and the order from their Supreme Leader to ready their weapons.

The cats have a new strategy this time, and it’s a deadly one. Instead of holding back and striking with precision, each cat taking its turn at playing with its food like they had before, they all move in at once. The stormtroopers hadn’t sufficient time to prepare, and it costs their outer ranks brutally.

Bodies go flying, literally tossed into the air, as the cats tear a swath into the center of the battleground. Immediate bedlam and destruction, and Rey feels almost nauseated by the waves of confusion and terror she feels emanating from the soldiers as they begin to be teared down.

The troops regroup quickly, however, those of them that weren’t immediately cut in the first wave of the assault. They take up arms and then the battle begins in full. Teeth and claws meet blasters bolts and Kylo’s precise commands. The tigers may be ferocious in every sense of the word, but now that they are mortal and can be wounded their numbers begin to thin, beastly bodies falling to
the ground but taking more white armored men along with them.

Rey sees it all from her perch, watching from the edge of the clearing at the bay to the ship. She grips her only weapon, the stun baton, tightly. She misses the security of holding her lightsaber. Gods how she wishes she’d had that now as everything starts to come to a head.

Through it all she can see Kylo racing in and out of all the chaos, channeling the Force to pick up debris or, in certain rather horrific cases, the dead bodies of the fallen, and send them slamming into an overgrown kitty cat and knocking it back.

Rey waits, breathless and tight with nerves, for her moment to strike. When he comes close enough, she’s going to knock him out. Use the stunner on him and then somehow maneuverer him back into the ship. Take her prize and get the hell out of here.

Good plan? No, a terrible one, but also her only plan.

But she had forgotten about one key element, one key player who very much refuses to be ignored any longer. The Tiger King leaps in front of her, his back arched and teeth bared. A living embodiment of pure rage.

He surges forward, focusing only on disemboweling her. This time the tiger’s not playing around. If she’d thought it was vicious before, it’s nothing like it is now. Pure rage emanates from it, its utter hatred of her and all her kind only growing more and more as she readies herself for this fight.

The Varn Stone. That’s what it wants. What it’s always wanted. She should have never taunted him with it.

Rey waits until the last possible moment to dodge to the side, striking at its hindquarters with the edge of the stun baton. It’s a heavy weapon in its own right even when not used for its proper function, and that makes it too slow to used as much more than a cumbersome club.

The King roars, whipping around and slashing at her. It’s claws come within millimeters of Rey’s neck as she leaps back, pushing herself to safety with the Force.

He dives again, wanting her dead. She wants *him* dead. A battle to the end, even as all the chaos and kitties and stormtroopers form a backdrop of carnage to their one on one battle.
Again he strikes, and again she leaps out of the way. This time she slams the side of the baton into it’s back paw, causing it to yelp out in sudden pain. The bratty King isn’t used to being hurt and not getting its way, apparently, and just who does that remind her of?

Who indeed, because she can feel Kylo again. He turns his attention to her, and she can sense him giving up whatever fight he had been engaged with to come to her aid.

Normally, his assumption that she can’t take care of herself would be highly infuriating. This time though, Rey needs every bit of help she can get.

The tiger spins around, slashing through the air almost blindly with its rage. Rey shoves at it with the Force, her only real weapon that she has in such a fight. She rolls away from its next attack, this time a low and lighting fast swipe intended to knock her feet out from under her.

Claws scratch at her back, drawing her blood but her fast instincts have saved her from what would have been a devastating wound. Behind her another tiger gives a death cry that echoes hauntingly against the metal of the ship as the creature meets its end at the hands of Kylo and a Force choke. The Tiger King howls in rage, every one of its fallen comrades seeming to make it impossibly angrier.

The field is now laden with dead tigers and dead stormtroopers. Rey is thankful for the darkness of the night shielding her from must be a truly ghastly sight.

All the deaths seem to turn the King practically berserk. It races forward, howling and clawing in a frenzy of limbs. Rey gathers the Force, trying to blanket it around her in a protective shroud. The beast plows straight through it, colliding head first into her abdomen and knocking her off her feet.

She slams hard against the ship, all the air being knocked clear out of her lungs until she can’t even scream as the Tiger King rears up, drawing its claws back and moving in for the kill.

Rey stabs the baton forward, hoping that the electrical blast will be enough. And, just like he had with her lightsaber, he bites it. Chomps down and forcibly tears the weapon out of her grasp and tosses it aside before she can activate it and shock him.

Not a second is wasted before he strikes again, and another push of the Force is the only thing that saves her from immediate death. She cries out when his weight crashes against her, pinning her to
the ground as Kylo appears. Her bondmate does a flying leap through the air, crashing his own weight down onto the beast’s right shoulder and shoving him off of her long enough for Rey to scramble away and back to her feet.

She’s bleeding. The King had clawed at her, and so is Kylo. Both of them are streaked with the battle scars of this fight, but their main enemy licks its lips as it circles them. Gods how Rey hates this vicious beast. She’s not going to be its damn meal tonight, neither of them will be.

“Focus Rey, you’re panicking.”

Kylo’s hand grips her own. His gloves are slick with tiger blood.

“And you’re not?”

She squeezes him back tightly, both of them turning to face the Tiger King as it prowls, back low and ears flat against its head. Waiting to strike. Waiting for a break in their defenses.

Then it growls, a horrid bone chilling sound as it hunches down, tail lashing from side to side. Any moment now it’s going to attack them.

“Kylo...”

Her voice breaks, fear and growing pain from her wounds starting to overwhelm her.

“We can take him, Rey. Focus.”

“We have no weapons.”

Kylo reaches out, summoning the stun baton back to them. He shoves it at Rey, his eyes never leaving the great beast. Rey glances at it, identifying the problem immediately.

“This only has one charge,” she tells him.
His hand tightens then he lets go. Rey can feel him channeling the Force into them, merging their two abilities together so they can fight as one. The Tiger King must be able to feel it too, his fur rising to form a stiff ridge as it senses their power. That power that it seems to hate so very much.

“Then make that one charge count.”

All around them the fight continues. Howling and growling and shouting and shooting. Rey pays it no attention. This is just them now, and she’s going to end this.

“Come on furball, let’s do this.”

For good measure, she palms the Varn Stone and lets the energy flare up. The Tiger King does not disappoint. It charges headfirst, throwing its full weight as it crashes into them.

Together Kylo and Rey try to slam the Force back to meet it. Try to literally crush it with the strength of their shared powers.

The Force slows it, but it doesn’t stop it. The beast strikes, hitting Kylo with all its might and they both collapse to the ground in a flurry of wrestling limbs and black and white.

Rey slams the baton across the King’s head as hard as she can and presses the trigger. The tiger shakes, trembling as electricity crackles over it.

Except the stunner was only meant to subdue, not kill, a human. The best it does to the King is buy them a second to react. Kylo shoves at it, and the tiger shoves right back, snapping its teeth at his neck and barely missing as Kylo fights to hold him off.

He’s going to kill him. Rey can see it before it happens, the shock of it turning everything into slow motion. Kylo is losing the battle with their enemy, every wound and every weakness building and breaking his concentration with the Force.

Then the solution dawns on her, breaking through the fear of her mind like a beam of light. She knows what she has to do. It was so obvious this whole time.
Her *lightsaber*.

It’s still in there. She can feel it. Her kripping *lightsaber* is still lodged in the great cat’s stomach.

Rey doesn’t think twice, but she still closes her eyes as she reaches out.

Guided by the Force alone, she finds what she was looking for: the switch. Rey activates her saber from within the animal.

The beast howls like never before as the energy pierces through its innards and out the other side. It’s a horrible sound, but what she started Kylo finishes. Despite being pinned under the King and literally seconds from a swift death, Kylo harnesses the Force with perfect skill. He commands Rey’s saber into his own hand, severing the tiger in half in a monstrous shower of nastiness far too gross for Rey to be able to describe.

A thunk follows and the ground shakes. Rey squeezes her eyes together tighter, the King’s blood splashing against her face as the creature collapses lifelessly to the ground.

And then there’s silence. Just the sound of Rey’s own gasping, shaking breaths.

“Rey,” Kylo’s strong hands grip her shoulders, shaking her gently. “It’s over. You can open your eyes. It’s finally over.”

When she forces herself to look, Kylo is slick with red. All the blood and… bits of things shine like black ink on his clothes in the moonlight. Her saber is still in his hand, and he deactivates it, snapping it to his belt when she numbly reaches to take it back from him.

“This is mine now, Rey. I’m keeping this. You owe me a debt and now I’ve collected.”

She exhales shakily, her hand still gripping the stun baton that she’d been holding onto for dear life throughout this whole fight.
Rey can’t bring herself to look down at their defeated opponent, but Kylo does. He frowns, shaking his head in distaste at the messy scene.

“Well that’s excessive and unnecessary.”

Oh. No. Definitely not going to look.

Instead, Rey turns out of his grasp, getting some distance between her and her bondmate. The battle between the stormtroopers, those few that remain standing, at the other tigers has come to an end. With the King fallen, the rest of the beasts take off, fleeing into the night and leaving a scene of destruction and death behind in their wake.

The battlefield falls still again.

Kylo watches Rey. She looks anywhere but at him.

After a few moments, the redheaded General approaches from the sidelines, looking only slightly rumpled despite the brutal fight that had taken place.

“Ren, what in the gods has happened to you?” he snaps, staying well back from his tiger blood and guts covered Supreme Leader.

Kylo pays him no attention. His eyes are on Rey and Rey alone.

Right. Of course. The battle with the tigers may be done, but hers with her kidnapper has only just begun.

“Rey.”

And out goes the hand, offering itself to her to take. As if it was that easy.

“Kylo, you know what my answer will be.”
He steps closer and Rey takes another step back, nearly tripping over the pile of dead king kitty.

“Rey, I will not force you to come with me.” He swallows, then corrects himself. “I mean… I will, okay? But I don’t want to.”

Rey shakes her head at him. Is this the way it will always be between them? This constant spinning in a circle, both of them trying to pull each other into the duty-driven orbit?

Kylo tries again, continuing to close the distance between them until he has Rey cornered.

“Please Rey, come with me. Of your own free will. Be mine. I love you.”

Rey is stunned into temporary speechlessness. He just came right out and said that. In front of everyone.

The uptight General starts to scoff, choking back his clear contempt for his Supreme Leader’s declaration.

“Ren, what the bloody well do you think you’re doing? This Scavenger scum is nothing but a filthy garbage pi-cker.” That was the missing syllable, but he never utters it because Kylo flips his hand, sending him flying against the side of the ship with a wave of the Force. The General crumples into an unconscious heap and the remaining Stormtroopers shift uncomfortably, clearly unsure what their protocol of duty is in these circumstances.

“Did you- isn’t he someone important? Shouldn’t you not have done that?”

Kylo shrugs, clearly already having move past the interruption.

“He’s just my second in command. He wants to kill me and take my place. Think nothing of him.”
“Kylo-”

“Rey, it’s just us here. You and me. No one else to judge or sway us. Let’s make this choice together. Come with me.”

Rey’s eyes dart from his pleading faced to the masked heads of the Stormtroopers gathering around the unconscious General behind them.

“What about them?” she asks. “They’re here.”

“They? They’re nothing. Ignore them.”

He has such a way with words, doesn’t he?

“Nothing? Nothing like I am, you mean?”

Among many things, that’s another one that Rey will make sure he pays for forever. Kylo swallows and takes another step closer.

“They’re really nothing, Rey. They’re pathetic. Useless. Ignore them.”

Behind him, one of the Stormtroopers hangs his head in shame.

“And if I say no?” she asks, her hand tightening on the handle of the depleted stun baton in case she has to hit him upside the head with it and make a getaway.

“Don’t. Say yes.”

Kriff he’s singular. Rey has to spell it out for him, that’s the only way he’ll understand.

“No, Kylo. I’m not going back to the First Order with you. I refuse to.”
The hurt and desperation rise in Kylo’s eyes. He shakes his head mutely, stubbornly refusing to let Rey’s words sink in to his incredibly dense skull.

“Rey-”

“You lied to me, Kylo. You knew the ship was coming for us, and you fogged my mind and hide them from me until it was too late.”

Kylo steps closer then and this time Rey stands her ground. Because she has to, since she’s already been backed up flush with the wing of the ship.

“Wrong. I hid us from them, Rey. I was going to stay here, they never would have had to know. And then...”

And then she’d become pregnant, and that had changed everything.

Everything more than Kylo even knows.

“You lied, Kylo. You lied to me.”

His eyebrows pull together, and he nods softly.

“Yes, Rey, I did, but I did it for you. I did it all for you.”

His hand strokes her face. It puts him in the perfect position to sink her into another Force sleep, she notes.

Rey sighs, pulling herself free.

“Kylo… I forgive you.”
She smiles up at him, watching the confusion flash across his face as she repeats herself.

“I forgive you, Kylo, but only this one time. Because I lied too. This stun baton didn’t have just one charge, it has two.”

And she steps back, plants the end of the weapon square in his chest, and pulls the trigger.

Unlike the tiger, Kylo goes down in an instant. He collapses into a twitching heap, all the electricity making his hair stand on end.

Murmurs of shock rise from the three remaining stormtroopers. Rey can feel their eyes on her, the indecision echoing throughout their minds. She summons her lightsaber back into her palm and this time no jungle beastie rises out of the depths to take it from her.

“Pick him up,” she orders, pointing at Kylo’s unmoving shape. “Carry him into the ship and take him into the back room.”

The stormtroopers look at her, then the General, then Kylo, then at each other. Rey rolls her eyes, waiting for them to either fight her or obey her.

“Is he dead?” one of them asks. There’s a touch of hopefulness to his artificially augmented voice.

Oh, Kylo will be fine. He’ll wake up with a headache and a bruised ego. But these troops certainly don’t need to know that, especially when the other option is to carry his massive bulk into the ship on her own.

“Yes, absolutely dead. I’m your new Supreme Leader, so, like, you have to obey me.”

Supreme Leader Rey? That’s… so messed up. Profoundly. She’s going to shuck that title as soon as she hits atmo.

The troops still hesitate. Rey feels her annoyance rise. Maybe Kylo was right about them after all.
She clears her throat, igniting her lightsaber and gesturing from them to Kylo.

“Are you disobeying your Leader?” she barks, channeling her inner angry man-child.

Now that gets their attention. They immediately snap back to perfect posture, scuttling over to Kylo and picking him up. One of them even salutes her as they haul him into the ship.

And in less than five minutes, the three bucketheads and their two unconscious guard companions are back on the ground and Rey is in the air.

Nine nights. That’s how long it has been since they crash landed on this planet. It seems like a lifetime ago that she was up there on the Millennium Falcon, wondering what the hell the ‘incoming ship’ that her scanners had detected was doing.

There’s something slightly melancholic about leaving here, but once again fate played its hand and she and Kylo were simply swept along for the ride.

With a deep sigh, Rey settles down into the captain's chair of the Upsilon-class and starts plotting out a route back home.

Chapter End Notes

next chapter: Epilogue of things to come…
Epilogue

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Little by little, the planet fades from view.

Even from the distance of space it appears to glow. A purple and green and every other color aura emanating out, flaring brightly against the background of infinite space.

Forgive Rey for being poetic, it’s been a hell of a long ten days.

She should be elated to have escaped, but she’s not. In it’s own odd way, they were safer there on that bizarre rock than anywhere else in the galaxy. No one knew they were there. No one could hurt them. It was just the two of them.

And then the three of them.

Rey is pretty sure it’s going to be a long time before she comes to terms with that. Her pregnancy doesn’t even feel real. She’s going to have a child. Someone else to keep alive. Such a bizarre concept. And Kylo Ren, the great Supreme Leader, as the father? How utterly ridiculous.

Her scanner beeps at her. Rey flicks on the side viewscreen, already knowing what she’s going to see.

The Millennium Falcon. It’s there, floating aimlessly and lifelessly through the depth of open space, just like Kylo had said it would.

Rey marks the coordinates down, knowing that it may drift, but it won’t drift very far. She’ll come back for it, just like she had come back for Kylo.

Full circle again. Kylo is now in the hold of this ship, tied up and Force cuffed and still unconscious like he’d done to her but she can sense him stirring. No Master or Varn to help him.
Even in his sleep he likes to stroke their connection, and now she can feel him innerly marveling at it. Their bond has grown so much, but it has also become thinner. Wide and vast, but now there’s a part of it that’s pulling away from them both and trying to cleave to the microscopic collection of cells laying hold inside her womb.

*My girlfriend is pregnant.*

Kriff, what an unbearable ass. Rey should have slapped him silly when he’d said that to her. Oh, try to kidnap her, will he? No no no, that’s not how this is going to work.

Truth be told, they’d sort of kidnapped each other. Both of them took their turns with it, and Rey just so happened to be the second to try but the first to succeed. She’s got him and now she’s not letting go.

*Scavenger.*

Rey smiles at hearing his voice in her head. It’s just the three of them now out here in the black, the way it should be.

*I’m here, Kylo. I’m coming.*

Rey gives one last long and lingering look to the now pinprick of purple in the rear viewscreen. She’ll come back for the Falcon, and maybe to that planet again as well. Except this time she’ll bring the Resistance with her. A planet as far and remote as this would make an ideal secret base, and there’s that king’s ransom of wealth of kyber down below the surface.

Rey sets the navigation to autopilot. She’s confident that she’s disabled the tracking mechanism the First Order must have used to locate at, and the vessel’s superior speed should get them back to her side in under a standard day.

* Kylo smiles when he sees her.
“Scavenger,” he repeats.

“Supreme Leader.”

His face flickers, his eyes drifting down to her stomach. Rey self consciously tugs his tunic down lower over her body.

“How are you feeling?” he asks.

She shakes her head. Ridiculous man, shouldn’t she be asking him that question? That was one hell of a stunner blast she had given him. He’ll need to be checked out by a doctor, they both will need to be, but Rey isn’t so sure that any medical practitioners at the Resistance will be willing to help him.

“They’ll kill me. All of them. You know that, right? Shoot me with a blaster the second they take sight of me. You’re bringing me to me death, Scavenger.”

Rey sighs and sits next to him on the metal bench he’s fastened to. She gives his bound hands a squeeze and he merely look down at her and says nothing more.

“Kylo… don’t worry. Not everyone there is going to try to run up and kill you immediately. There will be plenty of people who are too afraid to and they’ll just poison your food or something from a safe distance.”

His expression falls flat.

“Well… thanks for that, Rey. Good to know.”

Rey snuggles up close to him, hugging herself to his arm.

“Kylo, you big baby, I’m not taking you back to the Resistance. At least not at first. I am going back myself, but I’m doing it alone.”
Before he can open his big, dumb trap and squack a protest, Rey shushes him with her finger to his lips.

“No, you nerfer, I’m not ‘abandoning’ you, we’ve been through this already. But I do have work to do, and sorry buddy but we can’t always be together every minute of the day.”

Kylo’s lower lip pushes out into a very immature pout.

“But… I want to. I don’t want us to be apart at all.”

Rey shrugs.

“Tough. I’ve got to go back and repair your father’s ship. I’ll be gone for three or four days, but don’t worry, you won’t be left lonely.”

Kylo frowns. Rey tries and fails to hide her inner smirk.

“You don’t mean-”

“Yuh-huh, I do. I’m not taking you to met your death at the Resistance, Kylo, I’m taking you somewhere far worse.”

His Adam’s apple bobs up and down prominently as he gulps.

“…General Organa.”

She nods, her smile breaking wider.

“Your mother. Leia has arranged for a private location to meet you. I’m sure you two have a lot to catch up on. The Resistance won’t kill you, but it’s entirely possible that she might.”
Anxiety starts to build in Kylo, making his side of their connection prickly and uncomfortable to Rey’s touch.

“I can’t face her, Rey. Not after… everything.”

“You’re going to have to. She’s waiting.”

Kylo swallows again. Rey hugs him tighter still.

“What did she say? When you told her I was coming?”

Rey huffs in amusement. There’s such a big part of Kylo that’s still a little boy, hoping for attention and his mother to want to see him.

“She said ‘she’ll be waiting’. She said it just like that, but she wants to see you. She’s missed you.”

Kylo doesn’t answer, his head dropping to rest on top of her own. They breathe like that, sharing each others company in peaceful silence. Rey can feel his thoughts swirling, all the fears and dread striking him now as the full magnitude of him returning home dawns upon him. She pokes gently at his mind, surprised when he lets her right in and doesn’t try to resist her snooping.

“I dreamed about her just now, when I was unconscious.”

Kylo’s voice is a soft rumble, and Rey pulls away to look at him. He’s staring out at the rear viewport where the planet used to be.

“Your mother?” she prompts, nudging at his shoulder with her hand.

Kylo shakes his head, his eyes drifting down to meet her own.

“No. Not her. Our daughter. She came to me in my dream.”
Rey stares at him. Kylo stares back, his expression softening the longer he looks at her.

“Our… are you sure?”

Kylo nods. He reaches out for her, straining with the short limits of his cuffs. Rey immediately takes his hand in her own again, though what she’s offering him she’s not clear on.

“How?” she finally asks.

It’s not possible. It’s physically not. Their child doesn’t exist yet. It’s too early.

“It was a figment of my mind. I saw her as an adult. She looked just like you, Rey. Absolutely beautiful.”

Sadness starts to lace through his voice and Rey knows exactly why.

“You don’t think you’re going to be there, do you? You think you’re going to die before she grows up, or maybe before she’s even born.”

Kylo nods, swallowing again and there’s a shimmer of wetness to his eyes.

“Well, you’re wrong again, Kylo. You told me that everything was going to be okay, and now I’m telling you that right back. We’ll figure this out. I promise.”

He still doesn’t believe her. Stubborn git, is it really so hard to have a little faith?

“I love you, Rey.”

She sighs and closes her eyes, snuggling her face into the side of his arm.
“Did you hear me?” he repeats. “I love you.”

“I hear you. If you’re expecting me to say it back-”

“I know. That’s what you’re supposed to say. It worked for my parents when they were courting, now it’s our turn.”

Courting? Oh how fancy. And yes, Rey has heard the stories. It was sweet for Han and Leia, but it wasn’t them. She and Kylo will never be like that, no matter how hard they try.

“How about I do one better?” she suggests. “How about I offer a way for us to while away the time having a little fun?”

His head picks up again, and Kylo eyes her suspiciously.

“You don’t mean-”

“Kinky prisoner sex? I think I like seeing you in chains. I think I like being able to do whatever I want to the naughty Supreme Leader of the galaxy.”

He raises an eyebrow. Rey changes position to straddle his lap so she can kiss him. Her blood is already starting to heat up already at the thought of riding him hard. Maybe she’ll use her mouth on him, too. They haven’t done that yet, though they’ve tried practically everything else.

When Rey pulls away from their kiss, Kylo’s eyes are dark. Victory is hers. She moves to slide back and get started, but he stops her with a clearing of his throat.

“Rey, are you sure that’s it’s safe for us? For you, I mean… since…”

Rey rolls her eyes. This is going to be a very insufferable nine months with him, isn’t it?

“Kylo, I’m one day pregnant. I’ll be fine.”
She drops down to her knees before him, rubbing her hands along the top of his legs and licking her lips as she contemplates the task at hand.

“Well… only if you’re totally sure.”

He starts to firm up against her palms. Clearly the man doth protest too much.

“Kylo, I’m not even showing yet.”

“You will be.”

There’s more than a trace of masculine pride in his voice when he says that. Rey rolls her eyes and starts to work him free of his pants.

“Yes, Kylo, you successfully knocked me up. Congratulations. Let’s screw to celebrate your conquest.”

She palms him, working him to full hardness as she ponders the best angle to go about taking him into her mouth.

“Rey?” his voice rises in pitch as he realizes her intended objective. “One more thing?”

She hums against his thigh, resting her head and waiting.

“What happened to Hux? Did you kill him?”

She smiles then, kissing and nipping her way back up his leg.

“I left him on the planet with the stormtroopers. I’m sure they’ll all have a lovely time there until someone bumbles along and rescues them. Who knows? It might even be my side. The General will make a fine catch for us, won’t he?”
Kylo snorts, an incredulous downward smirk decorating his lips.

“For your bumbling side?”

“Shut up.”

His smirk becomes a smile.

“Rey, I love you. I’ve never loved you more. Now say it. Please.”

He’s not going to let one this go, is he? Well fine, since it apparently means so much to him…

“I know you do, Kylo. I know. Now, if that’s good enough for you, would you oh so kindly stop talking for a few seconds? There’s something I very much want to get started on.”

Kylo huffs, rolling his head back as she strokes his length.

“Such a taskmaster. You know that if I break out, I’m going to treat my prisoner exactly the same way you’re doing to me?”

Rey smirks, wriggling closer between his bound legs, and getting to work.

“I’m counting on it.”

Then, for the next seven minutes, a miracle happens: Kylo Ren finally, finally shuts up.

Until he cries out her name, but Rey is going to allow him that, just this one time...
Well, we made it! This is the end of this story but there most certainly will be a sequel... at some point. I have a supremely narcissistic breakdown of the fic on the next chapter here, and if you don’t want to read all my rambles about the plot and structure (heh) then please at least read the last two paragraphs of ch23 because I have a message to share with all of you! <3<4<5
Final notes

Chapter Summary

Where I the author rambles for a real long time before actually finally having something to say ;)

Holy smokini macarini! We made it! We actually made it to the end!!!

I started this fic a few days after TLJ came out and now here we are at the start of summer how crazy is that? Over 100,000 words, so many hours, I can’t even believe I wrote this much.

This was by a decent margin my longest story I’ve ever written. Under Skies You Could Drown in made it to around 80k before I pulled it (more about that in a moment). I’m really happy with how it came out in the end, so forgive me for being very self indulgent and rambling on and on about this experience (IE feel free to skip the rest of this until where it’s indicated in the last 2 paragraphs when I finally get around to actually having something to say!)

Let’s recap the whole process:

things that went right:

I managed to maintain relatively regular updates. For a while I did 1 a week, though a few times I was late or missed a week for various reasons. I feel like this was probably the deciding factor in this fic’s popularity because you, the readers, knew that you could count on me not to have unnecessary delays and that I would actually finish this fic. You did trust me to finish this, right???

For my future stories: keep it up. Regular updates of at east once a week, twice is better I think.

The storyline was solid. Okay, it was a wacky storyline with psychedelic jungle cats and lost Jedi getting stuck in crystals and chemical storms and glowing rocks oh my!, but I feel like it all came together and hit the points that I wanted it to. This was definitely my most heavily outlined work and that extra time and effort really paid off.

For my future stories: Plotting. Plotting plotting plotting. Some people are plotters, some are pantsers (ie. you fly on the seat of your pants and write as your mind comes up with greatness), but I am absolutely 100% a plotter.
This was fun. I really enjoyed writing this most of the time, and that’s 90% of the whole reason to write at all, right? The other 10% being practice and to become a better writer in general.

For my future stories: Lots of variety. I’m going to try a whole bunch of different genres and ideas and see how they go.

Slight side tangent: a number of people over my 2 years of writing have asked me for tips. I am very happy to offer my advice and anecdotes though I’m by no means a professional writer (yet! Working on that!). Please, if anyone wants to chat about this or whatever, feel free to message me on tumblr at lost-inthesunlight or my email’s in my profile here. Don’t be shy, I’m pleasant, I promise :)

Also, if you want to become a writer or already are and are looking to improve your craft, I will always always sing praises to Plot and Structure by James Scott Bell. Bell has a ton of writing books, actually, and they’re all fantastic but Plot and Structure really is my bible for learning all the basics you need to know about wordcraft. Get yeysel a copy now, don’t wait. It’s under $10 and seriously, it’s that good.

Now, for the not so good stuff:

Too long. My original goal was to have this story 15 chapters and (12 to 15) and absolutely no more than 60k words. I had a whole schedule and stuff worked out and plenty of reasons why.

Weeeeeeellll… yeah, that didn’t happen. I ended up almost doubling this just… because the story needed it. Apparently I write really long. As long as this after party post-note is, haha.

For my future stories: Lessons have been learned. I’m sticking more or less to my 50k, 10 chapter goal for On Ben’s Knee and I’m learning much more clearly how to plot in a more concise manner. There was just too damned much going on in this fic, which for me as a writer became tiring. I didn’t want to mention this before, but starting around ch16 I got pretty burnt out for a while right up until these last 2 chapters. Lessons learned here, definitely.

Plot hole. Not a major one, but I never mentioned exactly why that old Rebellion ship (the one Rey found the body from like in ch3) was even on this planet. I was originally going to tack it onto Varn’s storyline but he was here much longer ago that that ship and then this plot point just kind of got forgotten about.

For my future stories: Oops. I’ll tackle explaining it in the sequel.

The Tiger King. It’s kind of really bad form to not mention at least vaguely a major villain until the start of Act 3. He should have been foreshadowed from the start, ideally made an appearance before they entered the caves. I had built this whole story on the diea of a giant critter eating one of
their lightsaber’s and then them killing it by igniting the saber inside it. Literally this was the whole base for this fic. But I hadn’t actually figured out how the ending was going to go until they had escaped from the caves after freeing Varn.

For my future stories: Yeah, do it better. Yup. That’s what to do.

Other rambles:

If you’re interested, here are my signposts:

Doorway 1 from act 1 to act 2: Rey and Kylo are reunited in chapter 4. Doorways should be a point of no return, and once Kylo got his Scavenger back he wasn’t letting go. You could also argue that the real door 1 was the start of ch1 when they crashed into this planet because they literally couldn’t go back (if you count The Space In Between as part of the outline for this story).

Middle moment: Rey can’t face her growing feelings and runs away in the caves. The middle moment needs to be a point of great personal growth for the main character.

Doorway 2 from act 2 to act 3: This one is easy: Kylo and Rey escape the underground. Now all the rest of act 3 should be building up to the final battle.

And there you go. Seriously, Plot and Structure, best book ever. Also Super Structure (also by James Scott Bell). This story would have wickedly suffered without both of them.

So… what’s the takeaway from all that I’ve just gibbered at you? I don’t think I want to write another work this long anytime soon. 100K words are fine and great, but next time I’m going to break them up into two stories and turn them into a series that I write in bursts and take a decent break between. So that would mean 6 weeks of 2 chapters a week book1, break for at lest 4-6 weeks, then book 2 same burst. I’m hoping this will be the best way to keep my productivity up and boredom down since I don’t have the longest attention span. This will be both for my fanfiction and other fiction writing.

Speaking of, my ‘have your cake and eat it too’ method of writing is that soon I will have hopefully a bunch of temporary ‘pop-up’ stories. These are fanfics that I will write, complete, leave up for a specified amount of time, and then take down to re-purpose. This won’t be forever and it won’t be for all my upcoming works, but I’ll give everyone a heads up on which stories and when they’ll be taken down and then you’ll have to contact me via email or tumblr and I’ll be happy to send you a copy of the finished fanfic :) On Ben’s Knee is a pop-up story, and I’ll take it down one month after whenever I complete it.
Right, wow, got way off track, it’s ANNOUNCEMENT TIME. For those of you who have been with me for a long time might remember that I had a long, rambling, bizarre but cute modern AU called Under Skies You Could Drown In. I took it down from AO3 last August for reasons I don’t want to get into, but (up until now) it had been my longest and most popular story. So… guess what? DO OVER TIME!!! I promised you a reboot, and now let’s get to it: Stranger to Blue Waters is going to be heavily inspired by Under Skies You Could Drown in. Think of it like Skies 2.0 but with a big upgrade to the system patch. The first story suffered from a rambling storyline, this time I’m pulling that sucker right in and keeping firm hands on the reigns. I’m going to keep the same basic plot, the setting, some of my favorite scenes from the original (ghost town, the lookout tower, random moments of camping domesticity and adventure) but this time I’m going to give it a proper, well thought out plot. And this plot is probably going to take me a long, long number of chapters and I’m not even going to guess how many thousands of words. A lot. So this is where writing it in a series of manageable bursts is going to come in. Stranger to Blue Waters is going to be “book 1” and it will have it’s own full mini-arch that supports the overall plot arch, if that makes sense? Chapter 1 has just been posted now because I’m shamelessly hoping to grab some readers from this story and tempt ya’ll into checking it out also. This first chapter very closely follows ch1 from Skies, and then we’ll start to deviate further as the story progresses.

FINAL NOTE

Have I rambled on enough for you?

Okay, back to No Rest For The Wicked. Well obviously we have to have a sequel for it, now don’t we? Someday. I promise. I just really need to take a breather for a while and recharge my batteries with other projects for a while. When the sequel is ready, I’ll post an update chapter here so anyone who is subscribed will be notified :) I’m about to leave for 2 weeks of camping off the grid, just me and my family and my kindle loaded with ebooks, so please forgive me if I’m late in responding to your messages. I’ll be back on June 6th so wait for me then :)

And a final OH MY GODS THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH FOR STICKING WITH THIS STORY!!!!!!! Yes, THANK YOU READERS! I literally couldn’t have done this without you guy’s support. All of your comments or feedback or just saying hi to me on tumblr at lost-insunlight really mean the world to me and I have all of them saved in a big directory on my computer that I look at whenever I’m feeling down (no, seriously, I do and the fact that the folder is so huge with support or helpful critiques really is just the best damn feeling in life. So again AAAAAAAAAHHHH!!! THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH!!! SO MUCH LOVE TO YOU ALL!!!!!
Now, because saying goodbye is hard, I’ve enlisted the help of the Bernard Black to chase you all away with a broom :) 

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9qVZR6tQhmc

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!