Republic in Peace

by Azulsilvis

Summary

It is a time of peace in the galaxy. Regarded extinct, the Sith were defeated hundreds of years ago, and their mark on the galaxy was eradicated in the centuries that followed. Since the fall of the New Sith Empire, the Galactic Republic and its Jedi protectors faced no outside threat. But now, a new threat arises from the shadows as galaxy-wide deterioration and corruption threaten the welfare of the galactic community.

Notes

Hi, everyone! This is my first attempt at writing a fanfiction. I am writing a kind of interpreted Star Wars here where I focus on things other than those in the movies or things that are left in the background. Also, this fiction lacks the canonical characters (except one), and instead, focuses more on fan characters and their relationships I introduce. I want to make this a long story, and am planning to release the chapters as I write them. I hope you enjoy it.
The Disavowed Visionary

I see conflict. The air in the large city carries poison to its dwellers. It passes around their narrow and hexagonal homes that stand high above them. It surrounds the crowds of people that have shades of red. They cry out in anger, clashing at one another ferociously. Horns are aimed for skins of red as the luxurious buildings litter the ground with the pieces they drop. It is chaos everywhere. Then, the image changes.

I see a young woman. I do not know her. She stands there motionless and there is only whiteness around her in the image. She is so beautiful. Her skin is a color between yellow and white. Dark brown hair, light blue eyes... The image changes.

Ruins lie on empty plains and steep mountains in a desolate land. Rocks encapsulated by sand shine on the orange landscape as the forgotten ruins stand in mystical dignity, waiting impatiently to be uncovered. Then again, the image changes.

Fire. A town in the middle of an endless desert lights the night as white, circular buildings burn like camp fire. I can hear the screams of thousands coming from hundreds of them. As the voices get abuzz, the image changes.

I am in a dark room. It is the young woman, again. Two men in black armour stands behind each side of her, holding her from her arms. Beside them, a man in black robes sits on a throne-like chair in front of me. He is hooded to the eyes, and wears a mask made of a gray metal. He speaks to me, but there is no voice. He extends his arm, giving me a lightsaber. I light it. Filled with a red light, the image changes.

I see the void of space. The stars in the distance look beautiful from far far away as always. While I stand still, they march forward like arrows directed at me. And then, in the darkness of space, an object is revealed. What stands out is a moon or a planet. But it is grayed out, devastated.

I wake up from the same vision that haunted me for over a decade. The holobook on which I fell asleep reads 'Aspects of the Force, The Light and the Dark by Tasiele Shan.'

"Slept well, Mr. Malcom?"

The voice comes from right in front of me. I had not noticed her. I look at her with empty eyes till my sight gets clear enough. The earnest Jedi Master sits in front of me, her hands folded on the lengthy table.

"Master Alvan. I am sorry. I must have fallen asleep," I say tentatively.

"You seem distressed. Is something troubling you?"

"Nothing out of the ordinary, Master Jedi."

*She knows exactly what I mean by 'nothing out of the ordinary'*. 

"I see," she says, breaking the eye contact. "It is however no excuse to occupy the library an hour before the sun rises," she adds as if she is making a playful comment.

*The Grand Library of the Jedi Temple is indeed not somewhere you spend your nights, yes.*

I fake a shy grin.
She smiles in return. "Or is it for Averane Malcom?"

"I don't know..." I mumble like a little boy who got a harsh reprimand. "Master Reyma let me stay."

"Did he?" Well, you are lucky my days as the Jedi Librarian are long past."

Silence.

All of a sudden, the Neutolan Jedi Master laughs out loud. "And you thought I didn't have a sense of humor."

I smile.

"What were you reading?" She reaches for the holobook in front of me, and starts scrolling it up and down randomly.

"Many things, really," I say on impulse.

"It is not a lie," she says continuing to mess around with the holobook. "I spoke with Senator Ferdon this morning." She takes a pause. "Or rather the morning before," she adds grinning. "How do you know him?"

"We are friends."

"It is not a lie, either." She is still skimming through the book. "So... You can't have been reading books here all day."

"I really don't have much to do, Master Jedi."

"Yes, it isn't one too..."

*Now, that's too much.* "If you have questions, I will do the best I can to answer them, Master Jedi."

Her pale purple face gets somber again. She slowly puts the book back on the table. "This is not an interrogation, Averane. Not yet." Her tentacles sweep the table as she slowly moves her head towards me. "I understand you have worries because of the visions you have been experiencing, but I had already assured you that the Jedi Council is looking for anything extraordinary on Devaron. If we find something, we will share it with the Senate to be addressed. You should leave this matter to those who qualify for it."

I protest: "I haven't done anything." *Yet.*

"And I hope it will remain that way," she says in an extremely calm voice all of a sudden. "For your safety." She hikes her robe, and gets up. "Now, if you will excuse me, I have a Padawan to tend to."

"Please, send Padawan Loff my regards, Master Jedi," I say like nothing happened.

"I will."

And she leaves.

*Maybe I should do the same before anyone else comes by here now that it is the crack of dawn.*
I am no Jedi. I am no civilian. I am nothing. Perhaps, she is right. Who am I to take things into my own hands? Deprived of my status of Jedi over a stupid dream, I roam the corridors of this temple like a womprat in a mollgar's pit. I should never have left Nar Shaddaa.

The trail of thoughts stop as I come to the place. This storage room of the Jedi Temple is always the same junkyard. ...For a reason I have never known. I step inside it. I carefully close the door behind me. And I turn on the lights.

"M4. Hello, it's me."

Silence.

"I know you are there," I say, raising my voice slightly.

"Maybe because I have no legs to go anywhere, you idiot!" the bad-tempered obsolete medical droid shouts.

"You want me to bring some?" I offer 'with a good heart'.

"You really think I'll fall for that? You are the idiot, not me, you filthy human."

Ouch. "That's racist." I fake a sad face.

"That's specificist, you idiot. I hate it when you litter my place with your hair. Return here after you shaved your horrendous hair and beard! Wait! On second thought, DON'T EVER COME HERE AGAIN!"

Putting up with his ill temper is a part of the price for sneaking out of the temple. So, I shall endure.

"You sure you don't need any parts?"

"You are the one who will need parts if you continue bothering me! When will you go obsolete? You are functioning for how many years? Eighty one?"

"Twenty three."

"Well, maybe I should let you leave for the last time so you find a job, and be of some use!"

"OK, OK. I'll just leave you alone." Then, I turn my back, and start moving slowly to the door.

Silence.

"Wait, wait!"

It always works.

"I may actually need a new decomposer unit."

"What model you said?"

"V9-DMD / 7EKO."

I write it down. "Got it."

"Here." He transmits me the clearance code.
M4's getting me out again. I don't know how it still has a clearance, but I won't question as long as it can sneak me out of the temple.

As usual, I get inside the vacant room with the clearance code. Next, I take the ventilation shaft inside to the upper level of the temple to an unused balcony of sorts. Then, I simply jump from over six hundred meters of height. I use the Force to push the ground just before I land so as not to break my legs, and end up in a suburban street. I start running from there for a while. And I finally take a taxi.

Dropped nearby, I shortly arrive at the avenue for the agreed meeting. As always, it is full of people walking around. Thousands of voices ring in my ears while the exact place for the secret meeting, the public holoscreen, broadcasts the news of the Devaronian anarchy. The words of the speaker come and go meaninglessly in my mind. I am focused on the images.

*It's so similar to what I have been seeing in my vision all those years. Angry crowds of red people with horns... It is happening.*

I stop for a moment.

*What am I doing here? What can I do, anyway! I should just... No, no! There has to be a reason for my vision. It can't be for nothing. No way! After all those years, it is coming true.*

"Mr. Malcom." The voice comes from right beside me. The Devaronian senator I am used to see in most luxurious outfits is dressed with a plain and white tunic.

"How are you, my friend?"

"Senator," I salute him. "I guess I am as fine as I can ever be."

"Oh, my friend," he says in a manner so courteous I would normally call it theatrical. "I am so glad you commiserate with my people."

*It is not that, but thanks I guess.*

"I wish I had taken your warnings more seriously."

"You did, senator. Truth be told, even I wasn't sure."

"My people suffer," he continues to reproach. "And the Senate is deaf to my cries and my people's. Do you see?" He shows me the screen.

It is the Chancellor: "... an era of peace over centuries, now. And that peace, dear citizens of the Galactic Republic, only prospers at this moment. Do not believe the lies of those with the ill-intent to deceive you into believing a Republic deteriorating.

"In contrast to some who do nothing, but speak against our actions, we do the work. They are jealous for it! They are jealous... Yes!"

In short, he talks gibberish again.

I refuse to make the political comment. Then, I remember: "Senator Ferdon, did you talk with a Jedi a week or so ago?"

"Many. Is there a problem?"

"Maybe. I was kinda interrogated. Do you know Nerreta Alvan?"
"Really? That name doesn't sound familiar. Can you describe her?"

"Female, brown robes, somber, looks modest..."

He scratches his right horn. "What you describe is half the Jedi."

*Since the other half is male*...

"She has..."

*Aah! I hate specifism, but fuck it.*

"She is a purple Neutolan."

"Oh, yes, I did. She stopped by my office a week or so ago, reassured me that the Jedi Council is doing all they can regarding Devaron." And he adds with a sigh: "To no avail it seems."

"So, yes, she did speak with you. She told me she did while questioning me."

"It was all, though. I thanked her and we parted ways. She didn't say or ask anything else."

"Doesn't matter. She probably spoke with you just to tell me."

"She could have lied, no?"

"Not to me. Lies are easy to detect with the Force," I try to explain. "It is almost... subconscious."

"Ah, I see. Regardless, it seems we need to be more careful from now on."

"I think so, yes."

On the screen, the Chancellor is still talking.

"Aren't you getting any support from the Senate?"

"Senator Domma and Senator Vel have been great support, but no, nothing new." He sighs. "Most of the Senate is corrupt to the bone," he adds nearly spitting.

*Wow. Things can't be getting better. I would never expect him to react like that.*

"I am sorry, Senator."

"I have gotten support from a certain non-governmental organization, though. I have you to thank for that."

"Lamus agreed to help?"

"Yes, he plans to do everything he can. Posters, community aids, and maybe even a protest... We'll see how much it helps."

"I am glad."

*Big help...*

Someone cries out behind me. "Averane!"

I turn my back. "Ediskard?"
"Senator," the bulky Padawan salutes him with a random curtsy.

"Master Jedi," Ferdon salutes back. "It has been a great pleasure to speak with you Mr. Malcom," he turns to me smiling. "If you will excuse me..."

And he leaves.

"So, Rane," Dis starts, "Haven't you been warned just recently?" He smiles slyly.

"How do you know?"

"She is my master, and I am her errand boy, so I am to babysit you," he says teasingly.

"Well, Dis you know, it has been more than a week, and I thought it wouldn't draw suspicion."

Dis laughs out loud nearly roaring. "Well, no problem for me. You are in big trouble this time, anyway." He puts his huge arm around my shoulder, and I feel the physical pressure to start moving. "You are no kid anymore, Rane. You should have known better," he says as we walk.

"Shut the fuck up! You are not even an adult," I respond to his teasing.

He laughs. "You bastard!"

"So, what's the problem?" I ask most frivolously as I put my arm around his belly like a kid.

He can't stop laughing. I must have made his day.

"Don't worry. What worse can they do to you? And you didn't do enough to be executed."

"A full detention?" I suggest the idea.

"Look, I can't do anything, and you know it."

"Will you please tell me what is going on, then?"

"Master Lin wants to speak with you."

"May the fucking Force be with me."

Dis laughs again. "Always man, always."

I breathe out a deep sigh. We walk silently for a few minutes till we get on the speeder.

"Sorry you had to be bothered to look after me," I apologise.

"Oh, I should thank you. I saw some normal faces."

"Hah," I give him a knowing look as I am taken back to the temple.

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Why me? Am I chosen or destined for something? If not, why would the Force grant me such a
vision? The Jedi mantra teaches us that the Will of the Force guides us. Then, the Sith will return? I know I am not having that vision for no reason. It has cost me everything! I know what will happen, and I know I have a place in all that. I have to move on, no matter what.

I get out of my usual thinking, and take a deep breath. Then, I knock the door to the Jedi Grand Master's chamber.

"Come in."


"Oh no. Come join us young one," says Master Lin.

I take an empty seat.

"Some fresh air you took, mhm?" the little green Jedi playfully remarks.

"I did Master Yoda. I am sorry."

"It would be too strict of us if we deprived you of all your freedom after we have ...disavowed you unfairly," Master Lin responds to my shock.

They admit I was right? After all this time?

"Understand you must that only about you, it is not. More at play to your visions there is, young one." Yoda remarks.

"I just want to understand my place in all of this," I exclaim, suppressing my temper.

"The Will of the Force itself the visions reflect. Messengers they are. That is, most of the time..." Yoda's face takes a grave form. "But manipulated even the purest forms of the Force can be. Generally, a mere possibility a vision about the future shows. Yet yours, a series of... certainties it seems to be, young one." His face turns more and more grave with each word he utters. "Playing with you the dark forces may..."

"I think it is enough, Master Yoda," Lin interrupts. "Will you please leave us alone for now?"

"Oh," Yoda is taken aback for a moment. "Of course, master," he says jumping down the chair. "A nice time you have," he salutes us as he leaves.

"Thank you, my friend."

And Yoda is kicked out. Wow.

Lin turns to me. "How are you, my friend?"

"I am fine. Thank you for asking, Master Lin."

"Some people do need to learn some manners, don't you think," the old Jedi Master comments with a smile on his face."

I raise an eyebrow in dazedness.

"You have to excuse Yoda and the others. They are worried, and they don't have the trust I have for you."
"Now, what was that?" I... don't understand what you are saying, Master Lin."

"You do deserve an explanation." The Grand Master takes his hand to his long beard. "A decade ago, you warned us with your visions of the upcoming danger. The matter at hand was... sensitive at best. Even more so now. At that time, it required subtlety on the Council's part. The members of the Jedi Council decided that the truth had to remain a secret. So, you had to be... disavowed."

I stay silent for a moment till I digest his words.

"Why tell me now?" I eventually ask.

"Your vision is coming true. Devaron succumbs to anarchy as you said it would. It may be that the Will of the Force has decreed you must be a part of what is to come." The old Jedi Master hikes his bluish white robes, and gets up with a sigh. "Let us take some fresh air before we continue, my friend."

I obey, and we start walking to the courtyard. Lost in feelings of sadness, disappointment and anger, I stay silent for a few minutes. The old man is silent, too. But finally, I can't resist anymore, and spit it out.

"You want my help?" I ask accusingly.

Lin looks at me without emotion.

"You want my help after kicking me out of the Order, trapping me in this temple, and I had to live a life of divergence, no Jedi, and yet no civilian for nearly ten years?"

"As I said, I understand your situation. The Jedi Council's decision wasn't an ideal one, but it was deemed to be for the best," Lin responds, maintaining his composure. "Indeed, your help is needed. The Council now thinks we have to keep track of your vision, and unravel this mystery or the consequences may be catastrophic for the entire galaxy."

The way he expresses it... I can only imagine how unfair a treatment I received. To be cast out for warning them of such a danger, for speaking the truth... I was disavowed from the Jedi Order, and my future was destroyed! And it was because the truth I spoke of had to remain a secret? Was there no other way for them to act like they didn't believe me that day?

Lost in my thoughts and feelings, I stop at the overlook. I turn my face to the city under my feet. The daylight shines over the courtyard while I stay still in all kinds of feelings.

I should just spit on his face! I should let the galaxy burn if that is what is at stake! What happened the last time I wanted to be of help? They refused my offer of help then, I should refuse their ask for help now.

"I am no Jedi!" I finally burst out.

Silence. The wise old man doesn't respond.

I take a deep breath, and release, finally regaining my composure.

"What do you want?" I ask.

"The girl in your vision, that is, one that suits your description is found on Mirial. A young Mirialan with a human-like skin. She has no facial tattoos or headdress like the traditionalists of her people."
"Mirialan? When?" I ask in surprise.

"Yes. Three years ago. Master Alvan returned empty-handed, however. It seems that the young woman's parents relocated."

"Why wouldn't she track her presence?"

"The young woman seems to have an innate ability with the Force. Her presence seems to be... insensible. A very rare case, indeed."

"How did you locate her in the first place then?"

The wrinkles on his face change place, and he turns sour. He looks around to check if we are alone. Then, he says in a nearly inaudible voice: "Some others who are not Jedi did before."

"What?" I get shocked.

A moment of silence as I piece together the events.

"The Sith... and now they beat you to it, again?"

The Jedi Grand Master nods with a sigh. "There has been a disturbance in the Force. The Jedi Council meditated on it, and concluded it is centred on Mirial."

"A disturbance in the Force?" I ask in surprise.

"It was a minor one, but still indicates the importance of this matter."

"Why wouldn't you tell me anything the first time?" I resent.

"As I said, it had to remain a secret."

"And you wouldn't trust me enough to keep my mouth shut!"

Silence. Lin kneels down, sits on the ground, crosses his legs. And he invites me by tapping on the ground with his hand.

I sigh, but accept.

"You freed yourself from this temple once, travelled the wider galaxy, spent time with people of all kinds. Yet, in the end... you would return. Why?"

The sentiment pierces my mind like a blaster fire. I say nothing for a while. I look at the ring on his finger to distract myself so I can keep myself away from raging. It is a plain ring with a black stone on it.

"I couldn't stay away," I finally say. "All those years, the vision... haunted my nights."

"Then, you understand what I mean. You have to go to Mirial with Nerreta Alvan this time. Please, young one."

I take one deep breath, and comply: "OK, OK."

"Please, meet them as soon as you can. We have no time to waste. They will depart shortly, and they will require your guidance."
"I will, Master Lin."

"May the Force be with you all."

I say nothing in return. I get up and turn my back. And I leave the courtyard with mixed feelings, feelings of worry, fear and doubt, but also... purpose.
"Eva!"

I sober up on the chair I fell half asleep. "Whoa."

"You are doing it, again," sis yells at me.

I notice the sound of broken glass. Then, I look down, and notice the floor is littered with everything we have eaten and drunk throughout the day.

"Again! Oh, please."

"No worries, dear. You’ll clean it up," she teases me.

"Fuck this!" I swear to the cosmic energy.

She laughs like a villainess.

My head hurts from drinking to death. I raise my eyes from the ground to look at my older sister. She doesn’t look very healthy, either. "Why did we do that to ourselves?"

"It was YOUR idea."

_Jeez. It's six already. Mom’s gonna kill us if alcohol doesn’t. I’d better start cleaning this mess._

So, I get off my butt. And I start from the pieces of glass.

"Hey, why don’t you lift them like you just did?" she remarks mockingly.

"I can’t," I say, and continue to pick up the pieces of glass from the ground. Then, I drop at least half of them back. "It happens without me knowing."

"Oh, that must suck hard."

"Yeah," I sigh.

I throw the trash in the bin. _What a mess!_ Then, I go sit back on the sofa. I notice I just colored it red.

_Of course, I cut my hands. I am leaving the rest of this mess to lie on the ground, because fuck it!_

"Eva..." sis reproaches worriedly having noticed the blood on my hands.

"It’s fine," I murmur.

She gets up to bring me a piece of ice for the cuts. Next, she sits down beside me. With care, she starts to press on my hands.
I hate ice. I hate cold. And I certainly hate sand, but that's beside the point.

"Are you OK?"

"It'll pass. Don’t be so gloomy," I tell her off.

She smiles. Her eyes shining, she instantly reaches for the remote control, and turns the holoscreen on, apparently to cheer me up. Then, she continues to press on my hands. It is the 'President of Cryowhere' on the screen, again: "Traditionalists? Approaches these groups suggest are not only primitive, but dangerous for our society, and damages our place in the Galactic Senate," he decrees.

"Like anyone cares about this rock of sand, huh sis?"

*She is so cute trying to cheer her little sister up.*


"Mhm?"

"That’s fucking true!"

"I know right," she nods.

"No one is stupid enough to give a shit about this place, its people or its problems. And even if that president of ours showed whatever cryo there is under his pants, he wouldn’t get any more attention." Kerinn laughs her ass off as I go on a roll. "Hell, I would get more attention than he ever could if I slapped my own tits on that channel all naked!"

"Oh, you would," she says in between laughs. "You are the sexiest bitch ever!" she compliments.

I laugh. Then, I sigh at the reminder. "All I want is to get away from this rock... to just anywhere," I rebel like an adolescent.

"Graduate from high school. Find the credits. Then, go wherever you want, Eva. No one can stop you then. You can travel the wider galaxy." She puts her hand on my shoulder.

*Yeah yeah...*

"That’s not going to happen so long as dad can’t manage to stay in one place on this cryo-rock for more than a year."

"Eva!"

"I should just escape now," I tease her.

"No spaceport in Getleei," Kerinn responds.

"No transport to Raassa?"

"You have no credits."

"Bitch."

She laughs.

"I'll just find a rich man with my tits," I joke acting a little serious.
She shames me with her eyes. We laugh. Then again, I screw up my face: "I just don’t know what to do with my life."

"We all go through that, Eva."

On the screen, a protestor’s voice stands out: "Ours is a proud society! With Mirial’s blessings upon us, we shall keep the corruption of the Republic away from our divine customs!"

"Yeah!" I comment.

We laugh. Again.

"Listen, Eva," Kerinn says in a soft and caring voice all of a sudden. "I know what you deal with. People think and say all kinds of things, and that makes you worry and doubt yourself." She pauses for a moment to turn off the holoscreen. "I know the feeling," she continues. "You conquer countless challenges in life, and may get little to no congratulation for any of that, but then, you get stuck just once, and they all start criticizing you. That happens. What to do is not to avoid being criticized, but to rise above that, to do what is good for you, not for anyone else."

And she lifts my spirit, again.

"Whoa, Kerinn. I know you are saying it while a little drunk, but thanks."

She smiles like an angel in response.

Then, noises come out from outside the hall.

"Kerinn! Evail!"

"Shit! Mom."

"What do we do?"

"Run, run!" I suggest hurriedly.

"Eva, stop!"

I don’t listen. As usual, she follows my craziness. And as usual, we run to escape to the yard from the hall. "Evail, Kerinn, turn back!" mom shouts from behind us. We don’t care. We giggle. We continue to run.

But then, something happens. I stop in my tracks.

What’s this? There is something. It is evil. I feel so cold. It gets inside my skin. But it is... unnatural.

Kerinn stops when she notices me. "Eva! What happened?"

"Turn back, now!" mom shouts.

"I feel... I feel so bad. I don’t know. Kerinn!" In an instant, I collapse on my knees. My hands on my head. I am in extraordinary fear.

"Mom, we are here!" Kerinn shouts for help. She runs near me. "I am here, Eva. Speak to me. It’s all right," she consoles me. "You must have gotten sick. You shouldn’t have drunk that much, she says in worry. I feel her tender hand caressing my hair, her nails painted in black.
Anger, fear, sorrow, pain, worry... I feel it all. They all come down on me, overwhelm me.

"Eva!" Kerinn shouts.

I am shaking. I feel my body getting as cold as ice. It is like I am drying.

"Turn back!" mom shouts. Only now, do I notice there is more to her voice than simple resentment.

And I shriek with the pain that tortures me. Rocks, leaves, dust, everything on the surface starts floating in the air around me.

"Eva!" Kerinn shouts. She steps back in fear.

I feel all my body tensed up. The energy inside me commands the space around me on its own. In an instant, the pain ends. Everything drops on the surface. And it’s over. I give out a grateful sigh. "Kerinn," I call out to her with a weak voice.

But instead, she screams: "Eva!"

I look up instantly. A red light passes through her stomach with a yellow burn. She’s frozen. Her mouth’s wide open. Her eyes lack their light. Startled, I freeze with her in this moment. I’m unable to respond. And then, the red light disappears. And she falls lifeless.

I look at the red alien revealed behind where my friend for life just stood. My shock turns into fear as I get stuck in terror at the sight of the woman who just took her life in an instant. Then, my fear turns into sorrow. "No!" I start crying sobbingly. I scream. I screech. With all my voice. And then, my sorrow turns into anger. Blinded to everything material around me by fury, I attack the red alien. But my arms are grabbed by hands of at least four others. I don’t even look at them. I am devastated. All my sanity has left me. I see red.

Next, I hear the screams of another. I flare-up. "Mom!" I screech in agony. And I desperately attempt to run home that is burning. She is screaming in such pain. I lose myself utterly as madness overwhelms me. I squirm in infinite wrath while hopelessly trying to get free of the hands that hold me. Fire and destruction surrounds every inch.

Meanwhile, the alien comes closer. Mad woman is smiling in joy at the sight of my agony. I go even more crazy. I let out a scream I never thought could be this loud in a fury I never thought could be this much. Rocks, leaves, dust, everything on the surface starts floating in the air around me. I no longer feel the hands that were holding me. I hear the sounds of men that scream. They are breaking just as the floating rocks do. The red murderer steps back. She covers her face with her hand while the surface around me is filled with men writhing in pain.

The density of power born of my fury encapsulates the entire yard. I feel it overwhelming all those around me like gravity. And, as it overwhelms me, I pass out.

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Eva!

Turn back!

Evail, Kerinn...
Voices in my mind stop. I open my eyes to darkness. My head aches like a thousand needles were injected on my scalp. My hands are tied to a wall with iron. As I come to myself, I lament: "Kerinn, oh mom!"

"Awake at last?" The coarse voice comes from inside the room.

"Why are you doing this? Who are you?" I cry.

"It is not who I am, but who YOU are that matters, girl," says the voice with a harsh tone.

"We have done nothing wrong! Why did you do this to us?"

"...and, who YOU will be," adds the voice ignoring my words.

A flash of light blinds my eyes. I struggle with the light. As I slowly open them, I see the gigantic man before me. It is another red alien, but a different one. Small tentacles on his chin hang down like beard. He looks like a half-naked beast wearing some black metals on his torso and a short piece of cloth on his legs.

The creature looks at me with empty eyes. "You met fear, pain, anger. A touch of the dark side was bestowed upon you. Now, you will experience them."

He grabs my jaws with his red hand. I scream. I make futile attempts to break free, but my struggle's in vain.

"Do not worry. You will not be humiliated. You will not be degraded. You will not be decreased to size. Such a pity..." Then, he pushes my head from my chin to the wall.

"Get... away, you... psycho!" I scream. And, I grab his hand, helplessly trying to break free.

He raises his other hand above my head. "Now, know... FEAR!"

I feel an immense pressure. From his hand comes an invisible wave of energy. It hits my forehead. And it gets inside my mind like a swarm of insects. I scream as high as I can in the face of such evil. I use all the power I have to resist, worrying it will destroy my mind. And then, I sense another energy releasing abruptly from my mind. This one comes from me.

The red psycho baffles. He steps back. He's taking his hand above his own head, now. I can clearly notice he’s spitting nails. Then, he makes a move to attack me, teeth grinning.

I am pulling myself back with a high-pitched scream.

"No." A metallic voice inside the room stops him just before he smashes my face.

A masked figure who has been sitting in a chair inside the room. He stands up. I had not noticed him being here.

"Stand back," he orders the red psycho.

He obeys, still grinning his teeth.

The masked man approaches me. Entirely covered in a black robe, he has its hood on, which covers the top of his mask. The robe’s large collar is attached to his long mask, and covers its lower end.
The man says nothing as I look at him with begging eyes. He raises his hand gently.

"Fear," he commands.

I feel the same pressure again, but this time, it is much more intense. I feel knives cutting through my forehead. I scream. Again, I force myself to resist with all my power. But it is nowhere enough.

"Such a mind... Such a pure land for terror," the masked psycho remarks.

In an instant, I travel into a dream. In it, a figure of darkness plays with me. I run in the streets of Getleii. It catches me. I hide in the cabinet of my room at home. It finds me. I attack it. It dominates me. There is no escape. Everytime, the dark creature gets to me. It is an endless game of torture.

In endless fear, I make a final attempt to resist. And, it ends. I feel like the wave of energy released from my mind just passed through the opposing energy only by an inch.

My entire body sweats. Not even trying to regain my composure, I take tens of deep breaths in weariness. I feel I used up all my energy and power.

The masked psycho shows no sign. He still stands in the same way. Then, he turns to the red psycho.

"She has known enough. Proceed."

The red man says nothing, but grumbles.

The masked man moves to the door. As it opens automatically, he adds, "As planned."

As the door closes behind, I notice the red man is still mad at me.

"Now, it is time for pain," he announces.

"Please, you don’t have to..." I beg him.

"What do you know!" he yells at me. "But, you will learn." He pulls out a small rod. Turned on, it sends out electricity.

"Please!" I cry. "No! No more!"

But he doesn’t care. He stabs the rod on my waist like a knife. I scream in pain as electricity wraps up my body.

---

Kerinn.

I look at the cuts of glass on my hands tied to the wall behind me.

*Is it all that is left of her now? Oh, Kerinn, why did it have to be you? You were so innocent and good and... I should have died, instead.*

And I burst into tears. Her very last word rings in my ears: "Eva!" as she screams.

*All the happy, and all the bitter happy moments we had together... They are gone, now. All of it is*
taken from me. I am left in my misery.

"Hello, dear," says a woman’s voice as the door opens.

I raise my head, and notice the woman immediately.

It is her! The red bitch who murdered my sister in cold blood!

She comes closer. I realize she was a twi-lek. The tall and muscular woman has nothing but a piece of garment on her to cover her private parts. While I lay my eyes on her, she plays with her black striped lekkus in a sarcastic joy.

I flare-up. "You!" I shout at her, grinning my teeth in rage.

"I see you’ve been enjoying yourself," she says with a mocking tone of voice.

In fury, I attempt to attack her so strongly that the sound of metal from my chains resonates in the room. I could even hear the wall cracking.

She takes a step back. But then, she laughs. "Oh, you have no idea how much I would love to play with you, my dear."

*I lose my mind at her sight, and she mocks me!*

"But, you see, we have little time," she adds. "The others are already left, and I have other things to do than to babysit you."

"Why have you done that! She was innocent!" I rage in tears.

"Innocence is for the weak, so I just killed her as she deserved."

The way she says it like it is so normal...

"You psychopathic bitch! You monster! I loved them more than myself, you... you..."

I wallow, and weep in their memory. I am unable to believe they are really gone.

"I understand, you know. I really do."

I raise my head. And I look at her in rage.

"Regardless, I’ll take these compliments. Thanks, dear. I must say it is so much fun to see you this way. I truly wish we had more time to play."

"Ah!" I rage with every emotion I could feel.

"Did I mention what we did with your mother’s body after the tentacle beard slew her by the way?"

"No, no, no! You... you monsters!" I go delirious out of rage. Start hitting the wall that chains me, screeching.

"And of course, your sister, was it?"

"I am going to KILL YOU!"

"Oh, before you ask, your father is dead, too."
"Why, why, why?"

"You are special, and we have uses for you, but don’t get cocky." She laughs malevolently. "As for your family, your friends and your town and everyone and everything that you cared for, we just didn’t want to draw any attention."

As I hear it, sorrow and guilt takes me instead of rage. "No," I say meekly.

"Ah, yes, it is all your fault."

I am stuck. My mouth doesn’t open. My limbs don’t move. I can feel nothing anymore.

"And here you are feeling sorry for your own self." Then, she pauses for a moment. "Oh, don’t worry," she says with a fake sigh. "Perhaps, one day, you will have your revenge." She moves away. "Until then, take care of yourself." And, she leaves, blowing a kiss to mock me one last time.

The lights go off. Sounds and voices of suffering ring in my ears. They originate from the darkness before me. It reflects my imagination of the tragedy that took place because of me. Screams of men, women, children, all my friends, mom, dad, Kerinn...

In delirium, I pull my chains to my neck to choke myself to death. No. They are not long enough. Helpless, I bang my hands and head to the wall time and again in hopes of venting my anger on myself, but it is still there after I am exhausted. Then, with my last energy, I let out one painful scream, but it is lost in the darkness.

And, as the darkness inside me becomes one with the darkness that surrounds me, I am nothing.
"You say you have been experiencing this vision for months now, young Averane?"

"Master Dorut, I swear I am telling the truth."

"You do indeed, young one, which is what is troubling."

"Master... I didn't do anything wrong."

"Yes, nothing wrong you did, but a victim of what is done, you may be."

"We believe your mind may be corrupted by the dark side."

"Please, Master Tassei. He is just a child."

"What this child experiences is not an ordinary vision, Master Lin."

"Indeed, it is nothing like what we have encountered before."

"I just started to see things... and noticed they repeated, and I was afraid to tell anyone... and... and I thought I should tell you. Please, masters. You... have to believe me."

"It is not about whether we believe you or not, young one."

"Want to punish you we do not, yet nothing to do there is."

"Enough! The Council has already reached a decision. Averane Malcom, we have concluded that you run a risk of dark side corruption. You will forfeit your status as a member of the Jedi Order indefinitely, and will remain in the Jedi Temple until you are regarded no longer as a threat by the Jedi High Council."

"Ho, Rane!"

I get out of my morning meditation of breaking my neck over the past, and notice Ediskard at the doorsill.

"Tired of sleeping on it, so you sit on that bed now? Get up! We've nearly arrived."

"Morning to you, too. I am coming."

He gets lost without saying anything.

I get up, dash water on my face, tie my hair, get dressed, and get out of that starship cabin before I let my thoughts consume me again. Alvan and Ediskard are in the cockpit when I get there.

"Here we are," Dis announces as the ship leaves the hyperspace.

What lies before us is not a planet, but instead a massive bulk of large starships cruising around a space station.

"The Republic Fleet?"

"We need authorization from the Gav Daragon to operate in an Outer Rim system," Alvan explains.
"We could get it from Coruscant, but it is too much paperwork even for an emergency mission," Dis complains. After a pause, he adds: "Never thought we would go on a mission together, Rane."

"Yeah," I brush him off.

*Wow. Most of these ships are ancient.*

The ship's comlink sizzles. "T-3 Freighter 264556, state your business."

"We are here with the special order of the Jedi High Council to see the Military Command for Operations to the Outer Rim Systems."

"Permission to board granted. You are expected, Master Jedi. Please proceed to hangar bay E-2."

"Thank you, officer."

*Too much formality already. I can't believe we have to waste time with all this.*

We land on the crowded hangar. Then, Dis and I follow Alvan to go out. Military personnel stand at attention at each sides of the hatch. They get inside the ship right after we pass them by.

*Standard procedure to waste our time, I guess. Well, at least I don't need to be angry about how slow these two walk.*

It is a long trip of the ancient cruiser. After what seemed like hours to me, we finally arrive at what looks like a command center of sorts.

"Wait here," Alvan commands, and enters the chamber.

Noises and beepings. Over-formality. Military personnel passing by. All of them add up to my worry. I lean my back against the wall, pull a long face, and give out a lengthy sigh.

"Loosen up," Dis says in a relaxed mood. "We'll sort things out."

"We just waste so much time on stupid formalities!"

"It is not a formality. Mirial is an Outer Rim system, and the Outer Rim Territories aren't in Republic Space. A mission there without permission would be considered trespassing, and you can guess what that could cause."

*I never thought like that.*

"So, we need permission from an independent system?"

"Nah. The Republic has its agreements with the Mirialan government. So, nothing that complicated. Plus, the procedure is fastened for us."

"Ahh."

"Come on..." He taps on my shoulder. "Don't sulk."

"It is just so..."

"I know," he interrupts. "But worrying won't help." There is softness and care in his voice I never noticed before.
"Thanks, Dis." I say pulling my shoulder back. "You are right. I should be more focused instead."

"That's the spirit!" he cheers, hitting my back.

That hurt, but I manage to fake a smile.

"So… Let's chat till my master is done with MC-FOTTORS."

"That an official abbreviation?"

"Maybe not official, but..."

"You just made it up."

He laughs, and throws his big arm around my shoulder. "You know this cruiser is the Republic's main mobile base of operations?"

"Like for three millennia?" I meekly say as he squeezes me.

"You know things," he says, and draws me even closer to himself. His short blonde hair brushes my eyes while he is leaned toward my face.

"Yeah," I respond trying not to show my discomfort.

Suddenly, he draws himself away.

The purple skinned woman appears at the doorsill. "It is done. We are good to go."

"There it is. Mirial."

I can feel my body shaking with anticipation upon Ediskard's statement. The first thing I notice after entering the planet's orbit is the landscape.

"Mirial is a desert planet?" I ask in surprise.

"Yea. The reports say it is also a cold and dry one. So, dress warmly!"

_How come I never thought about asking about this rock?_

"In my vision, I saw a city burning in the middle of a desert!"

"What?" Dis seems as surprised.

"The town was full of white and circular buildings," I explain further.

"Well, let's hope nothing that bad happened."

Then, I remember.

"You knew!" I accuse the Neutolan Jedi Master sitting in silence in the pilot seat.

"What?" Ediskard says in ignorance.
"You came here three years ago for the girl, you knew about my vision for about ten years, and even now, you would keep me in the dark!"

"Really, Master. You were here before?"

"Since when do I have to explain myself to either of you?" Alvan finally breaks her silence.

"It would make it easier for us to…"

"You saw the connection, and still didn't tell me anything!" I say fuming. "How do you people expect me to help you if you don't trust me for anything!"

And find myself furiously heading to the nearby cabin.

"Rane…" Dis calls out from my back.

I pointlessly put my hands on the wall, and look at the mirror over the sink, respiring rapidly while looking at my reflection.

Purple bitch! I should have questioned her the first time I…

"Hey…" Dis starts from the doorsill.

"I need some time alone!" I rebuke him.

"Alright, alright," he says, and gets lost.

I am the one getting crazy over this vision, and they won't tell me a thing they know about it even though they believe it!

"Give him some time." I overhear the words as Alvan speaks to Ediskard.

"Yes, Master. Where will we land?"

They may believe my vision, but they will never believe me!

"We shall see if we can avoid dropping by Rassaa Spaceport to save time."

Maybe they are all connected to Mirial. The girl, the Sith, the dark chamber… even the rocky landscape with ruins. Could this be the planet that...

All of a sudden, the ship gets shaken with a boom. And I find myself on the ground.

"What's happening?" I yell as sirens start ringing.

"We are shot!"

What the fuck!

I get up from the ground, which is littered with the pieces of the sink and mirror. Then, I strive to reach the cockpit.

"Rane, find something to hold! We are going down!" Dis shouts.

Shit!

I fall down while running out of the cabin. Time to panic! I only manage to grab the sill just before I
slide down on the windscreen. The ship goes a long way down. Then, I feel it crashing down on the surface. My hand slips. I slide down. And my back bumps hard into the iron bars above the hatch.

"Averane, are you alright?" Alvan asks.

I slowly get up from the floor by taking support from the bars.

"Ouch, my back…"

They unbuckle their seat belts, and Dis runs to help me.

"It is fine, it is fine. Just don't touch," I say keeping him away with one hand while still holding the bar with the other. "I didn't break any of my parts," I add.

"You sure."

I stretch my muscles to check it. Surprisingly, it doesn't seem that bad.

"Yeah."

"Cool," Dis says, then turns to Alvan. "What's the plan now, master?"

"And who shot us?" I add.

"To be honest, I have no idea. There are too many possibilities, and we have so little to go on."

"They could be the others who were searching for the girl before us. Then, we may be lured into a trap."

Dis makes sense.

"Perhaps," Alvan brushes off. "We actually have a bigger problem now!"

"We are entombed?" I guess.

"Under about three meters of sand."

"Really?" Dis asks exasperatedly.

"Padawan, bring a bandage for your friend's cuts, will you?"

I give her a look, then notice the blood on the iron bar.

What kind of an idiot puts a mirror and a sink in a freighter this small! Uhh, I should be happy I...

"Here, let me." Dis starts bandaging my hand, which takes quite long.

"Thank you, Dis. It'll hold."

"You're welcome."

"So…" I say turning to Alvan. "We can't stay here."

"We can't," she answers as she folds her hands under her belly. "Whoever assaulted us will soon come here to retrieve us. Let's hope they arrive shortly."

"That's wise?" I ask her sarcastically.
She condemns me with her eyes.

"Whoever shot us down KNEW the exact place our ship was! Above this giant rock... They KNOW who we are, and they KNOW why we are here, however much you don't want to admit it."

"Umm, he MAY BE... right," Dis comments tentatively. "I am not saying he..."

"I'll get us out!" I interrupt, and click the button that sends down the ladder to the roof hatch.

"You cannot," Alvan objects. "If you open that, we'll be truly entombed."

At last, she speaks like a normal person.

"I'll use the Force to push the sand up."

"It doesn't work like that," Dis says.

I knew they didn't teach them MUCH at the Academy.

"Uhh, I'll use the Force in a concentrated way to press on the air in front of me," I try to explain.

They both give me looks of suspicion.

"I don't want to be entombed with you, do I? And do you have a better idea?"

"Don't get me wrong, but it feels safer to wait for the enemy."

"Like we have all the time, Dis? Look, I have been in a situation like this before."

"When?"

"Since you don't tell me anything, I'll just keep this a secret," I brush her off.

That was fun.

"Just close the hatch after I make it to the top," I say as I climb the ladder.

"Rane..."

"Let him," Alvan says unexpectedly.

"Ookay." Dis gets to the button to stand at the ready. "On your signal."

On the ladder, I raise my right hand to fit just a little under the hatch. Next, I visualize the Force in the air in between my hand and the hatch as a circular layer just a little wider than the hatch. I focus on the Force in that area until I can feel the intense vibrations.

"Now," I signal Dis.

The hatch opens. And the sand pours inside, but drops on the invisible layer in front of my hand before the floor. I immediately close the gap between the layer of the Force and the hatch before most of the sand gets inside the ship.

"Wow!" Dis exclaims, unable to hide his amazement.

Careful not to break my concentration, I climb the ladder step by step while holding the layer at the same spot. As my back touches the ceiling, I get ready to take my head out from the hatch.
"As soon as you see me out, close the hatch," I remind Dis.

"You got it!"

I get my head under the hatch. And I push the layer further. The sand starts getting inside the ship from the gap I left. I put my left arm's elbow on the roof, and strive to get out of the ship as quickly as I can while also trying to hold the Force layer. The pressure gets more and more overwhelming. I force myself outward with all my power, and just barely make it to the top. Upon hearing the hatch close, I give out a sigh of relief.

Damn! It was harder than I remember. Ahh, my head… And… Here we go: Nosebleeds.

I am encapsulated by sand to my pants. I close my eyes, drop my head, and cover my nose and mouth. Then, I start pushing the sand around me with the Force.

After half an hour of effort, I can see the sky that's full of stars. I make a few more moves against the sand until the hatch is cleared enough. Finally, I jump on it few times to signal the others to get out quickly.

Damn, it's really cold here.

Fortunately, no wind happens, and the mountains of sand I made don't mess up my work by the time Alvan and Dis get out.

"Man, you're awesome!" Dis congratulates me.

"Thanks." Then, I notice Dis also cut his hand.

"How did you manage that?"

"Cleaned up your mess while waiting for you."

My mess...

"Impressive indeed," Alvan comments. "Who taught you this technique if I may ask?"

"I figured it out myself."

She raises an eyebrow.

"Master Alvan, we need to get this ship out of here before it is entombed in sand, again," I remark before letting her say anything else.

"Yes. You are right. We shall handle it."

We Force jump away. Alvan and Dis lift and carry the ship away from the mountains of sand, dropping it carefully on its feet.

"High energy disruptions," Dis says as he starts scanning the ship.

"It must have been an ion cannon," Alvan deduces.

"Yeah… And no sign of a tracking device or anything." He directs the scanner to himself, and to us. "Nah, nothing."

Alvan checks the comlink on her ear. "Still no signal."
At least they were busy down there.

"So, we are officially stranded here," I deduce. "How could anyone track us, though? Without a tracking device or..."

"The only plausible explanation I can think of is that our ship's database or navicomputer was corrupted in such a way to lead us on the planet's surface from a certain angle," Alvan states interrupting me.

"Who could have done that, and how?" I ask.

"I do not know, but we don't have time to check the ship's database now. We will have to leave it for later."

"I agree."

"Now, let us plan our immediate course of action," Alvan announces. "Three years ago, I tracked the young woman's trace here to a small town called Bolo His. At that time however, I learned she had relocated from there with her parents. Given the young woman's special nature of being insensible, it will be most difficult for us to locate her without following the enemy, gentlemen."

"You forgot the part with the disturbance in the Force, and the Sith beating you to it the last time. I mean no offence Master Jedi, but what if they already captured her, and..."

"Did you say Sith?" Ediskard exclaims.


"So, what do you plan?" I ask impatiently.

"The good news is that the attack on us proves the young woman is still on this planet. Otherwise, they would not be bothered. As you said, whoever attacked us weren't ignorant about our intentions. Our best course of action now would be to wait for our attackers from a safe distance, ambush them when they arrive, and question them about the young woman."

I can't believe how clever she's just sounded.

We take the speeders from the ship. High dunes near us look ideal for us to set our ambush. We climb the nearest dune to get a good view over the ship. But then, what lies on the horizon makes me stop in my tracks. Fire. Smoke rises up to the sky. It is shadowed by the dark night. And there it is. The town in the endless desert that is on fire.

It can't be.

I hear the screams in my mind as I remember them from the vision.

"Oh, no." Alvan looks at the town gapingly.

"By the Force!" Ediskard comments.

On a sudden impulse, I start the engine again, and start driving to the burning town as fast as I can.

"Wait!"

I don't listen, but hear their speeders coming behind me. I start getting the scent newly as I reach half the way. The smoke gets more and more intense with each meter. At one point, both the scent and
smoke becomes unbearable. Then, nearby, I notice someone wallowing in the sand. I stop, and signal the Jedi with my hand. "Look, a survivor!" I shout. Then, I steer towards the local. I rapidly get off the speeder when I reach the local. The green skinned woman is dressed in tatters. She cries sobbingly.

*She's tattooed from head to toe, and is over her thirties. Certainly not the Mirialan I am looking for.*

"What happened here?" I ask promptly.

She doesn't answer. She still cries.

I feel a tap on my shoulder. With care, Alvan approaches the woman. She kneels down in front of her. "We are here to help," she says with a soft voice. "Can you please tell us what happened here?"

The local takes a piece of cloth from the ground, and puts it on her head while still crying. "Erra ti Mirialha."

"Erra ti Mirialha?" Alvan imitates her words.

"Heretics! Terrorists!" she shouts and sobs.

"A local group of religious terrorists?" I deduce.

She shakes her head.

"They must be allied with the Sith!"

Alvan signals me to keep calm with her hand. "Do you know if anybody else survived?"

She nods in between tears. "They took them to Virll ti Mirial."

"How can we get there?" I ask.

"You cannot!" She bursts into tears. "Only sant urtulno... the blessed... people may enter there."

"What? Why?" *Because it's your religious bullshit?*

"You are no Mirialan, and you are not... born with Mir."

"Look, we'll help your people. Please, tell us where that place is."

She looks at me with empty eyes, and says nothing. Then, she hangs her head over her knees, and continues to weep.

Alvan gets upright, turns to us, and signals it is enough. "I know what she is talking about," she whispers. Then, she summons us to a nearby spot that she points out with her hand.

After we get out of the local's earshot, she starts explaining. "Mirial is the name of the god that some Mirialans believe, although the word is used more commonly for their world, and Mirialan is someone who believes in the religion of Mirial as well as it is the species.

*I almost forgot she made herself familiar with this world before.*

"As for what she calls as Mir..."

"The Force," I complete for her. "They must have mixed it with their heresy. I read about similar
"While I am unfamiliar with the way they use the Force, I know that these over-conservationalist Mirialans believe the Force-sensitives of their people are blessed by the god Mirial as the local pointed out. They become priests and priestesses, and are revered in their community."

"So, only these Force-sensitive Mirialans can enter that place. Whatever it was," Dis exclaims.

"Gaze of Mirial," Alvan says. "It is a place these Mirialans deem sacred."

"I don't think she knows where it is," Dis reproaches pointing out to the local.

"We don't need to ask her," Alvan says. "Now, our plan has taken shape. After we deal with our attackers, we will question them about the Gaze of Mirial. Then, we will take their clothes, buy dyes to color each other green and tattoo each other black in a nearby town, and head for the place incognito as Mirialan priests. And, before either of you asks, it will work for me too, yes, because there are minorities of other species that believe in the religion of Mirial on this world, which are also considered Mirialan."

"That's actually brilliant!" I fail to hide my amazement.

She smiles. "Now, let us wait for our attackers' sensors to find our ship."

"Master Alvan… There is no way it can all be a coincidence that we just bump into…"

"I am aware, Averane. It certainly can't be one. I do share your concerns, however much I don't want to admit it. But, we have an immediate concern at the moment."

*She is right, however much I don't want to admit it.*

But, then, the thought occurs in my mind.

*Could it be Alvan? She was the one piloting the ship! Could she be luring us into a trap? It just makes so much sense... Ahh! I shouldn't be so quick to blame her. Still, I'd better keep it in mind.*

So, I set aside my suspicions for now, and join the Jedi as they're walking back slowly. While passing by the local, I pause for a second to feel sorry for her; a sentiment I denied her because of my own grief. I give one last look to her destroyed home as it still burns like a camp fire. Then, a lightning sparkles in my mind.

I instantly turn my head to the local. "How long has it been?" I shout. "Please!" I beg her. "How long has it been since the attack?"

"It's been… hours," she cries.

"Hours! Just hours?"

"It's impossible!" Alvan gapes from afar, having heard me.

*Of course! If it had been days, the town wouldn't be burning like that now, and the local media would find out. We were such fools!*

"Master!" Dis exclaims, pointing out to headlamps of what look to be speeders in the distance.

The local screams, and starts running for her life as the speeders approach.
"Averane, stay here and stay low while Ediskard and I deal with them."

"OK, OK."

We crouch. Alvan and Dis start moving carefully, while I stay still. We wait for the attackers to park their speeders near the ship while trying not to be noticed. However, the speeders approach us more than they were supposed to.

"Looks like they just missed their parking lot!" I call out to the Jedi.

"They're coming right at us!" Dis exclaims, reaching for his lightsaber.

"Wait for them," Alvan orders Dis. "They may not have noticed us."

"Doesn't look like it," says Dis, teeth grinding.

As they come more and more closer, I notice there are at least eight of them.

"There is another wave incoming!" Dis points out to our front left.

Too much for US to ambush THEM!

"Stay close, both of you!" Alvan orders us, her hand on her lightsaber's black hilt.

And they fire. The two Jedi ignite their blue lightsabers. They start deflecting the orange blaster fires. I take a few steps back to give them some space. Alvan adeptly reflects the blaster shot of a speeder right at its own source. The scorching speeder rolls over, and crashes at two other speeders as I can tell from the headlights that just went out. Meanwhile, the blaster fire gets more and more suppressing with each passing second. Orange and blue lights dance in the air around me as the white headlights start to become blinding.

"They are surrounding us!" Alvan shouts while rapidly swinging her lightsaber.

I get in between the two Jedi as they position themselves against each other while tens of vehicles attempt to circle us. We get under suppressive fire. In the heat of the moment, I Force push an attacker from his vehicle. Then, I use the Force on the speeder, and pull it towards two nearby enemies. On impact, they fall down to the ground. With our backs secured, Dis takes advantage of the oppurtunity, and strikes forward with a roar. He severs the front of a speeder. It crashes just a few steps in front of us. In the meantime, another wave arrives. Dis continues to strike, stabbings his lightsaber in another speeder. Then, he whirls around, and chops the back of a third one all while deflecting blaster bolts.

"Padawan!"

Shortly, the crowded enemy closes the gap Dis left, and forms a second circles around him. Alvan reaches for her pouch, and ignites a green lightsaber as soon as she takes it out. She jumps forward with two lightsabers at hand. I run after her, Force pushing any attacker I see. Alvan cuts the enemy down by slashing their vehicles into pieces. I see her throwing her green lightsaber to one of the attackers that corner Dis. She then, continues to strike with her blue lightsaber by the time her other lightsaber returns to her hand. She then stabs them both in two enemies at her sides.

Over the horizon, I see hundreds of lights pointed at us from a line hundreds of meters long.

“That's an army of them!” I shout.
Panting for air, the Jedi Master directs her hand at the enemy with a cry. With her command of the Force, the sand in her hand's direction sprays on the attackers. They are repelled as she maintains the concentrated Force energy. The blaster fires stop as we get enclosed by dust. Then, she reaches out for the opposite direction. It's a second sandblast. Shortly, the dust turns into a small sandstorm. I turn my face. The exhausted padawan is with us. At that moment, a speeder passes right by us. Alvan gives out a sound of pain. She stumbles on her knees. I notice her hand bleeds.

"Master!"

When the sandstorm clears, hundreds of lights pointed at us are revealed. And we throw our hands up.

It has been hours of road since our capture now. Placed us on this hauler, and shackled to its iron bars, we are surrounded by hundreds of people on land vehicles of all kinds. I can recognize green to yellow skinned men when headlights light up their faces at times. They are all covered in white clothes and wear headdresses of all shapes and size. I can't make out a single word that they speak among each other. So, I sigh, and extend my head from the hauler to see where we are going. Scouts that navigate our route up front stand still, but I can't see anything beyond their lights.

"I wonder where they are taking us," I say to the two Jedi who have been meditating for hours.

Silence as they refuse to break their meditation.

Dis probably behaves after his reckless move back there. Even I could say that was stupid.

I give out a long sigh. Then, I just turn my head back to look at the road ahead.

How could all that happen? We just crash landed exactly near the burning town in my vision. I am nearly sure it was the girl's town, and these people are the ones that burnt it. And they spotted us instantly like they knew exactly where we were and what we were doing all along. And what about the time of the incident?

"We were deceived!" I finally say.

"We certainly were," Alvan says without opening her eyes.

"The town was burning for just hours. It was new. How long has it been since the disturbance in the Force?"

"I have not felt it myself, but then, the Jedi Council claimed it was centred on Mirial, not on the town." She finally opens her eyes. "Something else that happened here may have caused it."

"You are saying all of this is a coincidence?"

Dis joins us: "I'd say it is too much of one even if there were something like that."

"Indeed. However, the Force works in mysterious ways. We must rely upon it."

Yeah. The Will of the Force...

"Look! What's that?" Dis exclaims.
I turn my face to look at our front. The lights reveal a green mist at where the scouts have been standing.

"I could swear it wasn't there before."

"There is something about it," Alvan says.

I notice it, too. "Yes. It is the Force!"

"Sentrra!" A heretic shouts, and hits the hauler with a metal stick.

As we are headed towards the mysterious mist, the road gets narrow, and I notice we are passing through a canyon. All of a sudden, the heretics start making loud sounds I can't make sense of. The chant gets louder and louder as we approach the mist. As soon as we get inside it, I feel my head hurting terribly.

"What is this!"

"It's poisonous!" Dis covers his nose.

My sight blurs. And I blackout.
"Avi... Please! Stop this madness already!"

"Nigher, you must...

"Tombs? Catacombs?"

"The vision... it is..."

"Averane!"

"Every night now..."

"I'm BEGGING YOU!"

"I can't resist anymore! It's become so frequent!"

"Listen to yourself!"

"You've no idea what I am going through!"

"You're going insane! Please... Just give it up!"

"I need answers!"

"You need help!"

I am chained. The room is so dark that nothing is visible.

Alone, constrained in the dark, nothing to focus on... I hate this! I should be. My mind must constantly be distracted.

“The more evolved a mind is the more vulnerable it is, and the more simple a mind is the stronger it is. It is because an evolved mind is an open one while a simple mind is a mind kept closed.”

No. No. I have to keep...

"Why is that important? Let us take Mind Tricks, for example. Naturally, the more malleable one's mind is, the easier they are affected by them. On the other hand; however, the more malleable one’s mind is, the more effective they can practice them as well."

Keep... my...

"It's a delusion, young one. Your mind has been tempered with!"

SANITY!

On impulse, I pull my chains, making a sound of squeaking. Guards speak to each other outside. I shout like a madman: "LIGHT! Please, turn on the lights!"

My cries go unanswered. Again, I pull my chains. And again, I am lost in the nothingness.

"Each entity casts its reflection in the Force as a presence. The Jedi use not only the Force, but also their minds to sense them. It is a mixture."
"How can the Force be constricted? Much similar to a way a mind can be. The ways for constricting the two share a great deal of similarities, both for methods with and without the Force. Then, the question arises. Is it the mind or the Force that is constricted?"

"Mind, Body, the Force... When the mind is restricted, there is no doubt that the Force is, too. A most curious thing however is that the restrictions in the body does not have to become restrictions in the mind."

"Through victory, my chains are broken."

So, I break my chains.

I command the Force inside me to flow to my arms. I feel it blowing up like an explosion. My shackles crackle, and break into pieces. As my hands are freed, I give out a sigh of relief. I start approaching the exit with silent steps. The guards are still talking to each other in a language so unfamiliar to me. I reach out with the Force. They are two.

The Force is strong in this place. Wherever I am.

I close my eyes, raise my hand, and reach out again. The concrete wall in between me and my targets makes it harder for me to find their body parts.

Come now... There. There their larynxes are.

I clench my fingers, and grab them from their throats. As I squeeze them upwards, I can feel their feet off the ground. Then, I pull them toward the wall. As they bump on it, I can hear their sounds of pain.

I can't take any chances.

I am angry. I clench my palm until it is a fist. I feel their larynxes are broken. And they fall down on the ground. They are dead. In a weird way, I feel satisfied. I move to the door. It isn't automatic. As I push to open it, the bright light blinds my eyes, and I struggle with it. My cell leaves to a corridor. The walls are all concrete. The wall I crashed the guards on is cracked. I look at their bodies. They look just like the same people who captured us. Black tattoos and white clothes. I drag the corpses inside the cell, and pull to close the ancient door. It has a keyhole. I look around to see if there are cameras, but can see none.

I can't lock this door. ...And I can’t paint this wall. I need to find Alvan and Dis quickly before these heretics find out about this.

The corridors of the prison are well lit with white lights.

Gasoliers...

I pick the right side, and start moving carefully with silent, but fast steps. A crossroads. It's a very long corridor. There are cells at each sides of the corridor, but no guards.

They must be empty.

I take the right again. This corridor leads to at least four others, but I can see the wall at the end. I continue moving from there. On the way, I hear voices.

Shit! A patrol!
On impulse, I hurry to hide at the nearest doorsill of a cell. Voices come from the corridor at the right. I ready myself to Force choke them in case they decide to turn my way. I sneak a peek at them. Four men in White. They approach, but then, turn right. I give out a sigh of relief, and continue moving. I put my back against the wall, having just found out I should have done so from the beginning. Then, I go straight ahead from the junction, figuring a patrol newly passed through there. I stop when I come to another junction. All sides seem endlessly long.

*By the Force! This place is huge. I am never going to find them like this!*

I arbitrarily put my hand on the wall to think.

"Hey! There you are."

The high pitched voice comes from my back. I turn around at once, and see the woman in white clothes.

*It's her! The local outside the town.*

Suddenly, my anger hits the roof. "You!" I growl in anger while raising my hand as I move to attack her.

"Hey, hey. Calm down," she says, indicating she means no harm with her hands.

I focus on her larynx, and start clenching it with the Force. And I lift her from her throat. The woman mumbles unintelligibly. She gets her hands to her throat, and helplessly tries to get free of the power. Then, I pull her towards me. Her throat reaches right to my palm. I grab it. And I crash it to the wall. I am mad with anger. "You filthy snitch!"

"Please!" she begs barely while desperately trying to pull my arm away. "I am on your side."

As I strangle her, I notice the pain and fear in her eyes. In an instant, I come to myself. I drop her. She falls on the ground, coughing. Terrified of myself, I lean against the wall, giving her some time as she coughs constantly. In a minute, she starts to get up slowly. I help her.

"Oh, thanks." She clears her throat. "You're so kind, really." She coughs.

I give her an angry look.

"Oh, okay… okay. No jokes!"

"I may be in a mood to kill a woman just for the fun of it for the first time in my life," I threaten her.

"Look, I know what you are… thinking, but... I am here to help you find… the girl."

*I am shocked. She is not lying."

"I swear… please."

"You will tell me everything!"

"I will. Let's get... inside before we are seen…” She points to the nearest cell.

"I am to trust…"

"Ladies... first," she says in between coughs, and gets inside the cell.
I follow her. The gasolier is ‘on’ when I get inside. She has her back against a wall.

As soon as I close the door behind us, I ask: "Who are you?"

"I am an agent, but..." She still coughs. "I don't work for Erra ti Mirialha."

"Say one more Mirialan word, and..."

"These idiots," she clears up immediately. "I'm sorry."

*Now I feel bad. Why am I so angry still?*

"OK, OK," I try to soothe her. "So, you don't work for these heretics. Who do you work for?"

"I can't tell you that even if... you would crack all my parts."

*She has serious guts. I'll give her that.*

"But I don't work for anyone that means harm to you or your friends... or that girl."

*She's not lying. "OK, OK, where are we, and what is going on on this damn rock?"

"We're in Virll... Gaze of Mirial. It is..."

"Are you kidding me?" *Wait a minute.* "You were responsible for everything from the start. You had us shot down right beside the burning town. How did you know about our mission? And how did you lead our ship to the planet's..."

"Look, I don't know everything, and I can't tell you everything I know. It is too complicated... anyway. We don't have all the time on this rock. And I'm just doing my job, OK?"

"NO!"

"I'll tell you how to get out of here, with your friends, and lead you to that girl. That's my job."

*She speaks the truth.*

"Frankly that's what both my clients want."

*That's not a lie, either.* "You're a double agent?"

"Triple if you count Erra... I mean these heretics. But my true loyalty lies with someone who's on your side."

*A decent spy... "OK, so what're we going to do?"

"First, you need find and free your friends."

"How am I going to do that?"

"I was told you were capable."

I raise an eyebrow.

"But then, I was told you were kind."

"You must have been misinformed."
"Funny." She sighs. "I was to get only you out. Instead, I found two corpses in your cell."

"Don't you have comlink with a motion detector to locate them?"

"Oh, forgot. No piece of technology works here in Gaze of Mirial."

"What? How? Why?"

"I don't know, and stop asking things."

Explains ancient doors, gasoliers and no cameras.

"OK, let's say I freed them, then what?"

"Gaze of Mirial is a... mystical place. The only way out of here is to get past 'Sivi Emats', a kind of green mist that severs this place from the rest of the galaxy."

"What?"

"No one knows much about it, but that's true. The mist encircles all of Gaze of Mirial, and it includes the sky, and possibly underground."

"Fuck!"

"Only Mirialan priests know of a way to pass. They conduct a kind of ritual to do so. Others just follow them through the mist. I guess the priests... protect them in some way."

"And I am sure they won't share their knowledge of the Force with us."

"There is another way. The Grand Priest has a kind of... staff. It allows him to pass alone."

"A Force artifact..."

"Whatever. He is here, in this temple full time. Too old to go anywhere else anyway. And yes, this place is a temple. After freeing your friends, you go to the uppermost level, find him in his glorified hall, kill him, and retrieve his thing."

"What? Kill him?"

"You weren't shy on me..."

"I... No matter. If there is no other way, we'll have to do it."

"Good. Finally, you must get to your ship, wherever it is. They brought it to the Gaze, but I don't know where exactly it is. It is probably in this complex, as well. Then, you need to take the route that overlooks the mountains to get out from the other side of the mist. The girl is kept imprisoned at somewhere near there."

"Wait, wait. Our ship will work?"

"Oh, there is just no signal or electricity here. Blasters, vehicles... They work. Just don't forget. Mountains! You may never reach the girl if you leave from the wrong side of the mist."

"OK, OK. I get it."

"I need to go now before my cover blows."
"And I need to free my friends."

"Good luck," she says, and moves to door.

"Hey," I call to her from behind. "Sorry for not being kind."

"Eh, part of the job."

"I didn't crack your larynx by the way."

"Glad to hear that. Still won't kiss you. Bye." And she is gone.

"What?" Uhh, why can't I bump into normal people? Whatever. I should find Dis and Alvan. But how...

I sit down on the ground to think for a moment.

She said that she was told I was capable… How would I...

Umph…

Of course! Use the Force, you idiot!

I close my eyes, and reach out. I start scanning the environment for Force-sensitivity.

Nothing.

I reach deeper.

There. It's Dis. Just two corridors ahead.

I get up, and leave the cell quickly and silently. "Left, then left and right," I whisper to remind myself. So, I take my left from the door, and start running as silently as I can. Junction. Turn left. Straight ahead till the next junction.

He must be kept right from here.

I sneak a peek from the corner, but the doors are empty.

I can sense his presence. His cell must be here. But where are the guards?

I carefully approach the source of the presence I feel. Voices come from inside the cell. I put my ear on the door.

"Tmie dir ecitner!"

Damn! They must be interrogating him.

"Hem fen diil la san urtulno. Hem fen la san dorono!"

"Hem ama fen zorno!"

I must be careful. If they see me, they might kill him.

"Get away, you freaks!"

Dis!
Noises of fighting come from inside the cell.

_Damn you, Dis! Maybe I can choke them enough to make them faint, instead of killing them._

I raise my hand. And I reach out with the Force from behind the door.

_You’re not easy to spot moving larynxes._

I try harder, but their throats are constantly on the move as they are fighting.

_There is one!_

But I lose it. I feel he just kissed the ground.

_Fuck you, Dis! OK, no way I can grab two moving throats. Glad I didn’t try it on the patrol. Ehehe... What to do, what to do... They’ll call for help if I don’t act fast!_

_Oh my..._

I bite my lip, and kick the door. But nothing. They don't hear.

I start kicking it as strongly as I can.

"Dou fen mun?"

Noises of fighting stop. Footsteps. I quickly run to hide, leaning my back against the wall. The door starts opening. I reach out with the Force again as the man's pushing the door.

_Come on, come on... There!_

Noises of fighting start again inside the cell. I immediately grab the man's larynx with the Force before he runs back. I clench it. And I lift it upwards. The man starts choking, his hands on his throat. I raise my hand up in the air abruptly, hurling him up to the ceiling with the Force. He bangs his head hard on the cell's ceiling, and falls down. The noises of fighting in the cell is over, too. I slowly walk inside the cell. As I step inside, I notice the other man. His neck’s wrapped strictly by two big legs. A blade drops down from his hand with a chink. The man gasps, and falls on the ground breathless. He is dead.

"Rane!"

Dis is revealed to me from behind him. He's gasping, and sweating like a nexu. He is shackled to the wall behind him, and he looks terrified.

"Dis. I am here."

I immediately reach out with the Force, and break his shackles. He falls. I run to catch him. His weight falls down on me.

"Damn, you're heavy," I say with a chuckle to soothe him.

"Oh, thank you, thank you," he says while getting up. "They were going to... Ahh..." He's shaking, and gasping, still.

"Are you alright?"

"I'll be. Just a moment."
"OK."

Then, I hear a death rattle. It's the man I dealt with. His head bleeds.

Too much for not killing.

"Dou dono ti hem?" And he dies, giving out one last breath.

Dis turns his head away in disgust. Then, he turns to me. "How did you get out?"

"Long story. We need to find Alvan. I'll explain everything once we are all together."

"You're right!" He closes his eyes, and signals me to wait with her finger. A moment passes as I wait. "Found her! Let's go!" And he races through the door.

"Quite!" I try to warn him, but end up running after him myself. We start running through the corridors. We turn right from the first junction. Then run, and turn left from the second one. Run, and another left. But this time, Dis runs back, and pulls me to the corner from my arm.

"A patrol. We move in once they pass."

I see them. Four men, again. At the right. They move forward from the junction without turning anywhere, and they move slowly. Dis growls.

"What do we do?" I whisper.

"Let's start moving before another patrol catches us." Then, he starts moving carefully, signalling me with his hand to do the same. With silent and quick steps, we reach the junction. Dis stops at the corner to the left corridor. "There," he points out with his head.

I take my head out just a little to see. Two men guard the door to one of the cells, just like my cell. And the patrol is still in front of us. I whisper to Dis: "What do we do, now? We can't alert the entire building."

"Yea, we can't. We need to take them out silently. So, the plan is... Err..."

"Err..."

I sigh. "Forget it. I'll Force choke them."

"You can do that?" He seems shocked.

"That's gonna be the fourth time today," I whisper disgustedly.

I take out my head and hand from the corner. And I reach out to larynxes, again. I grab them. I clench them, and lift them. Once they start choking, I turn the corner, careful to keep my focus. Dis comes right behind. The man in pain have their hands on their throats. "I can make them pass out if I keep the pressure this hard for just a minute."

"No, no. Kill them!" Dis exclaims to my shock.

"What! Have you gone crazy?"

"We can't let them warn the others when they wake up."

"NO!" I exclaim with a glow. I keep on focusing on the Force. As the guards' eyes start slipping, I
release. They fall down. I can sense they are alive. I give out deep sigh of relief. Dis rushes to the
door, and pushes it. I follow him inside. The room's completely dark.

"Master!"

"Padawan!"

"Hey."

"And Averane. I am so glad to see you both."

I hear the sound of breaking shackles. Then, we leave the cell with Alvan. Dis grabs the unconscious
guards from their arms, and throws them into the cell. He then closes the door behind them.

"I know it's not the time, but were these men choked?"

*It's good to see your purple face, again.*

"I did it," I say before she takes that up on Dis. "They're alive."

"I see." She sighs. "Regardless, we need to retrieve our equipment and weapons."

"Good idea." *Because I can already dream about cracking larynxes.* "After we do that, I have a lot
to explain to you," I add.

"Very well. Excuse me for a moment." Silence. "My lightsabers are here, in a nearby room. They
must have placed our confiscated goods there."

"Right. I can sense mine, too."

"Then, let us move."

I follow them through the corridors. We encounter a few patrols along the way, but manage to move
undetected. Finally we reach a main corridor, and I notice the ancient stairs to the ground level.
There are no cells in this corridor, but a single room. We silently get inside. Our equipment's there.

"Glad they are neat," Dis comments.

We retrieve our equipment quickly. Then, without losing any more time, we make it to the stairs. I
hear voices from upstairs. We stop. Alvan reaches with her hand. In a moment, she signals us.
Guards start snoring, and we start climbing the stairs. Half way up, I notice how different this floor
is. The corridors are adorned with garish chandelier and friezes. Right in front of us is a balcony of
sorts. Sunlight gets inside from there. I can't help but take a look at the outside. Alvan and Dis follow
me. I can't believe my eyes. It's a beautiful village. Grass, flowers, trees, animals...

"Are we in Mirial?" Dis asks in surprise.

"This place… It is unnatural… The Force..."

I turn my face at the guards Alvan put asleep. "Hey, let's find a safe place. I guess it is time I told you
what I learned."

They nod. We turn around a corner to stay away from unfriendly eyes. And I tell them everything
the spy told me.

"That's amazing," Dis fails to hide his astonishment about the place.
"Yes. I have never heard or seen anything like this before, but we need to focus on our task."

"So, climb the building, convince the priest to hand over his staff, find our ship, get out of here, and rescue the princess," Dis sums up.

"Looks like it. I still can't figure things out, though, and that spy…"

"We'll worry about it after the mission," Alvan interrupts. "Let us move now, swiftly and carefully."

"Right."

We head to the stairs again, and continue climbing. When I reach the floor, Dis is already on the balcony.

He stops us. "Look, our ship!" he points out.

I run to the balcony to look. Our ship is on a large terrace on an extended level on the upper floor, at the corner of the building.

Damn, we can't Force jump that far.

"Great!" I say. "Hope they want us out of here because of their goodwill."

"Too much too hope for that if you ask me."

"All the more reason we should not be distracted, but careful," Alvan tells us off.

"Yea, you're right," I agree with her. "Let's be extra careful, though."

"I know right. This stinks way too much now."

We climb the final stairs. This floor is even more garish. A green carpet stretches out to the corridor before us along with torches at each sides. The corridor leaves to a circular hall. There is no way forward after that.

"I don't think we need to search too much for our glorified target," Dis remarks.

"It's all silent here."

"Like they expect us?" Dis asks.

"Indeed, they must be luring us into a trap, but then, we have no other choice than to step into it."

"Then, let's do that."

We continue moving carefully and swiftly. We follow the corridor to the end, and step inside the hall. At our lefts is another corridor, and at our rights is a large door.

"This gives me the creeps," I say

"You're not alone," Dis whispers.

"Calm down, both of you."

Suddenly, I hear two loud sounds.

"What the…"
I turn around to see the corridors to the hall closed by caps of stone.

“Shit!” Dis shouts.

The large door starts opening slowly. Alvan and Dis ignite their blue lightsabers. We step backwards. As the door slowly opens, Mirialan men and women in black clothes with adorned headdresses appear. All eight of them carry packs of small knives in their large pockets.

One of them speaks, “Rent re tmie dir san! Net, tori mana ti hem bilp pa.”

Next, they slowly step inside the hall. They surround us. Alvan and Dis get ready for an attack.

“Hao ama fen tarino!” another heretic shouts.

And they start declaiming all at once: “Tari! Tari! Tari!” Then, they raise their hands. Knives at their pockets start to rise up in the air. And they are directed at us.

“They’re Force-sensitives!” Dis shouts.

And they attack. Knives flow right at us. Alvan and Dis start deflecting them while I do all I can to avoid the knives in the air. A few of the heretics engage in close combat with knives at hands. The Jedi respond them with their lightsabers. But they manage to evade lightsaber strikes just as we manage to evade their knives. It is like a dance of a fight, now.

At an instant, the room beyond the large door catches my eyes. There are stairs in the middle of the room. They lead to a seat where a man in black clothes sits. At his hand is a long wood. The wood’s upper end glows with a green light. I barge into the door while Dis corners a priest to the wall with a flurry of strikes, and cuts the man down. I Force push a priest on my way, but he immediately Force blocks by raising his to his head.

“Rane!” Dis shouts. He jumps, and stabs the staggered man with an air strike with his lightsaber.

“I’m going inside!”

“No! Wait,” he says, but is already busy with the other attackers when I run inside the glorified room. The Grand Priest looks like a very old man. His black clothes and headdress are filled with adornments of all kinds. When he notices me, he looks down on me with a belittling look from his chair.

“Ah, hem fen la mutrub san.”

“Stop babbling, and give me that staff!” I yell at him. And I start running towards him to the stairs. He gives out a disgusting sound. Then, he barely directs his staff at me from his seat. I get knocked back by the Force energy while at half way on the stairs. And I find myself on the ground.

I struggle to get up quickly, but my body refuses because of the pain. “Ah! I’ll KILL YOU!”

“Averane!” Alvan shout from behind as the fight continues.

“Vi fen diil ehem torut, trie aldatano kocuk,” the old man babbles, “Trie san hem foolo gven fen.” He scoffs in a disgusting manner. Then, he raises his staff to the air. Spears at each side of the stairs rise up. “Hem fen diil la taurha. Vi issren mint sele!” He turns his staff sideways. The spears start spinning. “Bolotta kocuk!” Then, he directs his staff at me again. On impulse, I immediately visualize the area in front of me as a layer, swirl my hand in the air, and reach out with the Force. The spears hit my Force Barrier, and drop down on the floor. I keep my focus on the barrier, aim it at
the old man, and push the barrier at him with all my power. A scream. A smash. A crash. The priest gets knocked back for meters. His seat is wracked. The wall of glass at the back is in pieces.

I feel a massive headache. Blood coming from my nose drops on the floor. I am winded. My hands tremble. My entire body shakes. I put my hands on the ground, and struggle to get up. The fight in the hall still continues. Having managed to get up, I move faltering. My eyes seek the staff. As I go on, a green glow twinkles from behind the broken wall of glass.

There!

I walk as fast as I can to get to the terrace, my hand on my leg. Our ship is still there. As I approach, I notice the old man. He lies crashed on the terrace, and his blood sheds on the ground. Not far from him is his staff. It’s a green crystal that glows on its end. I reach out with the Force. The staff comes to my hand, and I weigh upon it with both hands for support.

The old man coughs. He’s still alive. In agony, he turns his face to me. “Trie aldatano kocuk,” he calls to me, “tho dill gven trie san hem foolo gven.” He gives out one last gasp, and the light goes out of his eyes.

Todilgven trisan hemfologven.

Todilgven trisan hemfologven.

Todilgven trisan hemfologven.

“Rane!” It’s Dis. Winded, he stands right beside me.

“You OK?”

“I’ll be, and I have the staff. Let’s board, and get out of here.”

“I agree.” Alvan shows up right behind. “Let us discuss the details aboard our ship.”

I nod. Dis takes the staff as I weigh upon his shoulder. As we get inside the ship, I remember to note down the priests words as much as I could hear and make sense. Meanwhile, Alvan gets ready to take off. “We need to take the route to the mountains,” I remind her. “The agent said we may never get to the girl if we don’t.”

“Yes. We should take no chances. I will drive close to the ground when we approach the mist.”

We take off. The ship cruises from high altitude.

“Doesn’t look like they touched our ship,” Dis states.

“Strange, but I won’t complain after all that.”

“I hear you,” he nod. “So, what’s with this staff?”

“It’s not the staff. It’s the crystal.”

“It doesn’t feel like an adegan crystal. It feels different.” Alvan remarks.

“Yea. Let’s see if it’ll work against the mist.”

“Yes, but do not take your guard down. Both of you. I sense there are multiple forces involved in all this, friend or foe.”
“Or both. That’s what I could get from the agent after all. And she wasn’t lying. Wish I could get more out of her.”

“And that’s why she won’t ever reveal herself, again I guess,” Dis comments while copes with computers.

_Damn. Why did I have to be so angry and so harsh to that feeble woman. She was telling the truth when she said she was an ally. Hope I didn’t bring any permenant harm to her. I feel like shit now._

“Found it,” Dis says. “You were right, Master. Our navicomputer was infected with a virus.”

“Do not touch it. We need to have it investigated for its source.”

“A virus? We were cleared on the Gav Daragon. So, it must have come from the planet’s surface.”

“I hope you are right. If not…” Alvan sighs.

“Look, there it is,” Dis says.

It’s the mist. The green fog encapsulates the entire area. Alvan takes us down to cruise from ground level.

“Brace yourselves. We are going in.”

As soon as we get inside the mist, I notice the staff Dis put aside. The crystal on the its end glows much more brightly now.

“It’s working. The mist didn’t poison us.”

“Still no signal. I cannot navigate. Brace for impact in case we hit something.”

I find something to hold as the ship passes through the mist. Soon, the density of the mist lessens. And all of a sudden, it is pure darkness.

“What the…” Dis exclaims.

The ship’s lamps and lights turn on. I look over the wind screen, but nothing in front of us is visible.

“It is sand,” Alvan says while directing the ship’s lamps.

I give out a sigh of relief. “So, we are out of that place.” I notice the crystal no longer glows.

“Thank the Force!” Dis exclaims. “That was so very weird. Let’s find that girl, now.”

“We still have no signal.”

“What!” I give out a sound of exasperation. “We are out of the Gaze, and there is no way a disruptor used on us could have that long a range.”

“Yea, all the way from that town…”

“Silence!” Alvan exclaims. “It looks like a natural interference.”

“A natural interference, Master?”

Alvan directs the lamps in the sky. There is dust pouring from above.
“Rocks?” Dis is puzzled.

“Of course! After we were captured, we got inside a canyon before the mist.”

“Wait, wait, wait… We are in a huge cave?”

“Accessible only from Gaze of Mirial,” Alvan adds.

“So, the agent was right. No way we could have gotten here if we hadn’t left from another way.”

“And if we hadn’t got shot down right where we had to, and got captured by the only people who could bring us to Gaze of Mirial, who also had the courtesy of docking our ship just where they had to in the first place.”

“And that, Master Jedi, is not even the entire story. I am one hundred percent sure this is all a huge trap, now.”

“By the way,” Dis says from the window with his headlamp on. “Where is the mist?”

I run near him to look. The mist is gone. It is all sand and dust behind us.

“Maybe the priests activate it with their Force ritual,” I guess.

“You know what! I don’t care if it’s gone for good.”

“You and me both, Dis.”

“Regardless,” Alvan says. “I think we need to follow the route inside the cave. We do not know who helps us and why, but we are better off completing our mission.”

“I’ll have to agree.”

We start driving inside the canyon. Nothing other than rocks, dust and sand are visible as we cruise in slow driving mode. After half an hour of nothing, we finally see a red light winking in the distance.

“Could that be it?”

“It’s just a single light.”

“Still, let us be on the safe side.” Alvan turns the lights and lamps off.

Only the red light is visible as we go on. Its glow intensifies as we approach.

“I sense no one,” I say.

“Neither do I, but remember, the young woman’s presence is insensible.”

“They can’t have left her alone, Master.”

“I just know they did,” I say.

“What?”

“We were led here, Dis. I don’t know why, how or by whom, but…

“Everything that has transpired here facilitated our task,” Alvan finishes for me. Then, she stops the
ship. “We are close enough, now.”

“Let’s just turn on the lamps.”

Alvan breathes out. And the lamps are on. It’s a small, single structure.

“Is this a joke?” I express.

“I must say I was expecting a kind of secret base or at least a facility or… something like that, but this…”

Alvan directs the lamps around. “There is no way forward.”

“That must be it, then!”

Alvan opens the hatch. I hurry to it. As soon as I get out, I run to the structure.

“Wait for us,” Dis calls out from behind me.

The door automatically opens as I run to it. The ship’s lamps aren’t enough to enlighten the room. I step inside. There is someone, here. I don’t sense it with the Force, but hear the gasps of air. I don’t see anything, but I move inside still. I make it forward. There is a feeling inside me that leads me to. Anxiety or excitement… I cannot differentiate. I stop when I know from the sounds of breathing I can hear that I am close enough. A smell. Footsteps. A light. Dis calls my name. And suddenly, the lights are on. I see a young woman. She stands there motionless, chained to the white wall behind her. She is so beautiful. Her skin is a color between yellow and white. Dark brown hair, light blue eyes… I am stuck out of shock. As for her, she just seems… empty. For a while, we look at each other in silence and immotility. A minute later, she starts laughing like crazy. She laughs and laughs. Then, in an instant, her laughs turn into painful cries.

“Please… Do not torture me anymore!” And she throws herself down. Her chains rattle. Then, she scream at the top of one's voice.

“By the Force!” Alvan hurries to us. She pushes me aside, and sidles up to the girl. “It is okay, now. You will be alright,” she says, using her calming voice. The girl’s shackles break. “You are free, now,” Alvan says while caressing her.

“Just kill me! Please, kill me!” the girl writhes. Then, she goes silent. Her head drops, and she passes out.

“Padawan, take her to the ship. Now!”

Dis hurries to the girl. He lifts her from her armpits, takes her to his back, and gets her out.

“How are you?” Alvan asks.

I say nothing at first. I look at the wall she was chained. There are cracks around her shackles.

*She must have endured so much.*

“I… I don’t know… I…” I give out a deep breath. “When I’ve just seen her, for the first time, it was just like in the vision, I did not…” I can’t complete my sentence. “Let’s just get out of here.”

She nods. We leave the bunker. We get inside the ship. Dis waits at the hatch.

“How is she?” Alvan asks.
“Unconscious.”

“I will tend to her. You drive. Alert me if anything happens.”

“Yes, Master.”

Then, she turns to me. “Averane, please stay with him as I offer our guest something to eat and drink.”

I nod. I sit at the cockpit with Dis. We don’t speak. My mind is at that moment. I can’t keep it away. I feel like I just had the vision, again, and that it wasn’t real.

*The town wasn’t that similar to its vision version. But, the girl... And what is going on? So, we crash right near the town. That must be the agent’s work. She’s working for an ally, and spies on the heretics. Then, she must have orchestrated our capture and led us to the Gaze, too. But then, the heretics made everything easier for us, too. And the girl was alone...*

“Hey,” Dis says. “Stop thinking. It’s not solving things for you.”

“Yeah,” I put him off.

“What happened to your hand by the way?”

I only notice it with his mentioning. My right hand’s palm is covered with a green stain. It clears when I rub my thumb on it.

“A dye.”

Silence.

“Hey,” Dis says, again. “I feel like shit for asking you to kill those guards. I was so... you know, in the heat of the moment, and...”

“It’s okay, Dis.”

“Those guards in my cell, they were about to cut me down. If you hadn’t come...”

“Don’t mention it. You saved me more than once on this rock.”

As we approach the entry of the canyons, I feel like the Gaze of Mirial never existed, like it’s always been just an ordinary canyon. As soon as we get out technological devices start working again as I can make out by the count of dropping transmissions and such.

“We are connected to the galaxy, again. About time, huh?”

“Yea,” I put him off again.

Then, I hear a door opening. I turn my back to see Alvan walking to the cockpit.

“How is she?” I immediately ask.

“Better, but not good. She must have been through so much.”

“Can I see her?”

“She rests.”
“I won’t wake her up.”

She takes a deep breath, but nods with sympathy.

I slowly approach the ward. As the door opens, I see her lying on the bed. I lean against the wall to observe her. She’s shaking during sleep and she takes fast breaths. She seems uninjured, at least not visibly. No mark on her face, not a single tattoo. Her brown hair is short. She is sturdy, medium-weight, a little long. Seems like a healthy woman. Wears casual clothes. A total civilian.

“Kerinn,” she talks in her sleep.

I pause my breathing for a moment in order not to wake her up. She tosses and turns, but continues to sleep with fast breaths.

*How is her presence insensible?*

I reach out with the Force. I do sense the Force. It is intense. She is strong with it. Maybe too strong. But her presence… It is like she isn’t a part of the Living Force.

Suddenly, she wakes up with a scream. A few tears drop from her eyes as she wriggles.

I immediately get up and pull myself away. “I am sorry, I… I’ll leave you alone. OK?”

Her hands shake in the bed as she looks at me with empty eyes, breathing slowly from her mouth. I take a few steps back, raising my hands to signal I mean no harm to her. Then, I move to the door.

“Wait.”

I stop, hearing her soft voice. I slowly turn to her. “Yes, something you need?” I ask her as kindly as I can.

She slowly straightens up in the bed, and lays her legs down on the floor. She puts shaking hands on the bed as she sits. She stays silent for a moment, avoiding eye contact with me.

“Don’t go,” she finally says. “Don’t leave me alone.” There is hesitation, but also softness in her voice.

“Of course,” I say, and move back to sit on the chair.

“Thank you,” she says without looking at me as I sit in front of her.

*She may hold so many answers, but once, I feel I should be… friendly instead.*

“My name is Averane.”

“Eva. Evail, actually. But, you can call me Eva.”

“Nice to meet you, Eva.”

She blinks her eyes, and smiles.

*Better I don’t remind her what she has gone through.*

“We’re going to Coruscant. To the Jedi Temple. They will do everything they can to make you feel better.”
“Yes. The woman, I mean the Jedi… with tentacles told me.”

I smile, forcing myself not to laugh.

“T-thank you, of course,” she adds.

“You’re welcome.”

Silence.

“You’re a Jedi?”

“I… am not. It’s a long story.”

“Oh, sorry.”

“No, no. It’s nothing, really.”

Silence again.

“Err, do you need anything?”

“Ah, actually, can you bring me thin clothes, please. It’s hot here.”

“I’ll look right away.” I get up. “Mirial was a cold planet,” I comment.

“Yes,” she says with a tentative smile.

I leave the ward. Beepings of transmissions come and go as I look around. Alvan speaks with Lin over the ship’s holocommunicator in the cabin at the back. I head inside.

“I could only trust my former Padawan to pull this mission through,” Lin praises her.

“I am honored, Master.”

“I would like to discuss the full details in person. Ah, Averane! Master Alvan told me you were an invaluable asset.”

*DID SHE?*

“I did my best, Master Lin.”

“You have my eternal thanks, my friend. And I know you have a lot of questions yourself. I shall meet with you in person, as well. Keep your comlink open.”

I smile.

“If that is all, Nerreta, I look forward for your return.”

“It is, Master.”

“Have a safe journey. Lin out.”

I turn to Alvan. “You put a good word on me?” Nerreta.

“Yes.”
Wow. She looks… embarrassed, I guess. Well, I am about to return her the favor anyway.

“Master Alvan, do you have any thin clothes here?”

She raises an eyebrow. I can feel my cheeks turning Devaronian red.

“For the girl,” I add. “She says it’s too hot.”

She exhales. “You woke her up? Did you question her?”

“No, no, I swear. She woke up herself, and we just talked. I swear I didn’t even ask her name.” *I just told mine.*

She looks at me with suspicion.

“Won’t you say, ‘it is not a lie.”

She is startled. “Ahh! I’ll tend to her! And you, you won’t disturb her again!”

And she gets to it.

*I deserve a medal for angering a Jedi.*

The ship leaves out of hyperspace to the orbit of the majestic capital of the galaxy.

“That was quite an adventure, huh?”

“Yea,” I agree with Dis.

“Though I am sure it was nowhere as hectic as your sixteenth birthday party.”

“Aah. I would never have never thrown that out if I knew you would shit on me about it for years.”

We laughs.

“You both act like children,” Alvan spoils our fun in the pilot seat.

I murmured. Silence. A minute later, I hear the sound of a door opening. We look back.

“Hi,” Eva says with a tentative wave of hand. “I felt… alone there, so…”

“Oh, come, of course,” Dis invites her. “Look, we’ve arrived.”

Eva walks toward the cockpit with slow and timid steps. She has a sleeveless clothing on her. I notice she has strong, even muscly arms. The light in her blue eyes enthrall me. Such an innocent, although broken smile in her face... She is so… magnificent.

Her eyes widen as she looks over the wind screen. “It’s so…” She can’t finish her sentence.

“I know right,” Dis says in a friendly manner. “No words to describe this rock. Welcome to Coruscant.”
“The Force works in mysterious ways. The Laws of Physics do not always apply to its intrications.”

“You suggest we ignore the gap of time between the disturbance and the event, Master Lin.”

“We have to depend on the Force, young Averane, but we cannot become dependent on it. It is unpredictable at best.”

“I see.”

“As for the situation of Mirial, we have received troubling news. The terrorists have advanced their territory to a great deal on the planet. It ranges from beyond the razed town, now. Mirialan authorities in cooperation with the Republic seem to be tied hand and foot. The Senate discusses the possible course of action, and invasion is one of them.”

“It’s terrible, but thank you for sharing.”

“This organization made so much progress instantly. It would be impossible without the support of...”

“But what do they want to achieve, Master Lin?”

“Hopefully, the young woman will have some answers. She’s being remedied at the moment, and we shall ask her the necessary questions once she gets better.”

“Then there is the matter of how we were led to the girl, and this mysterious help...”

“The Jedi Council discusses all those still. In the meantime, I suggest you take a break from troubling yourself, my friend.”

I nod. “Have a good day, Master Lin.” And I turn my back to leave the courtyard.

“Averane,” he calls from behind me. “One more thing. There are no news regarding Devaron. The situation is the same.”

I smile shyly. “I won’t leave the temple.”

“Good.”

Thinking is not a solution to a problem. And perhaps for the first time in ten years, I feel I should let somethings go. Stop thinking. Caring so much. Worrying. Let the events unfold.
The Remedial Process

I had a family, a home, a future. I had everything! I had a perfect life.

And I wasn’t even grateful for it!

"Dad, why am I like this?"

"Oh, my star. There is nothing wrong with you."

"But I-I make friends afraid. They say I am a..."

"No, no. Don’t listen to them. You are special. They are just jealous, you know. You can do what they cannot."

"But dad, I afraid, too."

"Don’t be. Super Girls fear not."

His smiling face comes before my eyes. The way he used to hold my little hands so softly... The moments I climbed on his arms to play with the black squares on his face...

I weep in silence.

"Eva... We chuff-chuff going."

"You there? Need help packing up your toys?"

"Kerinn... Why we go?"

"Because dad says so. I think he will go to a job in the new place."

"But... I like this house. I don’t want go."

"Me too. But maybe our new house will be better. And it means we will get new friends. I don’t like my friends here."

"I don’t get friends. And we got this house... one-two-three-five-six... five months ago. I don’t want go!"

"No one asked you little thing."

"Uff..."

"Come on. I will help you pack your toys."

"Kerinn..."

"What now?"

"We go because of me?"

"What! No, no. That’s absurd."

"Aah! Okay okay, don’t hit."
"A minute, please," I say hurriedly as I dash away my tears. Then, I get up from the bed, rush to wash my face and hastily do my hair in the dorm room I was placed in. Finally, I run to the door, and open it.

It is a human child at the age of twelve at most, but her pale face is forty year-old serious. She has whitish robes. Her hands are tied behind her. She has a certain familiarity for a reason.

"Evail Leetas," she says with a mature tone of voice.

"Yes, it’s me," I respond, ignoring her mispronunciation.

"I am Apprentice Orta. I was tasked with overseeing your process of initial orientation to the Jedi Academy."

_Fucking seriously?_

"I will visit you every morning at 8 a.m. from now on to guide you to the procedure of familiarizing yourself with the Academy. This includes informing you of your tasks for the day, supervising your progress as you go through your tasks and evaluating your state at the end of the daily grind."

"Ehh, thanks I guess."

"You are expected to be ready at the predetermined hours. I will take you from your dorm every morning, accompany you during the day, and take you back to your dorm once you have completed your tasks."

_You may as well fuck me too while you are at it!_

"Now, please follow me."

You don’t refuse that serious a command even it comes from a kid, and even if you are a depressed wrack. Thus, I obey. The kid has her hands tied to her back still, and her chin faces the sky as she walks. We don’t talk, but she occasionally eyes me from behind her fair hair, apparently to make sure I am following her. People of all shapes and colors walk by us as I follow the kid in the plain halls. All of them wear brown to white robes.

_It is like I am in a cult of zealots._

"You will now speak with Jedi Master Atanim. He will instruct you."

"OK."

"Please, make sure you address him either as Master Jedi or Master Atanim."

"Right."

"And greet him with a bow. You will do so after me."

_I would beat you so hard you would see your... "Oh, of course."

We leave the halls into a sort of huge saloon. It has pillars in two rows. I keep following the kid as she moves toward a pillar where a green alien in brown robes stand.

_Oh, that's a Rodian..._
Curious. Did I see him before?

"Master Atanim," the kid says while dropping the most absurd curtsy I have ever seen.

I would rather lick his ass.

"Thank you, Apprentice," the green guy says, and turns to greet me. "Miss Leetas."

"Master Jedi," I only respond.

The kid gets tensed up.

"If you will excuse us for a moment, Apprentice."

"Of course, Master," she says and bows again. Then, she leaves.

That shows the kid. Sure she's spitting nails.

"How are you feeling, Miss Leetas?"

"Not good." Like a mutilated corpse actually. "But I am thankful for everything." I guess.

"Whatever happened to you was unfortunate and unexpected. Before you attend your first training in the Academy, we see it as a necessity for you to undergo a remedial process."

Wait. It feels like this happened before. Freakish. I don’t even remember my days here before today. Not... really. It is like I was brought here just yesterday, but I was not.

Truly freakish.

"Miss Leetas?"

"Uhm, may I ask how many days has it been since I started the therapy?"

"Your healing process is one that requires delicacy. We are being careful not to put too much pressure on your mind."

That's not an answer! "Yea, thanks, but how many days has it been?"

"It has been over three months of progress now."

"What the f- I mean... The last thing I remember is our first..."

"Suffering from amnesia is an expected side effect," he interrupts. "The fact that you realized it shows that its effects on you have lessened. It is unlikely that this will be the case from now on."

"W-wait wait. You are telling me I kept forgetting everything every time for three months?"

"Yes. The process has repeated every day since your arrival. So, you will be attending a lecture for the first time today."

Slap my hips and fuck my tits!

"Worry not," he reassures me. "All the side effects of the remedial process are temporary, and will soon fade off."

That doesn’t look right! But no one asks my opinion I guess. Plus, my gut tells me to trust him, and it
never failed me before. "Right."

"If you please." He shows me the way.

My angst hits the roof as I follow the frog guy to a plain small room just nearby. Inside, there are a bunch of robed weirdos and a bed. The bed at least looks normal. As for my efforts to look normal, they fail since I give a weird nod at the people, and actually manage to lie on the bed in a weird manner.

Get your cunt together, Eva. You have been through the worst already.

"And here you are feeling sorry for your own self."

No no no! I am not...

"Rest assured, the process is painless. You may experience some uncomfortable feelings, but as I said, the side effects are temporary."

I shake my head.

The peeps in robes start rotating their hands around in the air above my body. And I feel the power I am sadly familiar with. But it doesn’t feel evil this time. It is relaxing. Even… somnific. It is like an anesthetic. No. No. It’s like a drug. I feel out of myself. It feels like my mind is stripped from here and now into… a past time. Actually… past times.

"Did I say what we did with your mother’s body?"

Huh. It felt like she said it in a much more irritating way at that moment.

"I loved them more than myself."

"You did, didn’t you?"

"They will always be with me in my memories."

Yea, I remember that. Strange I was really that calm saying it.

"Eva."

"I'll miss you, Kerinn."

Wait, what? Did I say that? I... I guess I did, yes.

"And here you are feeling sorry for your own self."

"You should be the one to feel sorry for what you did."

No no no! That didn’t... Oh, yea. I remember now.

"Why have you done that? She was innocent."

This misses something. But what?

"Hello dear."

"You."
My anger. Where is my ANGER?

"Eva, are you there?"

"Yes, father."

Father? I would never call my dad 'father!'

"Your mother and I was thinking you should spend more time with us."

"I am not a child anymore, father."

My compassion, my love... Where are they? No, no!

I attempt to move, but my body doesn't respond. I am in paralysis.

"I understand. It is time we let go of you now."

Dad, no. They are taking my love for him? This is an even worse torture!

"Farewell, father."

I can’t feel it. I can’t... I can’t feel LOVE!

"STOP! PLEASE, MAKE IT STOP!"

I wake up, sobbing and screeching.

"What happened child?"

I can’t answer. My mouth is busy out of crying.

"Give her some water."

I grab the bowl of water the instant they bring it. I drink half of it, and splash the other half to my face. I am shaking like a washing machine.

"Are you alright now?"

"My... my feelings. I felt them... my feelings of love... They were getting erased." And I continue crying.

"Worry not. It’s alright. As I said, the side effects are temporary. We are working on alleviating your pain by regulating your mind’s perceptive aspects. This process affects other aspects of your mind, like memory and emotional processing, causing you to suffer from such side effects. All these, however is simply temporary, and the remedy itself is a preparation for the actual treatment. By the time you start it, all these side effects will have subsided."

I shake my head as an answer while sniveling.

"However, we may have put too much pressure on you. The remedial process is a difficult one to undergo, especially for someone who has no Jedi training. It would be for the best if you have some rest now. You can go back to your dorm when you feel better."

"I’ll feel better when I get the fuck out of here!"

"Thank you," I say while getting up and dashing away my tears. Then, I rapidly walk to the door
without waiting for a response.

"Evail Leetas."

It's the kid, again. I just turn my face to her.

"I am Apprentice Orto. I was instructed to..."

"I know," I interrupt her. "We’ve just met."

"Ah, you didn’t forget anything?"

Oh, of course. I am gonna get mad today. "No. He said I am not going to anymore."

"Great, Eva," she says as she exhales big time. "In this case, I would like to report to you that you have failed to properly address a Jedi Master sixty seven times, and failed to bow ninety eight times."

"Really?" I should make that a hundred."

"Unfortunately."

"Whaw, you are tense you know."

She doesn’t respond.

"Ehh, whatever. Master Ata-what's-his-name told me..."

"Master Atanim."

"Yea. He told me I should take a rest today."

"I will receive a report if that’s true, Eva."

"Look, kid. I am really not in the mood."

"I would like to be addressed as Apprentice Orto as I presented myself, if you please."

"What! You just called me ‘Eva’ twice."

"I was informed it was how you preferred to be addressed."

"Oh, well... not by everyone. Just by people I... feel like they should. You must have been ‘misinformed’."

"Very well. My mistake. You have my apologies."

"Oh, you... Wait, what?"

"Please, tell me how you would like to be addressed, and I will address you as such from now on."

Ahh! It's time I showed this kid.

"Okay. Call me Evail Leetas."

"Very well, Evail Leetas."

"It’s Evail as in avail."
"Evail Leetas."

"And Leetas as in task."

"Evail Leetas."

"Close enough, Apprentice Orto."

She doesn’t respond, but I can feel she is holding something inside her, which lifts my spirits.

*That shuts her up. It was much better than that mind fuck therapy.*

I hear a short beep sound. The kid clicks something on her glove. A holo window pops up, and she starts reading it silently.

"It’s your report Evail Leetas," she says while closing the window. "You are given a day of rest due to your mental situation."

*Yeah. Cheer me up.*

"Please, follow me back to your dorm."

"I remember the way."

"I am obligated to escort you. Please, do not show any resistance."

"Oh yeah," I say as we start moving. "But you get it? I remember."

A few seconds of nothing. And she says, "I am glad, Evail Leetas."

_Uhh..._

And nothing comes out of our mouths till we reach my room after that.

"It is still paramount that you do not skip your meditation hours. I will be seeing you at the same hour, tomorrow."

I close the door to her face as she was saying 'Good day,' I guess.

*Get lost.*

I look around what looks like my new room for life. Nothing here. I take my clothes off, and throw myself to the bed. Yet a few fucking seconds of silence proves too much for me to handle.

"Did I tell you what we did with your mother’s body after the tentacle beard slew her by the way."

_That bitch!_

"And your sister, was it?"

*Yeah. That was how.*

"And before you ask, your father is dead, too."

Tears drop from my eyes as I struggle to remain quiet.

"Turn back!"
"Eva!"

Bastards messed with my brain!

"Hello dear."

"You!"

There. There is my anger. Yes! My fury. The sense of delirium! Yes.

I laugh.

"Know fear."

Oh, that reality of supernatural fear. Ohh, am I so grateful to be able to feel... Even fear is so valuable! The dark creature. The anxiety, the helplessness. Oh, that’s so... great!

I laugh and laugh and laugh.

"Your family, your friend and your town..."

Sadness. The grief.

"Ah, yes, it is all your fault."

The guilt. Oh yeah! That’s so fucking great!

I break into a laughing fit.

"And here you are feeling sorry for your own self."

Yeah! That’s so fuckin’ true! She is right.

I stop laughing.

Do I even deserve to get better?

Hell no!

I grit my teeth. I get my hands on my head, and pull my hair. I start crying sobbingly. Then, I hit my head to the wall to feel the pain. I hit it, hit it and hit it. Finally, I throw myself on the bed again and continue crying. I cry, I cry, and I cry.

"Love!"

I hear her voice. I turn my face to her. She stands at the door. There is that care in her eyes. Her black hairdress rubs her cheeks. I can take her smell. She is so beautiful. She is the most beautiful woman in the universe. And she comes to me.

"Mom?"

"My baby. Why are you doing this to yourself?"

"But..."
"Because... You are dead."

I cry again, sobbing in tears. But she holds my hands. I can feel her tender touch. My crying stops.

"I will always be with you, sweetheart," she says as she touches my heart.

"Mom," I reach out to her.

But she disappears. My hand stays empty in the air. Then, I cry again and lie on the bed, choking in my tears. I entomb my head to the pillow.

And for hours and hours, I cry, wallow in my misery.

"Eva! Wake up already."

I feel her hands shaking my arm. I immediately straighten up in the bed.

"Kerinn."

"Good morning. You’ve been sleeping like a fotnox for the entire morning."

"Kerinn. It really is you."

I touch her cheek. It’s so soft my hand enjoys a unique joy.

"Of course, it’s me."

I don’t say anything.

"Eva, that’s just silly. Stop."

"Kerinn," I say as I throw my arms at her. "I love you so much, Kerinn. You are..." Tears of happiness drops from my eyes as I hug her as hard as I can.

"Oh, I love... you, too. But it... hurts, you know," she says as I squeeze her.

But I don’t listen.

"It’s so good to see you, hear you, smell you, touch you."

"Eva! Let... go... of me! ...Please."

I let her go.

She takes a few deep breaths to be able to come to herself. "You are stronger than a giant bear!"

"Oh Kerinn, you are here," I say as I caress her hair. "It really is you."

"Eva, are you OK?"

"I am now. You are here. You breath. You are not dead."

"Oh, Eva," she hurries to make me sit on the bed. "It’s OK. You just had a terrible nightmare."

I look around myself. I am at my room. At home. The sunlight brightens it up. It’s summer on Mirial. 

*I never thought I would miss this rock. It was actually so beautiful. I merely... didn’t know to look at*
Kerinn smiles as she caresses her little sister’s hair. "Wash your face. I’ll prepare breakfast for you. OK?"

I smile and shake my head. I wipe away my tears.

"Come on. Get up! You’ll miss your classes in the afternoon."

And she moves to the door and leaves.

"Wait! Kerinn," I call out to her. I run after her, and catch her in the hall. I hold her hand, feel its warmth. She turns to me. I look at her innocent face lengthily. "Don’t go," I say. "I don’t ever want you to leave my side."

As our eyes meet, her expression turns sour. All of a sudden, the hall darkens, and the wind kisses my cheeks.

"I am sorry," she says.

A red light passes through her stomach with a yellow burn.

"Kerinn!"

All of a sudden, I am on my kness in the house’s yard. Kerinn falls down. I screech, and attack the red alien, but my arms grabbed by hands of at least four others. I don’t even look at them. I struggle, but find myself on the ground.

"Calm down!" the murderer says.

"What’s happening to her?"

"Call for help!"

I raise my head from the ground. Aliens in robes stare at me with startled eyes. A massive headache comes over me. And my sight darkens.

My sight blurs as soon as I open my eyes. And my head hurts. I make a few sounds till my vision gets clearer. I see I am lying on a bed in some plain white clothes. All my parts are stiff. I try to move a little in the bed, but my neck and shoulders make me regret it.

“Good morning.”

I turn my head to the placatory voice. It’s a very old human male with a very long beard and hair. He sits on a chair at my elbow. With white robes all over him, he looks like a character that came straight out of a fable.

Feels familiar, too.

I make another coarse sound and ask: “Have we met before?”
“Before you have started the remedial process, yes.”

“Oh.”

“Let me reintroduce myself. I am Bes-art Lin, the Grand Master of the Jedi Order.”

“You are the leader of the Jedi?”

The old man smiles. “I think you can say that, yes,” he says with hat in hand.

I stretch and straighten up a little in the bed, ignoring the backache. “What happened to me?” I ask as I clear my throat.

“You had a setback. Your mental state relapsed into its state before the treatment for a short period of time. It possibly happened because you had to abort your last session.”

Right. “I understand.”

“It was inevitable, however. Such a treatment requires you to be under no pressure and that was also inevitable for you.”

I shake my head. Awkward silence for a minute.

“What do you want with me?” I finally ask.

“I will be honest with you,” the old man starts. “You are a gifted woman. And this gift brings itself with power, but also danger. Thus far, you have managed to live a life of a common person. But as you have experienced yourself, this was not going to last forever. You have been attacked by dark forces, the enemy of the Jedi that keep themselves hidden.”

Dark forces? “What do they want from me?”

“Their motives are a secret. We actually hope that what you can tell us regarding what happened to you back on Mirial will provide some answers.”

My head drops the moment I hear that.

”Rest assured, we will not push you,” the old man says immediately after. ”You can tell us what you know whenever you are ready.”

_Fucking dotard thinks I am an idiot._ “Don’t you already know?”

The old man is floored. I can read the bafflement on his face. “I am sorry, Miss Leetas?”

“You warped my memories! They were changed.”

“Oo, that. Yes.”

The old man lags, swinging on the chair and muttering to himself for a while.

“It is a general side effect of the treatment,” he finally says. “Your memories were not changed one by one. Rest assured, it is temporary.”

“Oh.” _That’s a relief._ ”So, you don’t know.”

“We actually walked you through the remedial process, but you must have forgotten, of course.”
“Yeah.”

“How are you feeling, now?”

I stretch my muscles one more time. “Better… I guess.”

“Let’s have a walk together then,” he says as he stands up.

Ahh! I get off my butt, and follow him out. We leave the room, and he invites me beside him while walking in the halls. Everyone that passes us by greets the old man with an odd reverence, a simple nod or by saying ‘Master Lin.’

Yeah, Lin. Sure sounds like a big deal.

“So,” I say. “Let’s say I told you, then what? I mean… What will you do with me?”

“That remains to be seen.”

Huh? “Huh?”

“For now, we must ensure your mental health. There is another matter, however.”

“Oh?”

“You must learn to control your powers.”

“Okay, but… I can’t become a Jedi at this age. I mean I know that much. So…”

He smiles. “It is… unlikely, yes. However, we can’t let you harm yourself and those around you unknowingly. Thus, it is necessary that you are trained so you may reach a basic understanding.”

No one asks my opinion I guess.

“When the time comes, I will answer all your questions. Until then, have patience.” He says that just as I was about to ask another question about my future.

Uhh, fine.

We walk in silence. And to my surprise, he takes me out of the building to open air. Speeder traffic in the air is the first thing I see. And buildings, so many buildings…

Coruscant. What a place.

As we walk down into a courtyard, my memories of what happened in my own house’s yard come flooding back.

"Eva!"

“Turn back!”

“This place,” Lin says. “I like it. It is so serene, don’t you think?”

Yeah! Tell me about it. “It’s grand.”

He smiles. Then, we move towards a tree at the end of the yard. Out of the blue sky, the old man starts giving a lecture. “The galaxy is surrounded by an energy field. This cosmic energy binds us all together. It resides in every living being.”
“The Force,” I say. “I was taught in school.”

He seems pleased. “Mirialan society shares a basic understanding of the Force. Many such societies in the galaxy followed the Force throughout history. They adhered it to their cultures and religions.”

“People who followed the Force in my society used to become terrorists.”

“It is truly unfortunate,” he says. Then, he goes on: “While every living being is connected with the Force, some are more connected than others. These become sensitive to the Force. Thus, they are capable of sensing and manipulating this energy. Force sensitivity also provides them with higher capabilities compared to other members of their kind. These include higher cognitive abilities, better reflexes, acrobatic talents, speed and extraordinary immunity to diseases among many others.”

Makes… sense. Yeah.

“Will you sit here with me, please?”

He sits cross-legged on the ground, and I imitate him.

“Close your eyes now. Do not think of anyone or anything. Concentrate on the Force inside you.”

I close my eyes to do as he says. As soon as I meet some silence, trillions of thoughts come to my mind.

*How do three psychos come together like that? Why was that psycho masked, anyway?*

*Never fucking thought I would miss fucking Mirial. Yeah… Our fifth house was the best.*

*I am probably this well because they messed with my brain again. Who asked the fuckers, anyway, and… Damn, what’ll I do if I get away from this freaking cult, huh? I have no one anymore. Fuck my life.*

*Whaw, it’s actually hard not to think anything.*

“How do I concentrate on the Force?”

“If you merely seek it out, it will find you.”

*Uhh, that’s stupid.*

*Hey, Force. Where are you?*

*I know you are there. Knock-knock.*

*...*

*Hey, what’s that… feeling. Is that it?*

I feel an immense…. Vibration? It comes… from inside me I guess. It grows as I pay attention to it. Just in a moment, it comes to surround all my ins and outs. I feel so light, like my body is floating.

*This is actually… peaceful.*

I go on with it. The more and more I focus on it, the more and more it grows. I feel like the area all around me is filled with it now, and I am protected inside it. The darkness before my eyes feel… welcoming now rather than disturbing. I feel… in control. I am in control of
myself. I decide to give more of my attention to this darkness. It is so... inviting.

But insta-fuckin’-taneously, the darkness before my eyes turns white and I see that weird boy again as he stares weirdly. I abruptly open my eyes. The weird boy stares weirdly at me again.

“Fuck!” I scream, and throw myself back for meters.

“O, I am sorry. I didn’t mean to frighten you.”

“You a fucking moron?” I yell at him while struggling to breath.

“I am really sorry! I was just... Uhm... Passing by!”

“Passing by?” I shout at him. Then, I turn my back, and start walking inside the temple in an urge to get away from him.

“Wait, wait. Please!”

“Why do you always rush out on me like that!”

“Look, we spoke before, remember?”

“It’s thrice I open my eyes, and see you weirdly looking at me now!”

“I just want to get to know you better.”

I inhale and exhale in an attempt to come to myself. “I am really not in a mood today!”

"I said I am sorry..."

"Hey, where is the old man anyway?"

“He left half an hour ago.”

“Half an hour?” I am startled.

“Yeah. About that. You don’t really feel the time when you practice Control.”

"Oh?"

"Yeah. Great job by the way!”

“Thanks. Now, if you’ll excuse me…”

“Look, do I look like a bad person?”

I seriously look at him as he presents himself with a smiling face. Human, male, white, looks around twenty to thirty, plain clothes, light blue eyes, dark brown hair, pony-tail, pointed goatee, looks the same height with me, has a little weight maybe... Attractive? Not attractive.

Looks normal... Actually, looks more normal than everyone else here.

“You don’t look like one,” I conclude.

“I just want to talk. Really.”

“OK. Talk then.”
“Shall we go somewhere private?”

…

“Like my dorm or yours or near the bushes…”

No, I’ll pass. You can’t fuck me.

“Why do you want to be alone with me?” I ask with a blaming voice.

His face turns red. Humans…

“It’s really nothing like that.”

“Oh?”

"OK, Eva. It seems you are really not in the mood.”

“I am not!”

“I’ll just leave you alone.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah.”

“F-fine!”

Yeah, right… Finally.

“There is just one thing, though.”

Uff.

“A… sentence in Mirialan language. I picked it up while on Mirial. I looked up everywhere, but couldn’t find anything. You know since I just picked up what I could hear. Can you please try making sense of it for me?”

“Ah… Right. Well, Mirialans actually speak basic. For like hundreds of years I guess. It’s an ancient language really. Who did you hear it from?”

“I know. Heretics spoke a different language, though. I thought…”

"Oh, terrorists? That's bizarre. "Right. Well, they do speak it.”

“OK. Never mind then.”

“Wait,” I say as my curiosity gets the better of me. I hate myself. “I was thought that in school. Maybe, I can help if you show me.”

“Perfect!” he joyfully sputters. "Thank you very much.” He hurriedly takes out his datapad and shows it to me.

Hodilgves trizan hemveligvet?’ Ehh... Maybe 'Hao diil gves trie zenheim veligvet.'

“It… not… place… the…”
No wonder no translator could make no sense of this!

“Ah! …It is not the place…”

...

“Hmm, maybe, ‘where’ but…”

Oh, fuck it!

“Nah. Sorry. Can’t make it out.”

“No problem,” he says, trying to hide a sad face. "Thanks for trying.”

“Yeah. Don’t mention it.”

“Alright. See you later, Eva.”

I wave at him. And he gets lost.

...

Huh.

...

Hao fen diil gvet trie senhem vologvet?

...

Well.

It sure isn’t.
"What now, mom?"

"Eva, my dear. Your father and I decided..."

"What?"

"It is time you... learned the truth about yourself."

"Oh? You mean I am Force-sensitive? Boo! Well, because I already realized that. You know they teach it in school, nowadays."

"It is serious, Eva."

"Oh? So, that’s what the fuss’ about? You expected me to do what exactly? Shit on my pants because I am so surprised?"

"Eva, please don’t make this harder for..."

"I am a fuckin’ freak? Is that what fuck..."

"Eva... Please! You are... my reason to live!"

"O-okay... Mom. Mom, I am sorry. Don’t cry. It’s okay. I’ll listen."

"You and Kerinn. You are all that I have, all that I love."

"Hey, hey. Mom. It’s okay, mom."

"I love you so much!"

"I love you too, mom."

"And I can’t have let those Jedi come and take you from me! How could I?"

"What!"

"We can’t have... protected you. I... We..."

"What, mom? What have you done?"

"We asked for... protection... for you... from others?"

"Others! Who others? Mom! Answer to me!"

Everything to protect me from this place... And here I am anyway.

A pair of tears in my eyes make my reflection in the mirror blur.

What have you done?

Door bell. I wipe my tears, and hurriedly splash some water on my face. And I open the door.

"Good morning, Evail Leetas."
"Morning."

"I am happy to inform you that you have shown enough progress to begin your very first training session in the Jedi Academy."

"Really? After that hysteria last night?"

"It has been regarded as a temporary setback."

"Oh."

"Now, if you will follow me, I shall take you to your first training."

*What an excitement...*

I start following her as usual, looking at everyone who pass us by in anxiety. "So, Apprentice Orta. Were you around when I lost it?"

"Do you mean if I saw you when you went into a delirious state?"

"Yes."

"Yes."

"Oww. Well, how did I look?"

"Look? Like in appearance?"

"Ehh..."

"You were half-naked."

"What!" *Oh no! Fuck! I should wear pyjamas. "How many people were..."

"Please, make sure you address Master Lin properly," she interrupts me. "Bow to him, and then greet the Initiates inside with a bow as well."

"We are late in class?"

"We aren’t."

"But..."

"You will understand."

"You just enjoyed that, though. Didn’t you?"

She says nothing, but knocks the door in front of her.

"Yes. Come inside, please," a familiar hoarse voice calls out from inside the room.

The door opens. Lin sits cross-legged inside. Orta shows me the way, and I step in.

"Master Lin," I greet him, managing to nod with a smiling face at best. Then, I turn to my classmates. They’re a bunch of little kids. I get startled, but manage hide it with a smile. They smile back.

"Miss Leetas," Lin greets me back. "Please, take your place."
I guess he means sit cross-legged somewhere on the ground near the kids.

So, I comply.

"Now that play time is over, we may begin," the old man announces.

I smile as the kids shake their heads without any complaint. *Play time? He’s so good an old man. For someone of his status...*

"Today, we will cover our joint meditation practice on sensational awareness. We would be humbled if you joined us for this session, Miss Leetas."

"O-of course," I say shyly.

"Perfect. Now, can anyone remind us how we begin this practice?"

All the kids raise their hands.

"Yes, Luma."

"We close our eyes," the girl says. "We don’t say and think anything. Then, we listen to hear all sounds."

"Good, Luma. But do we just listen?"

"No," they all say.

"Then, what else do we do? Aslin?"

"We focus on the Force."

"Yes. Yes. The Force that flows through inside us, in one another, in our surroundings, and in the sources of those sounds that we hear, and beyond that. Now, tell me why we do this. Channis?"

"We sense."

"Yes. This is how we sense and understand what is happening around us through the Force. Through this practice, a Jedi can detect what he or she needs to detect. A person, an object, a path or a danger... For now, we use this exercise of sensational meditation to be able to achieve this. But once you have become experienced enough with sensing the Force around you, you will not need this exercise anymore. Now, any questions?"

*A whole lot of them actually.*

"Then, let us begin. Today, it will be a guided meditation so we review what we know. I will guide you through this exercise. Are you ready?"

Kids shake their heads, and I imitate them.

"Good. Now, close your eyes," the old man starts in a low and slow voice. "Do not give into thoughts. Pay your attention to the things that you can hear. My voice. Your breathing. The wind in the ventilation. Noises from the outside. Welcome those sounds that you may regard as disturbing. Do not let them bring you discomfort. Know that they are not there to make you uncomfortable. So, welcome them."

His words make me feel at peace. Not only the sound of them, but the meaning behind them. I do as
he says. He stops talking. But the hardly audible sounds of the wind, people or machines from the outside, my breathing, even the breathing of the kids... I hear them.

Strange there is no absolute silence. ... Uhh, No thinking!

"Remember: You cannot stop thinking," Lin says as if he just heard what I was thinking. "The mind must constantly work. Do not be troubled for it. Merely notice them, and wipe them away."

A few minutes of doing nothing passes. Then, he continues. "Now, reach out to the Force inside you."

I do that like the last time.

"Remember this is not a Control practice. Do not give yourself into the Force inside you. Instead, continue to keep your focus outwards, to the things that you hear."

Oh. Of course. Last time, I went into a kind of trance. If that happens here now, I'll be disgraced in front of the kids.

So, I try doing what he said instead, only to find out it is not easy not to give into that vast energy. I struggle to keep my own energy from drawing me inside.

"Do not show resistance," Lin says, having apparently noticed my forceful attempts at myself. "In the end, what you resist, persists. Fighting is what gives your worries and fears their power. Let the struggle go, and your worries will not be able to trouble you anymore."

Well, that’s stupid. But fine. You said it.

So, I give the fuck up, and let it take me inside. But it doesn’t happen.

Wait, what? It worked. But how? That’s stupid!

"Feel the Force inside you. Keep your focus on what you can hear."

Hmph, it’s easier now.

"And let us add more of our senses into this practice. Notice your body; your breath, sensations on your muscles, the weight of your body. Perhaps, a part of you aches. If it does, do not resist, just recognize it."

Strange I can keep the Force running while focusing on so many things at once.

...

"Now, reach out. Let the Force inside you flow out. It will spread anywhere if you merely ask it to. Let it spread to one another, and share it."

The energy inside me just flows out like a tidal wave when I will it. It mixes with a bigger energy field outside. It belongs to the kids. I just know it does.

"Well done," Lin says. "Concentrate on what you know is around you now. Can you feel their presence? What about the things you have been hearing?"

I can! The air, the ground, the space that the room has; I just know without looking. The kids are there, too. They shine in this space like energy orbs. There are eight of them.
Huh. I hadn’t even counted them before, but I know how many they are now. Can’t believe I am enjoying a meditation. Oh, there is Lin! I can see him too now. He feels... intense. Very intense. And there is something...

Wait. Can I find myself? I should feel like those kids and Lin, right? Let’s see.

I try searching for myself in the energy field, but nothing. It’s like no one sits beside those kids.

Weird. Maybe, you just can’t feel yourself. Whatever... Lin stopped speaking. So, it must be a free practice now. Wonder if I can see what’s going on beyond the room.

I will it to extend the energy field, but something just stops me. I feel like I hit my head against a brick wall.

What? I can’t go beyond that.

I try again. Again, it doesn’t extend.

Uhh! It’s like there is a barrier. ... Never mind.

This is getting boring, though. I wonder if there is really a barrier of the Force around the room. Maybe it is just me being incompetent. Hmm. One more try.

I try to extend the field as strongly as I can. The energy field extends, but then, like I just fell in a swamp, my energy field gets pulled back to the same limited area.

Uhh! What just happened? I nearly did it!

Oww... Oh, wait! Of course! I share this energy field with these kids. Maybe the old man instructed them not to reach beyond the class.

And it would be rude if I just detached, right?

Yes, Eva. It would. And you can always do it later.

Maybe there is a barrier though. If I detached, could I pass beyond that field? Now, I am curious. Only one way to find out, but... No. It’s just... Uhh, fuck it! I am new here, anyway. I can always say I did it by mistake.

I make an attempt to pull my energy back to myself from the shared field, only to find out you can’t do everything you like with the Force by just willing it.

Great... And it would take too long if I started from the beginning. Hey, why am I not creating a new energy field?

So, once again, I reach out to the Force inside me, and will it to extend out. But unlike the first time, I feel a kind of tremor on my body.

Whoa! That was intense. Whatever it was. I feel like I am vibrating, but I know I actually am not. I have a bad feeling about this. Better I try this quick.

I extend my new energy field as much as I can. And Bingo! There is no barrier. My new Force just
reaches beyond the room without any obstacle.

That’s incredible! Is it the whole temple? Whoa! So many energy orbs. They must belong to all those people in the temple.

Hmm. Let’s see if I can find a certain person in all this mess...

What about that weird boy?

I just imagine his appearance in my mind and look for the energy orbs, testing if it will work that way. But my little mischief just gets interrupted.

"It is enough for now!" Lin commands with a rigid tone of voice. "You are dismissed!"

Damn! And he clearly found out, too.

I open my eyes and get up with everyone else. As a preparation for my act, I put on an ignorant face as I approach the old man. Judging by the look of his face, he must be pissed.

First day in class, and I am to be told off. Somethings never change.

"Eva!" Lin shouts.

"Master Lin?" I tentatively respond.

"Eva!" he shouts again, louder this time.

"Yes?" Uhh! Stop staring and tell me off if you will already.

And why are you staring at my legs?

Suddenly, the old man runs towards me. Before I could get away from his way, he just passes... inside me.

He just passes inside me!

"Eva!" he shouts from my back.

I freeze. My breathing fastens as I shake in fear. Lin continuously calls my name from behind. I slowly turn my shaking body around. And there... I am. I scream with all my voice at the sight of my own self, sitting cross-legged and eyes closed on the ground still. Lin and the kids are gathered around my sitting body on the ground. The kids stare at it with empty eyes and open mouths while Lin still calls my name. I scream again.

"The session is over. Return to your dorms," Lin anxiously asks the kids out, and they start leaving.

O-OK, Eva. OK. You are just having a terrible nightmare. Yea. M-maybe I just went into... another trance. Yes.

"Child, can you hear me?" Lin asks my sitting body.

"Yea, I can hear you. I am just... behind you, really."

"Miss Leetas! Eva!"

"He can’t hear me! This is a terrible nightmare. Yes. Yes! It can’t be anything else, anyway."
I take a few deep breaths. Then, I force myself to wake up. "Wake the fuck up, Eva. Wake the fuck up!"

I start pacing up and down in fear, worry and all kinds of feeling I can't describe. "Fuck my life! Why can't I just die! Maybe this isn't a nightmare. What if I did something so very wrong! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!"

I look at my sitting body. It looks so real. I gather my courage and approach it. Lin is beside it, and isn't say anything anymore. I try touching him, but my hand just passes inside his body like he is nothing but an illusion.

"O-OK. Who knows? Maybe if I touch my own body, I’ll just get inside it again."

So, I try that, but it is the same thing. My hand just passes inside the face of my sitting body. Like it isn’t there. Or... like I am not. I turn around, move a little, lie on the floor, and start crying.

Why me? Fuck my life! "Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! What have I done!"

"You know..." a voice says.

"Wha- Who?"

"You. Or me."

I turn to the direction the voice comes from. My sitting body opens her eyes. I scream as high as it gets.

"What was I saying?" she says. "Yes. You know, there is an Eva who wasn’t naughty enough to pull that off. Or, I dunno. Stupid? Well, that’s me!"

I take a few steps back. "I am going mad. I am going mad!"

Lin’s no longer there. It's like he just vanished. The second me gets up from the ground, and comes towards me while my sitting body remains the same. I scream again. I look at my sitting body on the ground, and then to my woken own self as she approaches. She has a delirious look on her eyes. Her teeth in the open, she constantly grins in a frightening way.

"Nah!" she says. "That’s me. I went fuckin' mad. Couldn’t really take all that shit happenin’ to us you know."

I scream again.

"You? Well. You are going worse. Strange, isn’t it? There are things even worse than madness!"

"It’s not happening. It’s not happening. Not happening! No! No!"

"Oh yeah! Why not! Unlike you, I had a fuckin' brain. I mean... once. I still have it, of course. But you know what I mean. During that practice, I thought it would be a fuckin’ bad idea to do something like you just did. So, I didn’t share your fate. How’s it not fair?"

"You... You are just in my mind!"

"Hey, you should be proud of me. I fucking managed! Well, at least till that point in our lives."

"Eva!" It’s Lin’s voice. "If you can hear me, calm your mind."
Calm my mind. OK. OK. Well, easy to say! I inhale deeply to calm myself. I can’t believe I am doing this. "So..." I say, laughing fearfully. "How did you get mad?"

"Oh. Well, I just couldn’t take it all. Too much... in my brain. Sorry, I can’t just tell you about it."

"I can avoid it if you tell me," I say to Mad Eva.

"Oww. I forgot how fucking selfish we were. Well, since you are trapped here forever, you won’t need to know. So, cool it."

"What? Trapped here!"

"Yea. Basically Nowhere. But don’t get sad. I’ll introduce you to the others."

"Who others?"

"Come!" she clamors, and pulls me from my arm, dragging me. We pass inside the room’s wall into another room.

"Whoa!"

"Hey!" my voice says.

Oh no! A third me? I turn my face to her.

This me has my favorite turquoise sweater on. She looks silly and happy. "OK. Who are you?"

"I am you dumbass."

"I mean..."

"Oh. Right. I am you who haven’t ditched school that day. You know that day you had fun with Kerinn, drinking all day."

"Hey," Mad Eva objects. "You're spoiling. And how could any other of us know?"

"Yea," Casual Eva responds. "How could you two know that would get our family killed."

"What!" I instantly get miserable. "None of that would have happened if I didn’t drink that day with Kerinn?"

"None of that would have happened if you were in the place you were supposed to be, you dumbass. Well, dumbasses..." she mocks. "Some mysterious new friends I got that day kidnapped me instead of those psychos. So, the psychos just left our town and all alone. They came after me, but I was protected."

"No!" I cry. "It can’t be." I weep in a sudden remorse.

"Yeah. Wish you didn’t do that to everyone you loved."

"You... You..." My anger hits the roof. Or maybe it’s regret. Guilt. Or jealousy. I move to attack her.

"Eva!" Lin’s voice resonates in my ears. "Calm your mind. Please."

"Hey, hey, hey," Casual Eva says. "Don’t take it out on me. It’s your stupidity."

None of this may be real. I should listen to Lin. If anyone can get me out of here...
I push myself as much as I can to restrain my anger. "Where am I?" I ask.

"I told you," Mad Eva says. "You are at Nowhere."

"More specifically," Casual Eva says. "You are in between dimensions."

"Like a parallel universe?"

"No, vagina-brain! You are trapped in between universes. Like an astral realm, but it's really not. This is where all the universes collide, but it's just not that simple, either."

"You spoiled it!" Mad Eva yells.

"What?" I ask.

"You just can't know everything," she explains.

First, trance. Now, astral journey of sorts? I am on a roll at weirdness.

"Cool it," Casual Eva says in a relaxed manner. "She is not getting out of here anyway."

"Greetings ladies," a fourth me says, appearing out of the blue sky. She is serious and solemn. She has white and brown robes all over her.

"Oh! Not you," Mad Eva says disgustedly.

"Let me guess," I say. "You are me who decided to become a Jedi."

"Not quite," she says. "I did not decide. Our father, as you all would state, fucked up at what he was doing. So..."

"Go on!" Mad Eva shouts. "Spoil the entire thing!"

"Calm yourself," she responds. "If what has transpired here will change the course of events in her universe, then that is what must be."

"You're weird," Casual Eva states.

"This place is and is not," Jedi Eva tells me. "It is a point where the Living Force and the Cosmic Force intertwines."

"What are you talking about? Is it possible for me to leave here or not."

"Anything is possible with the Force."

"How pathetic!" a jar and belittling voice says. "You really think she can survive."

I turn to her. This one is so different. She has black pieces of metal all over her black pieces of clothing. Her eyes are yellow, and look malignantly. She looks evil.

"Eva. If you can hear me, you will be alright soon. Keep calm."

"OK. Which me are you?" I ask the fifth me.

"I am not you!" she scoffs. "I am Darth Vengix. You are nothing! None of you are!"
"She is the arrogant us," Jedi Eva states.

"Shut up! I am the you who killed that red bitch before she came for me!"

"What?"

"Do not listen to her," Jedi Eva interferes again. "She is our dark side. But she has no power here."

"But I don’t understand."

"You cannot! None of you can."

"She speaks of the Dark Side. You must never tread upon..."

"Enough!" I silence Jedi Eva. "What happened to you?" I ask the other.

"You fool! Why would I tell you?"

I clench my fists, grit my teeth, knit my brows, raise my neck and look her in the eyes. Reflection of myself frighteningly stares at me in her bloody yellow eyes. "Because you are me! Because she destroyed me! Because she killed our sister! You will help me have REVENGE! And I will kill that whore, too!"

She smiles. There is an evil glee in her eyes. Jedi Eva turns her head away in a ruthful manner.

"Very well," she says. "The answer is simple. I was captured by the Sith Lord."

"Who?"

"What did you do!" Mad Eva cries out. "You spoiled the entire story!"

"Maybe you should do the same, dumbass."

"Eva. Be ready, child."

*I should hear hers, too. I can’t leave without...*

"Yes, Mad Eva!" I shout. "Like it or not, I am getting out of here! Just tell me what made you mad! Please."

"Yea, just fuckin' say it," Casual Eva says.

"For our revenge!" the evil me shouts.

"The truth must be revealed," Jedi Eva states.

There is a short silence. Mad Eva takes a few steps back before she finally spits it out.

"I kept it hidden," she groans. "I kept what happened inside me. It ate me away. It drove me insane. And then... Then I couldn’t tell it anymore! My mouth couldn’t say them! My hand couldn’t write them! It stayed inside me for all time. ALL OF IT!" Then, she starts sobbing in agony. She throws herself on the floor, shouting and screaming. She continuously wallows, harming herself in any way possible.

My eyes widen. I freeze in worry and pity. My body shakes. Then, I feel the tremors on my body, again. I try to extend my arm to reach her, but it doesn't move. I look at my arm. My body begins.
to... fade. As everything around me vanishes, a whiteness is laid before my eyes. Then, I feel like something just hit my brain inside my skull. It rips me off my consciousness.

I open my eyes to Lin’s face. I shake continuously, tears in my eyes; my face is as rigid as a rock.

"Easy! Easy, child." Lin holds me from my shoulders as I sob. "Here, take this!" he says, giving me a glass of water. "It’s passed, now. You will be alright."

"What just happened? I traveled to a dimension. There were other me, other Evas. I..."

"I am so sorry. It is my fault. I should have instructed you more before asking you to practice."

"What do you mean?"

"You should never use the Force individually and cooperatively at the same time. It is so very dangerous. But as I said, it is my fault. After you have performed so well at your first practice, I..."

"Oh, no," I say, having come to myself a little. "You trusted me, and I got naughty. And stupid. I should have known my place."

Lin smiles. "You humble me, young Eva. After everything you have gone through..."

"You saved me. I heard your voice. Thank you." He tilts his head in humility. "I imagine you would like to have some rest now. I shall have you escorted..."

"No!" I shout.

He looks at me with surprised and asking eyes.

"There are things you need to know." I speedily say. "I will tell you everything that happened to me on Mirial. Everything I remember."

---

I can’t believe all I am going through nowadays. First, I am attacked and tortured. Oh Kerinn, mom, dad... and all those people... Was Casual Eva, right? None of that would have happened if I were at school that day? No! No! I am not believing that. I can’t.

And second, I get terrified by that freakish therapy. I can’t believe I still have to go through that. Sure, the freaky part is temporary, but still... And that green bastard should have warned me after he realized my memory got normal! Damn, they should have warned me about ‘set-fucking-backs’ too! So I wouldn’t...

And today was the ultimate mindfuck! And I did it to myself. I just fucked up! I may as well have developed a phobia of sleeping, now. I certainly developed one for... Damn! What if I was trapped there forever? Lin said it was so very dangerous of me. But hey. He was right! Sure, I was stupid, but he should have warned me, too!

Did I really go astral though? Maybe it was just my mind going nuts. Fuck! I’ll turn into Mad Eva if I don’t stop this.

...And all of that happened day after day! Sure, that fucking night was three months ago, but hey, I had amnesia; so it just feels like two days! Who do... Uhh! No way I can sleep. Not this night.
I open my eyes to my room’s ceiling. The lights are on, of course. I wouldn’t dare sleep in the dark after all that fear. I have my clothes on me, too, and the blanket is wrapped to my neck.

*I need to get outside. I can’t continue torturing myself here alone.*

I throw away the blanket, and get off the bed. I even skip doing my hair in order to avoid the mirror. I just get the fuck out of there, not daring to turn off the lights even when closing the door behind me. Fortunately, it is not completely dark in the halls. The first lights of the morning reflects on the walls of glass in the Temple’s halls.

*It’s morning already. I must have been ruminating all night. Hmm. Lin took me to a yard yesterday. Uhh! I hate yards! But I just know it is as far as I am ever going to get anymore.*

I try remembering the way only to realize I don’t know my starting point to that place.

*Damn, I had passed out before I got there. Oh, fuck it! Will find...*

"Evail Leetas."

I get taken aback by the sudden voice. "Apprentice Orta? Couldn’t sleep either?" I manage to say.

"I am early."

"Oh."

"I have been informed that you have gone through quite a trouble; details spared from me. I am actually here to check you out."

"Oh, thanks. I am... Well, I wanted to get some fresh air you know."

"Of course. I shall escort you to the courtyard."

"That would be great. Thanks."

"You are welcome. Please, follow me."

She is a good girl. Maybe a little weird, but who am I too judge after all that. I pay attention to the way to memorize it as Orta takes me through the halls. It so happens, the courtyard is quite close from my room. We just take it left, walk a few meters, and the way to the place is the first right.

"The Temple Courtyard is down here. I am to inform you that by Master Lin’s orders, you are given two days of rest and free time. I am still asked to check up on you in the mornings, but I shall leave you alone now."

"Thank you, Orta. Take care."

"You too, Evail Leetas."

I smile. "Sorry."

She smiles back, and leaves me.

The door opens as I take my steps. I inhale some fresh air, and start climbing down the steps into the yard.

"Eva!"
"Turn back!"

They just come flooding back. I can’t stop it.

I only notice the two stairs at both sides of the semi-circular yard now. They lead to a useless space below the yard. It’s just around two meters of height. I head there, hoping that not technically being inside a yard will help. The galactic city is vivid even in the wee hours. I get to the middle, sit on the ground, and start watching it. But that distraction doesn’t prove strong enough.

What am I doing in this place? Oww, Kerinn... I wish I died with you that day. I would just kill myself if I had the courage to do it. I can’t even do that! And who am I to decide anything about myself anyway? All my life, which is fucked up, I get to do what I am told. I am someone to control. I can’t manage myself.

"... to rise above that, to do what is good for you, not for anyone else."

Yea, Kerinn. I hear you. But if I could make choices, you would be alive. I couldn’t even choose to... Or could I? Maybe those were really Evas from other universes. Maybe that Eva did ensure you weren’t harmed. Not knowingly but... And maybe that other one did avenge you! No, no! That was just a live nightmare. It was Nowhere. And that Mad Eva! Oh, the way she collapsed in delirium... To see myself like that... I told Lin every single thing out of fear of becoming like her. And I did the right thing. Yea. I did.

Oh, I am going nuts. Damn it all! That red bitch was right, Kerinn. You died. Mom and dad, too. And here I am feeling...

"You summoned me, Master Lin?"

What? Wait! That voice...

"Averane."

It’s the weird boy.

"It has come to my attention that you have been impatient regarding the girl."

What? He means me?

"Master Lin, I just..."

"No matter. Eva has been cooperative sooner than I expected she would."

What! I should listen to this.

"Did she tell you?"

"She told me everything she remembers. I imagine it will ease your own mind to hear it out."

Why is he telling him out of all people?

"You will share it with me now?"

"She was a part of your vision. I have a feeling I can’t keep it hidden from you even if I wanted to." He laughs.

Vision?
"Moreover, I asked you for a favor when I wanted you to join the operation to rescue her. And then, this matter troubled you for about ten years."

Ten years?

"I... Thank you, Master Lin."

None of this makes any sense.

"Miss Leetas remembers only one of her attackers. A Twi-lek female. She says she had a... red lightsaber."

"A red lightsaber? Master Lin..."

"I know. And there is more. Among Eva’s torturers were two men. She says one was hiding his appearance completely. As for the other, her definition of him matches no known species. However, these two seem to have tortured the poor girl with the dark side of the Force. And all three seem to have psychopathic tendencies. If they aren’t Sith, they are something similar."

"Three of them! Master Lin, this is worse than we thought."

"Already, I have all the suspects investigated. Eva’s definitions of them were vivid. I am sparing you the details for now. We can discuss them later. There is one important detail, however."

"I am listening."

"Eva is a special one. While her midi-chlorians were found to be at an average, she has a deeper connection to the Force than... at least most."

What is he talking about?

"How is this possible, Master Lin?"

"She seems to be extremely Force-sensitive. It is a rare case. But it is not the first rare case for her."

Right. I am a freak among freaks.

"She is untrained, and yet she is able to use the Force with ease. She is talented for it."

"I see she has been performing well at her tasks."

"Too well. Yesterday, she made a very dangerous mistake. One even fully trained Jedi may not even be capable of... She is powerful, and with power comes a desire to use it, young Averane. It is especially dangerous with her mental state unstable."

"I understand. You are worried she may accidentally tap into the power of the dark side."

"I am afraid it already happened once."

"What?"

What? What have I done again?

"From what she told to me, I deduced that she accidentally used a very powerful and advanced dark side technique against her attackers without even knowing: Force Scream."
"What the..."

*Fuck!*

"Without any training? That’s impossible!"

"With the Force, nothing is impossible. But I share your surprise."

*I did something terrible, and I don’t even know what.*

"It is not the end of it. From what I understand, her senses are so strong, the mere presence of the dark side that night wore her down before the attack; left her even more defenseless."

"She has power, and she can’t control it..."

"Yes. And she is too old to be properly trained. She must learn restraint and discipline so she may be avoided from bringing harm both to herself and to the others. I want you to do that."

"Me?"

*Him?*

"You are the only one who can understand her. I believe by tending to her, you will also find some comfort and peace."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Approach her as a mentor. Reconcile with her. Hear her out, and answer her questions. Teach her calmness and restraint. By putting a certain distance between yourself and her, you will be able to instruct her. In the end, you will have developed respect and understanding for each other. I am sure you will find out that you have more similarities than differences."

"You mean we can empathize with each other. You want us to benefit from each other because we share mental issues, don’t you?"

"As you know, Force-sensitive individuals do not develop mental disorders."

"Yes, and she knows that?"

*Whoa. What...*

"No. It has only been three days since she came to herself, and those days were harsh on her. Furthermore, I want you to help her understand. Just not now. Let her rest for a few days."

"I just wonder. Does she know anything at all?"

*Oh, damn it! What else?*

"In time, you will explain everything to her. Do not rush."

"Master Lin, it has been three months already!"

"Yes. And we are doing everything in our power. We are yet to uncover the motives of these *Sith*, but we are on the track, young Averane."

"What track exactly?"
"We have confirmed the presence of mysterious allies on their tails on Mirial. It seems they have had agents in their ranks to manipulate their actions."

**Mysterious allies? It was true?**

"How did..."

"The virus that infected the navicomputer of Master Alvan’s ship. SIS have uncovered special Republic military codes written in the virus. What is more; it was used with the permission of the High Command, and they keep it confidential. Also, the virus came from the planet’s surface."

"The Military High Command may be corrupt. What if..."

"No, Averane. They may be working against these Sith in secret. In no way you can afford to compromise their efforts."

"But why would our allies and enemies work together to lead us to the girl?"

**Huh?**

"Simple. These Republic agents, as I presume, must have had an ulterior motive. They used this opportunity to eliminate the Sith, but..."

"They escaped, and left the girl behind. The agent said she was working for three clients, but just one in reality."

"Yes. And I am afraid it is all that has been learned about them thus far. I will inform you if anything else comes up."

"Thank you, Master Lin."

"There is more. Thanks to Eva, we confirmed that it all happened in the same day."

"I thought so as well."

"Yes. By the way, the terrorists’ advance on Mirial has reached a full recession now, but the authorities fear they are using this time to gather force. It is still unclear if they are allied with these Sith. Either way, the Galactic Senate still refuses to interfere with the inner affairs of Mirial. As for Devaron, the anarchy still rages on to no resolution. There has not been any development reported."

"Thanks for informing me."

**Mysterious allies... Once that would save me if I stayed at school? That was true!**

**Fuck my life! I am living a nightmare!**

...  

And who exactly is this guy anyway? How could I be troubling him for ten years? That’s so... And he is supposed to ‘discipline’ me now? Shit! Well, I am not going to let him tell me what to do!  

**Hmm. Maybe I can learn more about him. Well, I can’t ask Lin... Maybe Orta knows. Nah! She is a good girl, but will see it as a duty to dob me in. I should find out about him myself.**

I get up, and walk towards the stairs. I have a look at the courtyard from the edge. They must have left.
Why am I feeling this... Uhh! Better I return to my dorm quickly.

I start running back inside. I run as fast as I can till I reach my dorm room so I am not noticed.

"Evail Leetas."

Oh, fuck! Are you always...

"I was just here to check you out as scheduled at 8 a.m."

"Oh, thanks. Really I was just running... Uhm... You know… Morning exercise!"

"I see. I was asked to check if you need anything."

"Oh?" Hmm. Now is my chance...

"Well, I actually need some things. You know, for my well being. Like... my mental health."

"Of course. Name them, and I will put in a request for you."

"Thanks. So, I guess if I looked better, I would feel better about myself. So... Is there any chance I can get a make-up kit?"

"Make-up kit?"

"Yes. And a hair wand, if possible."

...

"Then, I think listening to music helps me clear my mind. So, a music player?"

"Evail Leetas, you should spend your free time meditating, but... I will still put in a request for you."

"Thanks, Orta! You are a wonderful girl!"

"It’s..."

"Oh, sorry sorry. I mean you are a great Jedi Apprentice."

"You are welcome."

"Cya!"

And I run inside my dorm.

What's happening to me?

...

Whatever. That went well. Why did I just ask for a music player, though?

Ehh. I really should have some sleep. Oww. After bath.
7 a.m.

I stretch in the bed.

Wasn’t it past 8 a.m. when I slept? Oh... I must have hibernated.

Hmm. I was given a rest. Now is the perfect time to ask about the weird guy.

Maybe I can find him and get some answers. But where will I start?

...

Well. Not here.

I just get off my bed, put some biscuits in my mouth, and get some clothes on myself. I regretfully skip doing my hair again out of fear of my reflection. I just pull it and play with it a little, and hope it will be fine... or just not disgusting.

I am happy?

Door bell.

Isn’t it my free day?

I open the door.

"Hey, Eva!" It’s him! The weird boy leans on my room's sill with a smile on his face.

Should have guessed he would find me instead. But didn’t Lin tell him not to bother me for a few days? What’s he up to?

"Groggy?"

I respond with a fake smile.

"Good morning."

"Yea. Morning."

"So, won’t you invite me in?"

Huh? That’s a girl’s room, so... No? "Ehh... O-of course." Oww...

"Thank you," he says as he gets inside. I fake smile to hide my sour face as he invades my private space.

"I see you have been messy," he comments on my room brazenly.

Grr! Sorry you had to see my underwear lying on the ground you fucking bastard!

"I... guess, yes," I say shyly.

He laughs. "Sorry. I was just joking. Really."

"Oh, it’s nothing."

He’s teasing me? Talk about oversincere. Hmm. Still that’s what I...
"Err... I was thinking we should... socialize." Then, he sits on the floor.


He laughs. "You are so open, Eva. I liked you. So, ask me a question."

Huh? OK. "How is my hair?" Somethings just take priority. I can’t believe I present myself like this after...

"Err..."

Wait, am I turning normal?

"It’s shaggy."

"Shaggy!" I AM SO GOING TO KILL YOU! "Shaggy?"

"Sorry, did I..."

"No. No. It’s fine. Really. Eh... Can I borrow your hair tie, please?"

Why did I just... That was so STUPID. But, I just really need that confidence. Yes.

"Ehm, of course," he says. He unbucksles his hair tie, and gives it to me.

"Thanks," I say while I tie my hair. "So," I say smiling. "You said you weren’t a Jedi, no? So, what are you?"

His face drops. I must have hit a nerve.

"Tell you what?" he says. "Why don’t we turn this into a game. We’ll play Two Truths and a Lie. What do you say?"

Huh. He must be thinking I am an idiot to be interrogated like that. Well, I’m just gonna lie every time. Then, I’m gonna cut my fingers. WHAT? "Ookay. Sounds fun!"

"Glad you agree! I’ll start. One: I settled on Nar Shaddaa once. Two: I have ventured on desolate planets and moons. Three: I don’t know my homeplanet."

Show off! "Three. You do know."

"Yes. Stewjon. I have never revisited the place, though. And I was just three... Well, your turn now."

"OK." Let’s ruin your fun. "One: I love drawing, especially nude pictures. Two..." Hmm. "I once beat a boy in high school with one hand... when he invaded my privacy," Oh yeah! "And three: I have never ever gone to a gym."

"Why do I think two is partially true."

How did he... "Yeah..." I laugh. "He was innocent, really. I just wanted to do that. Poor boy." Anyway, he got my message.

"One is a lie."

"Well, it was three, actually."
"Eva!"

Whoa. Damn!

"Are you OK, Eva?"

"Oh, I am. I am actually... happy today."

"...your favorite meal in the dinner today!"

"Are you? I am glad."

"Thanks."

"Well, no points for me. OK. So, one: "I have seen you before we first met. Two: I have seen you after our conversation here. Three: I lie to you."

What? ... What!

"So..."

"What? All of them, of course. You lie. I mean… Uhh! One and two are lies. Logically..."

"Do not use your logic. Use your senses. What do they tell you?"

That you are fucking weird, and... Fuck!

But how?

"Uhh, it’s late, now," he says, getting up.

"W-wait!"

"Sorry. Gotta get going," he says, marching to the door. "Will drop by later. See you."

And he gets out.

Weird. And he forgot his hair tie.

...

He could see through my lies?

...

Oh, fuck! But how is it...

...

Door bell. I open the door.

"Evail Leetas. I was here to check up on you as..."

"Apprentice Orta. Did you enjoy it when you told me I was half-naked, and left me unanswered yesterday?"

"I do not understand the purpose..."
"Please. Just yes or no."

She hesitates for a moment. "Err... No."

*I could see it. I just know she lied. Don’t even know how.*

"Whoa! I can see through lies."

*She turns her eyes away, and I can see her face turning red. Oh, she says she is embarrassed.*

"Oh, no!" I soothe her. "I am so glad you enjoy somethings. Really."

"That... wasn’t OK, Evail Leetas."

"Hey, I just..."

"Just please... don’t tell anybody," she whispers

I smile.

She smiles back. "And here you are feeling sorry for your own self."

"What?"

"It may sound like a cliche, but you really are a different girl, Eva."

"No! No! No!" I collapse on my feet, shutting my ears and closing my eyes.

"Turn back!"

"I love you."

"Not again! NO!" I cry.

"Eva!"

"Know FEAR!"

"I know you will. You deserve the best."

"Stop! Make it stop!" I beg.

I can't dare open my eyes. I don't know where I am. And I don't care.
The Jedi Way

Master Lin prospers in the Temple Courtyard. This place symbolizes him beginnings. And continuity. Yet I believe it is also peace, harmony, serenity and wisdom that he finds in this place; the virtues that bind us to the Jedi Way.

"Ahh, Nerreta."

"Master." I bow to him with my deepest respect.

"It is a peaceful day, isn’t it?"

"It indeed is, Master."

"How much I would love to relive old days with you here today," he laments. "However, I have summoned you here to discuss something important. You are the only one I can trust with this matter."

"Anything, Master."

"As you well know, the girl in Averane’s vision is finally here with us."

"Is it about Miss Leetas, Master?"

"She has suffered a major setback recently, and is kept under observation still. But the girl will heal. What worries me more is Averane’s mental state."

"I see."

"Years ago, I asked you keep an eye on him after he returned to the temple. Then, his mind was damaged, and now, as his vision is coming true, I believe it is going to worsen."

"What do you want me to do?"

"I have asked Averane to look after Eva. I told him that it would be for the benefit of them both, but then, I also suspect that he is going to try driving her too into his obsessive pursuits. I can trust you and you alone to watch their relationships."

I nod. "I understand. Averane Malcom has been a troubling one all along."

"Not always, no," he states to my surprise. "As a Youngling, the boy stood out among the others you know."

"Forgive my prejudice, Master," I apologize in embarrassment. "I did not cross paths with him when he was an Initiate."

"The Force has always been strong with him. But it wasn’t that." He sighs. "As a Jedi Initiate, he showed great promise. He outperformed the expectations of his masters in all the areas of his Jedi training. By the time of his expulsion, his Lightsaber skills would match that of Jedi Knights. But most importantly, he had a passion to become a Jedi. He was a true believer of the Jedi Way. I have even considered seeing to his training myself you know."

I can’t hide my astonishment. "You wanted to take him as your own next padawan?"
"Well, it has never been possible."

"I see," I say as we start walking in the courtyard.

Master Lin sighs. "As you know, the vision that Averane experiences is unlike any other."

"Yes," I agree. "I have nor experienced neither heard of a vision that repeats over and over again."

"The members of the Jedi Council were divided into two regarding his situation. Some of them feared that his vision is a sign of dark side corruption. The others believed his vision could be true, and if it is so, it has to remain a secret for the Jedi to act before their enemies when the time comes. In either case, the Council saw it as a necessity to deny his vision, and decide against him.

"It is quite unfortunate."

"The boy not only lost his status of Jedi, but was also retained in this temple indefinitely. This way, the possible future was hidden for the Jedi to act against it, and the boy was protected from the possibility of dark side corruption." He stops in his tracks. "I had advocated for the boy. I believed he... was to be something more. Do you understand, Nerreta?"

"I do," I say. "You believe that Averane Malcom is destined for greatness and that it is the Will of the Force."

He nods. "The punishment he received was very unfair. The place he saw as home had become a constant reminder of what he was not anymore. He strayed away from the Jedi Way more and more each day."

"Had he remained here all this time, the feeling may have led him to the dark side along with the vision, Master."

"His situation was discussed more than once. The Council eventually reached that conclusion as well. However, the boy had already broken out by the time that session was over." He laughs.

I join him. "It seems it was for the best."

"It was. Thus, we allowed him to stay away from this place. But... I knew he would eventually return."

"Because of the vision?"

"So long as it troubled him, he could not have found peace."

"I understand."

"The Council still feared he may fall into the dark side. After he left, we had the boy followed, and checked up on him time to time. He settled on Nar Shaddaa, and tried the life of a civilian. He says the vision haunted him, and that it is why he returned."

"He seeks answers here."

"Yes. Before his return here, he had left Nar Shaddaa about five years ago, and travelled to some other place or places. But we lost his track then."

Could it be... "Master, he may have sought knowledge and power in places strong with the Force!"

"Or searched for the places in his vision... We do not know."
"Master, on Mirial, I have witnessed him using the Force in ways I have never seen before."

Master Lin stops in his tracks. "Interesting... It is possible. Yes..." he ponders. Then he continues: "It is of no matter, however," he states. "You see I suspect his obsession over the vision only became worse as time passed. It has been ten years now. The vision cost him, and continues to do so. He is a young man in emptiness. There is nothing else, but the vision that drives him. He will cross any line for it."

I nod. "I will approach him with understanding. I am sure he will see reason."

"Thank you, Nerreta."

We pay each other our respects, and I take my leave.

---

_The Grand Library of the Jedi Order. The most vast storage for knowledge in the galaxy. There is no doubt that the visionary seeks answers about his vision here, and the ways that can help him in his shadowy pursuits._

"Master Reyma," I greet the Jedi Librarian.

"Master Alvan, what a pleasant surprise," the kind man greets me back. "Have you come for further exploration of our ways in this sea of knowledge or are you just here to relive old days? How may this humble predecessor of yours help you?"

I smile. "You are so kind, Master Reyma. But I am afraid I am only here for a visit," I say. "Of this library’s most frequent visitor to be exact," I add.

"Ahh," he says with a smile. "I see."

"I am actually worried that Mr. Malcom has been spending too much time here."

"I would welcome anyone with the passion to learn as long as they want in this chamber, Master Alvan."

I kindly object. "Still, the library is off limits at nights, and..."

"With all due respect Master Alvan, it is in my authority to decide such matters."

"I see," I only say, hiding my surprise.

"Good day," he says, and walks away to another part of the library.

Averane Malcom once again proves very easy to find in the library. A pile of holobooks lay on the table he occupies in the very back of the chamber. Again, he doesn’t notice me. His head is entombed to the book he is reading frantically.

"Am I interrupting?"

He shakes his head, and raises it abruptly. His eyes are bloodshot. "Master Alvan... No, no. You don’t."
"May I sit?"

"Of course."

I sigh, observing his sleepless face. "After Mirial, I thought your mind would be at ease."

"Sorry. Can’t help it."

"And why?" I ask as kindly as I can.

"The vision... It... It doesn’t stop there, Master Alvan."

"I am listening."

"I saw a planet die. Then that masked man with a red lightsaber... Eva met her. And some rocky planet that doesn’t make sense... I..."

"Yes? Please, go on."

"I see those every time I close my eyes."

"I see. The vision reminds itself to you," I deduce.

"How can I possibly get my mind away from it?"

"I just want you to know that everyone is doing everything they can. Perhaps, it is time you let us lend our aid to you in this matter."

He exhales. "Thank you. I... appreciate it, really."

"So, tell me, do you still see Miss Leetas, her burning town and the anarchy on Devaron?"

"I do. All that happened, just the way I saw them happening, and I still see them."

"I had experienced visions before, and heard others experiencing them. Yours is different, Averane. It is like... I do not know."

We stay silent for a moment.

Then, I ask: "Have you heard? Miss Leetas..."

"Yea. It's hard for her. The Remedial Process is not for those untrained with the Force. But I understand it is necessary, so... Well."

"Have you had a chance to speak with her lately?"

He turns his eyes away.

"I understand," I try to reassure him. "I didn’t mean to... interrogate you."

He smiles. "Just two times, actually. And both were just last week."

"What is your assessment of her?"

"She is a civilian woman. She has a peculiar personality, but everything about her is just... civilian."

"Well, Averane," I state. "I am sure you will tend to her whether anyone asks you to or not. After
"Yea. I don’t think I can help it," he admits.

"And I hope that you will be considerate regarding her state."

"What do you mean?"

"After everything she has gone through, it is no surprise her mental state decayed."

"And?"

"You know what it means for one who feels the Force."

"Yeah. She is liable to be corrupted by the dark side. So what? What are you asking me to do? Or rather not do..."

"As you said, she is but a civilian..."

"Not anymore she is! Will you please stop beating around the bush?"

"Keep her away from the pit that you fear to fall yourself. Approach her with care. Do not let her stray to the darker path."

"You fear I’ll use her for my own gains!"

"I am sorry to interrupt your conversation," says a voice. I turn my face to Master Reyma. "But I am afraid you are disturbing the other visitors."

I ignore him, and turn to Averane. "I only fear that you will go to any lengths to find answers to your vision," I say after Master Reyma leaves us alone.

He does not respond.

"Please," I implore him. "Lead her to the Jedi Way."

"I am NOT a Jedi!"

Averane’s shouting echoes in the library, and I feel the looks of everyone else on us.

I sigh. "I am sorry," I say as I get up. "It must have meant a great deal for you once."

He turns his eyes away again.

"Still, neither is she. And you know what that you ask of you is for the best," I add as a final word.

Then I leave him alone.

I give Ediskard my usual disappointed look as he combines a Deflecting Slash with a Makashi Riposte.

"Sorry Master," he immediately says.
My young padawan has so much to learn, but then, we all do. One never finds trouble finding things to learn no matter how much he knows.

I deactivate my lightsaber, and he follows.

"It is not wrong to modify lightsaber moves to your personal preferences, Padawan," I tell him. "But before you do so, you need to have mastered their relevant forms first. And even then, it takes meticulous work. Tell me, are you a master of Form II and III?"

"Very far from that. Sorry Master."

"It is fine. Let’s sit down a little," I say as I sit cross-legged on the training room. He joins me obediently.

I sigh. "I must admit. I may be a little too prim."

"No. No. Master... It’s me. I-I am hot headed, pushy and rule-breaker and... I don’t know if anyone else would apprentice me if you didn’t, Master... I am just... not fit to be a Jedi."

Ediskard...

"It breaks my heart that you think that way. I respect your own personality, Padawan, and it is not necessarily..." I pause for a moment. "It reminds me. I never told you why I took you as my Padawan, did I?"

"No, Master."

"In fact, it was because I saw so much of my own master in you."

"Master Lin? Really Master?" he exclaims in astonishment.

"As a Youngling, I favored him because of his unique perspectives and understanding. I thought I could learn much more from - let’s say - a Jedi out of line."

"I never saw him like that myself, Master."

"He has a certain image in the perception of everyone who knows him because of his position now. But if you look closer, you may see what type of a person he really is."

I give Ediskard some time as he thinks.

"Whoa! Yea, it’s true. Now that I think about it."

I nod. "He was but a Jedi Knight when he accepted me as his Padawan. He was then a very impulsive man. We were quite the opposite of each other." I smile at the reminder.

"Master," Ediskard tentatively say, "Were you not a little... relaxed yourself if I may..."

"No, I have never been. I think I am one of those who were... born old."

We laugh.

"You are sure, Master? Because..."

"I know, yes. I probably turned out to be more relaxed as an old woman."

We laugh again.
"It was strange between us, me and my master," I continue. "We never got close on a personal level due to the differences in our characteristics. It was always a cold relationship of a master and an apprentice between us."

"I am glad ours didn’t turn out that way, Master."

"As am I, Padawan. Still, Master Lin would never judge me for my personality, and in return, I didn’t think badly of him. Thus, we always respected each other’s differences. And I was right. I learned so much from him. And this was perhaps the most valuable lesson he gave me."

Ediskard smiles. "Thank you for this, Master. I won’t let you down."

"I already know you won’t," I state as we stand up. Then, I remember: "Padawan, before I forget, I must ask you to take more care of your friend Averane."

"Averane? I visit him whenever I have time, Master. He has been... Well, not well."

"I have noticed. So, maybe you can reason with him."

"Yea. Will do, Master."

"He spends all his time in the library, even at nights. I do not know why Master Reyma allows him. It is strange."

"Beats me, Master."

"I am afraid the vision costs Averane more than ever, now that it is coming true."

"I think so, too."

"He is way too adept with the Force as we have seen on Mirial. I wonder how."

"It was weird, yes."

"And his years before his return here is shrouded in mystery."

"I’ll look after him, Master."

"Thank you. I know he is your friend, and I won’t ask you to betray his trust, but for his own safety..."

"Master?"

"Question him."

"Question him, Master?"

"And inform me."
Nothing. Nothing! NOTHING!

I throw away everything on the table in rage. My eyes hurt like they are scratched. I put my head on the table. The dim blue light on it is everything that illuminates the place for me.

*How does her being not cast a presence in the Force? All living beings do. How could she be insensible?*

The ambush, the virus, the town, the staff, the agent, the Gaze... NO! Nothing on Mirial makes sense! I can’t put the events together to seem right. No theory works! I need to find about the girl; what is special about her.

The only rare cases of insensible beings I could find are semi-synthetic creatures, like toranoids. But even they can be sensed at times. And even if Eva was a cyborg herself, she would need to be... Uhh, it’s impossible.

*Hey, hey, maybe I can get something from there still.*

I grab the light, get up, and rush to the closest computer. Then, I start searching. Nothing specifically about toranoids, of course. I try everything relatable I can think of in the search engine. There are only two sources about semi-synthetics. I run to the shelves to grab them. It is another painful search of a needle in a haystack, or rather a sand in a desert in my case. The first book reads ‘Studies of the Force in Synthetic Life by Prof. Dr. Denaya Arvan Remuls’. So, I start scrolling it down.

Pass. I don’t care who you are. Bullshit. Bullshit... Nothing about the Force... Bullshit. Total bullshit. Total bullshit again. Bah! This is just machines... Cyborgs... No Force... Here comes the part with the Force... Damn! Just usual scientist creations... Yes! Semi-synthetics! Yes, I know, they can’t be sensed with the Force, everyone knows that... Shit! Nothing... Wait. Blends of science and technology... Dread Masters twisted experiments... Nice topic, but shouldn’t get distracted. Phobis Devices? Nothing that’s even half alive though... Wait. An unknown technology that breeds creatures of the Dark Side?

"The records indicate that Dread Master Bestia unleashed breeds of creatures through devices that reacted to the Dark Side of the Force. Following the demise of the Dread Masters on Oricon, all the technology that belonged to them were reported to be destroyed by the separate efforts of the Galactic Republic and the Sith Empire both while the Great Galactic War was still waging. Thus, the secrets behind the twisted creations of the Dread Masters..."

Pffh, it’s a slim lead, but only one I’ve got. Let’s see if there are more cases like that... Uhh, no... Pass... Nah! The rest is crap.

I reach for the other book. It reads ‘Correlations: Synetics, Semi-Synthetics and Organics’ by Oppal Ulgo.’ I just search for the word ‘the Force’ for this one. No results.

*Figures. It writes ‘I am garbage’ on the cover anyway. OK, let’s see if I can connect things with Force sensitivity.*

I start pacing in the library.

So, the Dread Masters created living beings by mixing the dark side and science. Humph! Oricon was a complete wasteland as I remember. But still I could feel the dark side on the moon's surface.
Maybe the Dread Masters technological constructs affected the soil there, and led it to be corrupted. The book says nothing about Force sensitivity, but it clearly states it is a power of the Dark Side.

"Anything known to be insensible with the Force as an exception are semi-synthetics. And it seems it is possible to create life by using technology and the Dark Side of the Force, blending the Force with technology. Something tells me that whatever makes Eva insensible is..."

...the Dark Side. She can’t be a semi-synthetic - at least not enough. And she had parents. So, she can’t be a creation of Dark Side Sorcery. Hmm. It may not be that simple though... But then, she used an advanced Dark Side technique by accident. It could be that she is innately connected to the Dark Side.

"Pffh, I am just theorizing again!"

Still, it is the only clue I have. Gotta continue searching.

So, I find myself in front of the computer again.

It’s just unwise to type ‘dark side’ in the search engine. I can’t clear history. Ahh, think, think! Err... Creat! Bah... That’s the entire library loading. OK. Creat the Force... Bingo! Creations of the Force. If I can’t find anything in that, I am going to do what Alvan says.

I run to the shelf to grab the book, and start reading it like a maniac.

The author is anonymous? Augh... Don’t care anyway.

"This work is... All life is a result of the Force in... The Force makes it possible for... Force-sensitives are a... I shall also cover the attempts of Force Users to create... Some have mastered... Wait, wait, wait! Where do you cover that!"

I start scrolling it down frantically to reach the section, giving my full attention to the writing so as not to miss a part like my life depends on it.

"No, no, not that... Useless! No... Where do you cover that you full-blooded son of a bitch! Ahh... Here! YES! The attempts of Force Users to manipulate life. Damn! The tone of this book is freaky. And all of these practices seem to belong to the Sith. No Jedi must have ever tried..."

Failed attempts... Failed attempts, again. Wow! Maybe I should keep it for a full reading after all this... Another failed attempt. The costs were terrible... Successful Attempts! Dread Masters are mentioned here, too... Damn, it’s all horrible... and disgusting... Ziost? It was destroyed? Looked like a vibrant world to me... Who the hell is Lord Vitiate? "Turned on his glorious Sith Empire..." Glorious Sith Empire? Who wrote this? Wait, what?

"The Sith Emperor destroyed the entire planet to fuel his power of the Force, leaving no living being alive over the planet’s surface. I long assumed myself that Vitiate used a technological device to destroy the planet, and absorbed the essence of the living beings there - their Force energy - through a Force ritual. After he was done, the surface of the planet was left to a breed of Force-sensitive creatures, later called Monoliths. Nor alive neither dead, the creatures were insensible by Jedi while those who were affiliated with the stronger side of the Force could feel their immense power. They were a breed of the Force itself. They were evolution perfected. How the great Emperor was defeated has always remained a mystery. But when he died, as did his creations."

I raise my head in shock, trying to get my head around all that. I have difficulty processing what I just learned.
"Shit!"

I just learned about everything from one paragraph! That’s it! The destroyed planet! It can’t be a coincidence that I just bumped into this. It is the Will of the Force. Whoever is going to destroy the planet in my vision is going to repeat the Sith Emperor’s ritual. I found it! A technological device and a dark side ritual... Wow! I may be too optimistic, but... Wow!

Hmm... I can’t believe I found that in the Jedi Archives. Huh... And the book is so dark. I wonder how it is here... Or... I just don’t care. It was in the library if anyone asks anyway. Whatever...

So, the Dark Side users could sense those Monoliths whereas the Jedi could not. Let’s see if I can sense Eva’s presence with the Dark Side then. Not something I didn’t do before...

I return to the table, and sit. After taking a deep breath, I close my eyes. As I reach out, I tap into my anger. As the energy field darkens, I realize I had forgotten how disgusting it felt to touch the Dark Side. It is like reaching in to a swarm of insects. Fortunately however, and unexpectedly, my search for the girl lasts quite short.

She is there! In her dorm room... It worked. And well, that was easy. So, they brought her back. I wonder when. Or did they ever...

"Good morning."

The voice that interrupts me is the Jedi Librarian’s. The old Duros looks at me smiling.

"Master Reyma... Good morning to you too... I..."

He patiently waits for me to finish my stutters. Or rather the act of stuttering. How quickly I wear my masks now troubles me for a second. It had become an ingrained habit of mine.

"I am sorry," I just say. "For the mess," I clarify, pointing out to the books on the floor.

He grins. "Young Malcom, you remind me of a once great Jedi you know."

"Really? I am not even a Jedi."

"Like you, she was known for her passion to learn. She even neglected her duties as a Jedi for it, like her duties to me. But I always respected her."

"She was your master?"

He smiles. "I shall let you clean this up."

"Of course, Master Reyma."

And he walks away.

Damn it! Hope he didn’t sense me. Ahh... Can’t do anything about it. I’d better behave.

So, I start putting back the holobooks I threw up on the floor to where they belong. Finding those in the huge library once again proves time-consuming enough to constantly curse myself. Just as I put the last book back at its shelf, I hear Dis’ voice.

"Need help?"

I turn my back to his grinning face. "Nah. Thanks. Just finished."
"Sorry I missed all the fun."

"Morning to you, too," I respond to his teasing.

"You didn’t sleep. It’s no morning for you."
Again, I put a mask on my face on impulse. "It technically is," I protest. "Scientifically..."
He laughs.

"...the planet doesn’t care whether you slept or not."

"Hey, don’t make me laugh in the library."

"Fair enough."

"So, what have you been reading..."
I sigh. "A lot of things really."

"Right. Err... Let’s talk, Rane." And he sits on a nearby desk.
I put another mask on my face. "I gotta sleep. Another time?"

"No, because you have been imprisoning yourself in this library for what? Two months?"

"You missed me," I say to loosen things up.
He doesn’t buy it. "I did. And you told me you’ll stop obsessing."

"It has been more than three months!"

"You endured just for one month."

*I is right. "OK. You have a point," I say, sitting in front of him. Then, I add, whispering: "But I am close to something now."

"You always are. No big secret."

"Hey! That’s not fair."

"I apologize," he immediately says. *Poor Dis. Don’t have the heart to upset me.*
I laugh. "OK. I’ll forgive you in exchange for not telling you what it is."

"Deal," he says, laughing too in response.

"So, Rane..."

"What?"

"You like reading... or learning? Or is it just that?"

"What kind of a question is that?"

"Choose the correct answer."
"Dis!"

"Hey! It isn’t a secret. Is it?"

I sigh. "It is just that now," I say. "I did like it once though. Back when I was... a part of the Jedi Order."

"I am sorry. I think... I think you would make a great Jedi. Really."

That talk never fails to break my heart. "Thanks," I just say.

"You heard? Master Tassei was re-elected for the Jedi High Council."

Ahh! That was supposed to make me feel better?  "No, and don’t care!"

"Not in mood to talk I see."

"Uhh, you didn’t know."

"What?"

"Nothing."

"Whatever. So... Err... Tried speaking with the girl?"

"Let me guess. It is a Yes-No question."

"Come on..."

"Send your master my regards. I say this in a rather friendly way.

"Hey, Nerreta’s a good woman," he protests. "A little serious looking, but she is actually so soft."

"Nerreta? Even I call her Alvan in my mind."

"As I said... Bah... Do not divert from the subject."

I laugh.

"I wouldn’t even try talking you out of it if I thought it’d be for your bad, would I? Not even because my master asked."

"I know Dis, and I appreciate it."

"So, tell me what you plan with the girl."

Pffh, what’s the harm anyway. "Master Lin asked me to tutor her," I say. "To be honest, I am planning to make use of her power. She is strong with the Force, and I think she needs the confidence."

"You will teach her the... way to be... powerful."

"If she trusts herself more, her mental health will improve. At least, that’s what I think."

"Yea. I guess, but, you know..."

"I do. Tell it to Alvan. Let’s see if she approves."
"You both are shitting me at this point!"

I laugh.

"Hey. I want to ask something else. It isn’t anything..."

"I get it. Go on."

"You think she is beautiful, the girl?"

"What?" Damn. "She isn’t too bad. Why?"

"Come on. She is ugly!"

"Dis...

"The most shapeless face I’ve ever seen!"

Oh my...

"She has no elegance. Even her arms are manly..."

"She isn’t that..." Ahh, what am I saying?

"She is..."

"I gotta go sleep. Really. I can’t stand," I say as I get up.

"And that skin..."

"Cya later." And I walk away fast.

"I didn’t know such a hideous shade of yellow even existed!"

The Devaronian anarchy. Eva. The orange landscape. The burning town. The meeting in the dark room. The destroyed planet.

I wake up from the vision again, hearing a beep every second. I tumble out of the bed, turn on the lights, and reach for my holocommunicator.

8 P.M.? Damn!

I turn my holocom on.

"You have a video message. Press 9 to see..."

I just do that. It’s Ferdon.

"Hello, my friend. I have received your message. What happened on Mirial is disturbing. Along with the anarchy raging on my world, the advance of the terrorists on Mirial has been one of the main discussions in the Senate as I am sending you this message. I hope you receive it in time. You see, I have spoken with the Mirialan Senator. He also wishes to speak with you personally as I do,
following the developments.

"I am afraid things are getting worse in the entire galaxy now. Worlds all over the galaxy carry a risk of succumbing to chaos. It makes the senators and representatives of those worlds also worried as you may imagine. There is a chance now that we will have each other’s support, which is why our meeting will be most fruitful in the Senate Tower. This way, you will also have an opportunity to make your case to the other influential individuals in the Senate.

"As for how you will get inside there undetected, there will soon be a gala held for the founding of a governmental organization: Interplanetary Mining Corporation for the Prosperity of the Core Worlds. The invitees are all people of high status. And after the gala, they will all be escorted to the Senate Tower. I believe this will also provide us the best opportunity to hold our secret meeting.

"I am sure you will find a way to get inside the gala. I have sent you the details as to where and when it will be held. I will try to attend it myself, but I may not be able to. I will keep you posted about it. Either way, we will meet in the Senate Tower.

"I understand your situation of not being able to leave the Jedi Temple for the moment. But I have hope that you will find a way again. There are also other matters we will have to discuss. Matters I cannot mention even over a secure channel...

"Take care, my friend. Ferdon out."

*Ferdon’s been busy... But how will I possibly... Ahh! Let’s see... Coordinates are here. The other end of Coruscant... Damn! It’s just a week later. I need to have a look at that connection. Hey, what’s that?*

*Note: There won’t be any cameras. Don’t worry about your looks. :)*

*What’s the point of a gala then? Bah... Gotta find a way to get inside it.*

*Footnote: No singles allowed. :)*

*I could guess that much...*

*So, any obscure name will do if it isn’t going public. Now, I need a woman... who won’t blow our cover... and...*

*Strange... The gala itself is a secret? If you won’t show it to everyone else, what’s the...*

The bell rings. Pffh! I open the door. It’s a Youngling. Her arms are folded at her back.

"Yes?" I ask.

She judges me with her eyes, apparently for my pyjamas. "Mr. Malcom?"

"Yes?"

"I am Apprentice Orta."

"Yes?"

"I am responsible for..."

"I don’t care." *Wonder why I can’t stand forward kids.*
She judgest me with an eyebrow in air.

"Yes? Cut to the chase. Get to the point. What is it?"

"I-I am to inform you that you are asked to-tor tutor Miss Leetas in the evening from tomorrow on, between 7 P.M. and 8 P.M."

"Who is Miss Leetas? Uhh, you mean Eva."

"Yes. You are expected to."

"Thanks," I say as I shut the door in her face.

High time... Humph! Months of nothing, and then everything comes on top of each other. I had better sort this gala out when I have time first. Now, I need a way to get out of here. Dis owes me a... What was that?

I start rummaging through my notes.

Here. A decomposer unit. V9-DMD / 7EKO for M4. The bad-tempered machine is never going to get me out of here again if I don’t bring him what I promised. Hope I can convince Dis to buy me one the next time he leaves the Temple.

...And without giving him a kiss.

"I am such a bitch!"

So, I reach for my holocom to contact him. After a while, he connects.

"Hey, Dis. Are you available?" I say with a fake smile.

"Err, I was meditating in my dorm room, and..."

"I am coming!" I joyfully say as I hang up on him.

I hurriedly put some clothes on, tie my hair, and run out of my room. I walk fast past the endless halls to Dis’ room, and ring the bell.

"Hey," I greet him as soon as he opens the door. "Hope I am not interrupting."

"I was meditating," he says as I get inside his room. And he closes the door.

"Come on. It’s just minutes of doing nothing."

"Says you who can’t stand seconds of doing nothing."

I fake cry for his amusement.

He laughs. "Don’t do it."

"I just wanted to visit you."

"Ooh, come on! What do you want?"

"I need a droid part. Any chance you can get it for me the next time you have a leave? Here is what it is," I say as I show it to him from my notes.
He sighs. "Why? You are no droid."

"It is for a droid."

"Yea. Tell me why, and I will."

Damn... "I need to give that to a droid."

"I got that much, Rane."

"Err... Better to tell him about the gala than M4. "There is a gala that is going to be held. They will take everyone to the Senate Tower after that. So, I need to get inside that gala to talk with the politicians."

"Rane... By the Force!"

"I am asked that part." ...Which is not a lie. I am getting too good at this.

"That's ridiculous. Why can't you..."

"You know how important it is for me, Dis. I am begging you."

"You'll go to a gala?"

"Yea."

"Let me guess! You'll take your vision girl with you!"

"What?"

"Come on! You wouldn't that chance! And I know you love her. You always described her as beautiful in your vision."

How did I not think of that?

"You were in love with her before you met her. You... you..."

"Dis!"

"You know what? Go have fun with the woman of your visions."

"Dis!"

"What!"

"You are a genius!"

"What?"

"I'll take her with me! That will be much better."

"Whoa! Wait, wait."

"I can make her an excuse to leave the Temple, too. I won't even need to..."

"Oh, you must be shitting me!"
"Look. I don’t need that part anymore. I’ll buy it myself."

"I am sorry?"

"I’ll go to that place with Eva, and introduce her to the politician, too. They will see."

"Rane, I can’t..."

"And you won’t tell anybody."

"NO WAY!"

"Please," I say.

And I hold his hand.

Silence. Dis’ face suddenly changes as he hides it. Still, I can read a kind of joy from his expression. It is grateful, but it is not happy. It is sad. There is a bitterness there. I know why. As does he. It is the blurry line between what is hope and what is lie that he is troubled with. Like me, he is familiar with it.

He knows me; Ediskard Loff, Padawan of the Jedi Order. He knows the true me behind all the masks I wear; the mask of the bookworm, he who plays the role of a man known for his hunger for knowledge; the mask of the undergrown man, he who plays the role of a spoiled, yet innocent child; the mask of the good guy; he who plays the role of an amicable friend. These are the personas among many others that I hide behind to conceal who I truly am. A deceiver. A manipulator. A betrayer.

Now, as I betray my oldest friendship, I wonder if I always wanted to do it before. Perhaps, out of my jealousy...

"You are going for the Padawan Trials?"

"I am little Ediskard. In a few months."

"I wish they took me, too."

"Your time will come. We will both become great Jedi."

I hold back a tear as he raises his head, and our eyes meet.

"I won’t."

"Thank you," I could say as I drop his hand. And I leave his room.

I fall prey to an unexpected feeling as I am headed towards the girl’s room: Anxiety.

_The woman of my "visions"._

I laugh to myself.

_Maybe Dis is right. She is nowhere beautiful. Maybe I just thought so because I have been constantly_
seeing her face in the vision since I was a child.

Yeah. Her body is nice, but her face is so... Augh! What am I saying.

The same kid that informed me waits in front of the girl’s door with the same posture. She turns her face to me when she notices me approaching.

"Mr. Malcom."

I wear my mask of the solemn Jedi; the first mask I’ve created. "Is she inside?"

"She is. She prepares at the moment."

"I see."

"A training room in the Training Area has been allocated for your use. I shall escort..."

"No need. I will instruct her in her room."

"B-but..."

"Yes?"

She gives out a breath from her nose. "It is not possible. The procedure is..."

"You just have to report it to the Masters, Youngling," I interrupt. "Don’t trouble yourself with matters out of your depth."

Startled, her face gets ready to cry. "F-fine! Very well," she bursts out. Then, she turns her back, and moves away with fast steps before she can cry.

Younglings...

I turn to Eva’s room. I reach for the door bell, but my hand hangs in the air. I hesitate. There is that anxiety again.

Ahh... That’s stupid. I spoke with her before.

So, I just press it. It immediately results in a feeling of anticipation. I wait.

Nothing. The anticipation only gets stronger as time passes. It is as if I look forward to seeing her face; the face I have been seeing for far too long.

The door opens, but her face looks different. She wears make-up. My stomach burns out of anxiety as our eyes meet.

Why am I feeling this way now? I can’t let a pretty face...

"Hi," she says in a joyful manner.

"Hi, Eva. Err... How are you?"

"I am fucking better. Averane, was it?"

"Yea. Err... Don’t bother to leave your room. We’ll be..."

"Oh, OK. Why don’t come inside?" She giggles.
I notice an *over-nice* tone in her voice as I step inside.

"Sorry for the fuckin’ mess," she says as she closes the door behind us. "Fucked up the place. If I knew, I’d fuckin’ clean it up a little."

I raise an eyebrow. "No worries."

"Oh, would you like me to turn on the music, you know, just for fuck’s sake?"

"Music? You have a music player? And cosmetics?"

"And some fuckin’ nice clothes! I asked for those because they make me feel good, and the people here’ve been abso-fucking-lutely nice to me." She giggles again.

I notice the skintight clothes on her only now. The black dress and tights are non-revealing, but they are certainly tight enough to reveal the shape of her body.

"I am happy for you," I just say, turning my head away.

*I shouldn’t think ill of her. She must still be unstable.*

"Isn’t it fuckin’ so?" she says. Then, she moves towards me a little too close, letting me smell her perfume. Her breasts would’ve bumped on my chest if she had taken one more step. We come eye to eye with each other for a moment before I brake the eye contact.

"So, we didn’t have a chance to get to know each other last time," I say. "Not properly."

"Oh, I remember," she says, and gives me a bad look. "Why don’t you sit?"

And she sits on the floor with her legs wide open.

*What’s her game? Hmm… She isn’t trying to seduce me. But to deceive me... But why?*

I sit cross-legged. "I see you feel better," I comment.

"Fuck yeah! I feel much better. Thanks for fuckin’ asking."

"So," I say, "Why do you swear so much?"

She laughs. "Oh, sorry. It’s just a fuck- Oh, sorry again. …a habit of mine really. I was swearing since I was six."

I smile. She thinks she can deceive a real deceiver.

"I see. However, you must have forgotten not to lie..."

"Uhm..."

"Six."

"Oh, right. T-that was just a rough guess really."

"Then you should state it that way so as not to be detected while lying."

"Oh, I..."

"Just for future reference."
"Right."

I grin while she gnashes her teeth in shame.

"You have much to learn, my dear," I say to her embarrassment.

She responds with a forced smile. I can sense her nervousness.

"Since I already know enough about you, maybe I should introduce myself," I propose.

"Y-ya. Of course."

"I was a Youngling here in the Jedi Academy once. Could never become a Padawan."

"Oh, really? Uhm... Could you become an Apprentice?"

"Apprentice? Uhh... Apprentice isn’t a formal rank. Apprentices are Younglings who pass the Padawan Trials, but wait to be taken as a Padawan by a Master."

"Oh, OK."

"I could never enter the Padawan Trials myself though. When I was thirteen, I had a vision."

"Vision?"

"A vision is a sight a Force-sensitive gains about the past or the future. They are like dreams, but they have a possibility to come true."

"Right... Oookay... I don’t get it."

"A Force-sensitive does not have dreams. The Force provides them with visions instead."

"Huh. It reminds me. I never remember any of my dreams."

"Because you never had one. If you had, it would be a vision. A vision is a way the Will of the Force warns us."

"I was told that the Force has a will of its own, and it casts it in many mysterious ways." She seems intrigued.

"Yes, and a vision is one of them."

"But what do you mean they have a possibility to come true? And if it is about the past, then... Well..."

"There are many possible futures, and there many possible pasts."

"Like parallel universes!"

"From a scientific point of view, yes. You may see a vision from a different past or a past of another universe, too."

"Whoa-fuck! That’s fascinating."

"It didn’t end up so great on my end."

"Yea... What did you see in your vision?"
"An anarchy of Devaronians, a rocky and orange land, a destroyed planet..."

"Whoa! Wait. Did you see that anarchy before it happened?"

"And you in that cell on Mirial..."

"What?"

"...and your burning town."

Her pupils get bigger. She freezes. It is a long silence before she speaks again.

"T-that makes sense," she finally says. "I mean, you told me you saw me before you met me. So, you saw me in that vision?"

"Yes."

"And what else did you see?"

"A masked man in black robes. In a dark room with you and me."

"What! And... And it will happen? Oh fuck! What was it like?"

"His men, I guess, were holding you from your arms, and... I think I was shouting at him."

Another uneasy silence goes by.

"Do you see now?" I say, breaking the silence. "How destiny brought us together."

"Umm... It’s... both freaky and... amazing."

"I know," I say. "So," I continue, "When I told my vision to the Jedi Council, I was expelled from the Order. I learned that they did it because they wanted to hide it, and... didn’t trust me to keep my mouth shut."

"But couldn’t you tell it to everyone anyway?"

"That is why they kept me detained here, although I escaped later..."

**Why didn’t I think of it myself before?**

"Anyway," I continue. "When you were attacked, Master Lin asked me to join the operation to find you."

Her face drops. "Yea, thanks for that. It was a terrible day."

"I am so sorry. You certainly didn’t deserve any of it. I will tell you everything that happened on our part another time. For now, tell me, how do you feel about it all?"

She looks perplexed by the sudden question.

"It’s understandable for someone in your situation to... have some strong feelings after that terrible event."

"Like... ruined, fucked-up... over-depressed... ruined and ruined and ruined? I don’t know."

"I understand. I am asking just so sharing your pain may ease it."

""
Tears drop from her eyes. "I lost my family. My friends, too... and all those... innocent people. Just because of me."

"You have a great heart to take blame for what happened, but it is not true, Eva. And you know it."

"Yea. Thanks. Still..."

"So, you feel sadness and loss. Anything else... Maybe you are angry?"

"Of course I am. How can’t I be?"

"Do you want revenge?"

"Revenge?"

"It’ll be between us. And, look. Am I lying?"

A quick smile blossoms on her sour face. "No, you aren’t," she says.

I respond with a smile myself.

"Well," she says, "I thought like that, but I don’t think I was... myself that time. Now, I am just happy that the Jedi protect me, and I am sheltered here. I understand… they may still be after me and that this is the best place to be for me right now. I just hope... they will be brought to justice."

"Thank you for trusting me, Eva." I guess, yeah.

"Yea."

"The Force is more than what the Jedi make up to be, you know. It cannot be reduced to the Jedi mantra. It is much more than that. The Force creates life. All that lives come from it, and go back to it. Tell me, what have you been taught about the Light and the Dark Side?"

"Uhm... The Jedi follow the Light. And all I was told about the Dark Side was to avoid it."

"The Light and the Dark Side do not exist like two sides of a coin. They co-exist. Everything that is of the Light has a piece of the Dark Side inside it. And it also goes the other way around."

"I get it. It is like... Whatever."

"You see, neither of us are Jedi. We don’t have any obligation to follow the Jedi Way. We will use the Force the way we need to do. And you need to have a control of your feelings."

"Oh..."

"It is very dangerous when you are unable to control the way you feel, because it leads you to bring harm to yourself and those around you accidentally."

"How does it happen really?"

"You are strong with the Force. You are very strong, Eva. As you practice the Force, you will realize what you are capable of, or rather, will have but an idea of what you may do with it. The Force grants you incredible power. It is so much that it lets itself loose from inside you; it overflows out of you. And when it happens, it happens in the form of the Dark Side due to the feelings involved."
"And it is not good for my health, huh?"

I smile. "It isn’t. Constant exposure to the Dark Side costs you mentally and physically. It distorts the body and the mind of the individual in exchange for greater strength."

"Shit... And fuck!"

"That’s why I will teach you something to harness your feelings with the Force. You will use it in the event that your emotions are too much for you to handle."

"Oh, OK. You got it."

"Good. First, I must warn you. This is not for practice. You will not do it for practicing again. Only in case you can’t handle your feelings. So, learn it well this time."

"Huh? Why?"

"It is a technique of the Dark Side."

"What? But you said..."

"I know. It’s still better than losing control of yourself though. And since you won’t be exposed to the Dark Side constantly, it won’t pose a real danger."

"OK, then... Whatever you say."

I look at her legs. "First, cross your legs."

"Is it really necessary?"

* Just do it!

"OK, OK."

"And sit upright."

"Hey, I wasn’t..."

"What?"

"Nothing." She complies.

"Good. Let’s begin. So, the Jedi teach us to resist the pull of the Dark Side. But then, what you resist persists. When you resist the Dark Side, it only gets stronger. The same is true for the suppression of feelings. When you suppress your anger, for example, it comes out more intense next time. Thus, there are two ways to get away from the clutches of the Dark Side. One: You calm yourself. Two: You harness the power of the Dark Side. Now, we will do the latter."

"Right."

"When you harness the power, you don’t need to resist the pull of the Dark Side. Now, close your eyes, and reach out to the Force inside you."

I wait as she touches the Force. The raw power that she wields is so intense.

"Now," I say, "I want you to remember the moment where you were most angry."
"Really?" she says disappointedly.

"Yes, please."

A moment later, she gets terrified as expected. "Whoa! What is this?"

"It is fine. Don’t break your concentration. Do you sense the anger?"

"Yes, yes! I do!"

"Exert your will upon it. Lead the Force inside you to dominate it. All you have to do is to will it."

She struggles a little, but shortly, she opens her eyes. She is panting.

"I did it!" she says.

"Well done!" I congratulate her.

"It’s like I tamed it, took it as my own, and... and..."

"You added it to your strength."

"Yeah! I feel so... energetic and powerful."

I smile. "It will pass shortly though. And remember, don’t do it again."

She sighs. "OK."

"I think it concludes our lesson for today then."

I get up on my feet, and get ready to leave.

"Thanks, Averane. For everything."

"My pleasure. See you tomorrow. And one more thing. You will speak of our time here with no one."

"I will speak of our time here with no one."
The Deranged Jedi

Into a heated argument another discussion turns, in the Chambers of the Jedi High Council. Remind me the old days, it does. Not what it used to be, it is. Forgotten the virtue there is in compromise, we had.

"It is not to be so long as this Council licks politician ass!"

"Master Tassei, please," interferes Master Lin.

"How dare you speak against our fidelity as one of us yourself!" responds Master Rang.

"I will speak the truth, no matter what! The Jedi Order has become a glorified police force at politicians’ whim. I wonder how many of you breathe without permission from the Senate!"

Rise, shoutings do. My face, I cover. At each other, Master Lin and I look in disappointment.

Rise up, Master Lin does. "Masters, enough! Please."

"We seek compromise over conflict, Master Tassei," says Master Mera.

"Corruption’s name turned compromise!"

Rise again, shoutings do.

"Masters, Masters!" shout I. "Please. Let Master Tassei speak, we must."

"What this woman accuses us of is unexplainable, Master Yoda," laments Master Atamin.

"Perhaps," say I. "But let us hear her reasons."

"You have my respect, Master Yoda. You, I blame for nothing. But the rest. At least most of this Council is subject to political corruption, if not a corruption of another kind."

With sounds of discontent from the rest of the Masters, this response is met.

"Proof of this, you have?" ask I.

"Not yet. When I do, I will not shy away from sharing it."

"Very well, then."

Sigh, Master Lin does. "If this matter is resolved," says he, "we may continue to search for the enemy outside."

"Indeed," says Master Atamin.

"Averane Malcom’s vision has come true after ten years," says Master Morind.

"I think the matter of the boy has occupied the discussions of this Council long enough," says Master Darra.

"I agree," states Master Rang.

"The boy had foreseen the events, Masters," objects Master Morind.
"I was a part of this Council during his expulsion," states Master Tassei. "If I had known the Jedi Order would have taken no precautions upon his vision for a decade as decided..."

"Master Tassei, please," interferes Master Atamin.

"All of this crisis could have been averted!"

"We must have patience, Master Tassei," says Master Mera.

"Apathy's named turned patience!"

Master Mera sighs.

"I must agree with Master Tassei," states Master Morind. "We must take the blame for our faults, and make up for it."

"We are all here for that purpose, Master Morind," says Master Lin, reassuring him.

In agreement, I nod. "A bad time for all of us, it was. Turned the populations across the galaxy against the Jedi, the political pressure had. Accept young Averane’s claims openly, we could not."

"Speaking of Mr. Malcom," says Master Lin, "there seems to have been a minor incident in the Jedi Archives."

"A minor incident?" ask I.

"The library's staff spotted a suspicious book in the Archives. And it was a registered one. It’s name: Creations of the Force."

Shocked, I am. "The Deranged Jedi’s book?"

"They say they found it while going over the library’s search engine. The time is two days ago, and late at night. Master Reyma says he only allowed Averane Malcom to stay in the Grand Library that night."

"And may I ask why he was allowing him?" questions Master Tassei.

"It is in the initiative of the Jedi Librarian, Master Tassei," objects Master Mera.

"Levity’s name turned initiative."

"It is of no matter," states Master Morind. "It is the responsibility of the Jedi Librarian to make sure such incidences do not happen."

"It is a very small incident," says Master Nelliss.

"It is not!" exclaims Master Tassei. "That book is a collection of twisted knowledge. No one, not even any one of us should turn its pages, let alone someone like this boy, who was driven by obsession."

"Master Tassei speaks the truth," agrees Master Morind. "The boy is not guilty. Master Reyma is the one that must answer for it. It could be that the book was brought there deliberately for the boy to read."

"Indeed," says Master Tassei. "Master Reyma must be denied his status of Jedi Librarian."
"It is preposterous!" exclaims Master Darra.

"Master Reyma is a respected member of the Jedi Order," states Master Amilonassa.

"Yet not a good librarian, it seems," remarks Master Tassei.

"Masters, please," interferes Master Lin.

"I will have Master Reyma summoned here for our next session. I have confidence that this matter will be resolved with him personally, then."

"And what of the boy, Master Lin?" asks Master Mera. "Now that his vision has come true, I fear he will attempt to take action for it."

"I suggest he is watched for what he may do," supports her Master Rang does.

"Agreed," says Master Darra.

"I volunteer if the Council accepts," offers Master Rang.

"You both claimed the matter of the boy was unimportant, Masters," says Master Tassei.

"I agree with Master Tassei this time," states Master Atamin.

"If the boy is to be watched, I suggest Master Yoda for it, if he accepts," proposes Master Tassei.

At the Masters, I look. Most of them nod. On a young man, I am to spy now. "Hmmm... Very well. Accept, I do."

"It is decided then," states Master Lin. "Now, Masters. I think we are all tired. Let us adjourn our meeting for today."

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Much to learn, we all have; old and young, Master and Padawan. Crowded, but quite the Jedi Archives is, as it should be. Walk softly, I do.

"Master Yoda, welcome," greet me with his soft voice, Master Reyma does. "How may I help you?"

At him, I look up. Sense something I do. Elsewhere, my eyes turn.

_Clouded my senses, the discussion of the Council must have._


"Of course, good day," his voice I hear from behind.

_Hmmm... Disturbing, it was._

In the very back, the young visionary sits. Slowly, I approach him. To the book in front of him, his head is sunk. Nowhere else, he looks. Make a noise, I do when I climb the desk. But notice me, he does not. His finger, he still swipes.

"Good day."
Throw himself away, he does. Surprised to see me sitting beside him, he is. "Master Yoda! Sorry. I didn’t see you."

"Ohh. A problem, it is not. See me not, many do."

"Err... Sorry."

Smile, I do. "Reading a lot, have you, mhm?"

"Yes, Master Yoda. I was, nowadays."

"Share, would you?"

"It is just another book I found in the Jedi Archives, Master Yoda. I am sure you have read most of the work here in your time."

"Mhm? Sure, are you? Hmm, well, I am not." To the book, I point. "So, called, what this is?"

Hesitate, he does. "Creations of the Force."

I sigh. "A very dangerous piece of work, it is, young Averane."

"I... found it in the library Master."

"How it got here, I do not now. But blame you, I do not," say I.

"Still, have the Archives inspected, the Council will."

"I did not know. Sorry, Master Yoda."

"Hmmm... Know the author of this book, I did."

"Did you, Master Jedi? It said anonymous in the cover."

"Yes. Her name, she always hid," lament I. "Friends, we were, when first attend the Jedi Academy, I did. But learned her name, I never have."

Intrigued, he looks. "You were friends, and you didn’t know her name."

"Tell of it to no one, she did. Like people, she did not. Stay away from them, she did. Most of the time, that is. The only friend of her, I was."

"Why would she keep her name hidden?"

"As I said, like people, she did not." Again, I sigh. "Hate them, she did. Who she was, she wanted no one to know."

"But why?"

"Hmmm. Shy, she was. Too shy. I think the reason, that was. Too much fear, she knew... when speak to others, she had to."

"Uhh... So, she was..."

"Very unfortunate, it was; what happened to her," interrupt him, I do. "To the Dark Side, her mental condition led her. Mental disorders such as this one, a Force-sensitive does not develop. But always the case for her, it was. Tricky, the Dark Side is. A mysterious kind of a hold on her, it had."
"I see. Master Yoda, if you have time, will you please tell me the whole story?"

"Hmm... Yes. Time, I have.

"Centuries ago, it was. In my thirties, I was, when my training started here. My own master, Master Gormo, the one who introduced me to meet her was. A training exercise, it was. Lightsaber practice. Manage to hit her even once, I could not. But neither did she. Since a mere Initiate I was, and too shy, she was. An interesting lesson for me, Master Gormo gave me that day."

"Cruel, if you ask me," says he. "I am sorry to say that, but..."

"No. No. Understand, I do. Yes. Felt sorry for her, I did too, then. Repeatedly ask her to hit, her own master would, but bring herself to do it, she could not. And a Jedi Knight already, she was."

"That's... I am sorry to interrupt. But how did she even pass the trials?"

"Her opponents, she defeated, without igniting her lightsaber. In all of them..."

"Really?"

"Yes. Only by evading attacks, and with the Force. Very skilled and powerful, she always was."

"Wow! I am sorry for interrupting, Master Yoda. Please, continue."

"Hmm... Very tall, she was. With markings of a culture kept secret, her face was filled. A dark blue skin, she had. A nobility there was, in her appearance. A Voss, her species was. A conservative society that consisted of all Force-sensitive individuals... How she was brought here, I never learned. Maybe exiles, her family was. But a legacy of her kind, her power in the Force seemed to be. As a society very strong with the Force, the Voss are thought. They see the future with absolute precision, the rumor is."

Stop myself for a moment, I do. At the young man, I look. Disturbed, he is. "Apologies," say I. "A bad reminder, it is?"

"Not a problem, Master Yoda," says he, smiling. "Please, continue."

"Hmm, very well. Where I was... Yes. A joint training session, the next time I meet her was. A question, I asked.

"Excuse me, Master Jedi,' said I. 'Ask a question, may I?"

Answer, she did not.

"Peace and serenity, the same thing, are they not? Differ, how they do?"

For a moment, she thought. ‘I don’t know,’ said she. ‘And it is wise to admit it.’ And away, she turned.

"The difference between peace and serenity, I still haven’t learned, but something more important, I did learn that day. And the first time, she spoke with me, that was.

"One day, bring myself to speak with her, I did. In the courtyard, we were, on a sunny day. Alone, in silence, she loved to be. But not... Not to be in peace. A deep breath, I took, and approached her.

"Hi,’ said I.
"In rush, around herself to see me, she looked. The only person who failed to notice me, she was not. But only half as tall as her lower leg, I was.

"Here, I am,’ said I. My hand, I waved to help her see.

"Oh,’ said she. Taken aback, she was. The anxiety in her, I could feel. Very intense, it always was. Terrifying for her to speak with another person, it was. ‘Err... Hi,’ she could only say, and her head, she instantly turned away.

"At your records, I looked,’ said I. ‘Very impressed, I am.’

"At my records, you looked?’ shouted she. Terrified, she was.

"At her records, you looked, Master Yoda? Uhh, I am sorry I..."

"Yes. Everything I know of her, from her personal records, I learned. Never share personal details about herself, she would." I sigh. "Young I was, and still new in my training. To my heart, she appealed. Make her stand out in my eyes, maybe her extreme shyness did. Majestic to me, she was. Like the void, her eyes were, and glow they would when the Force, she touched. Close with her, I wanted to get. For it, relate myself with her, I did.

"So sorry, I am,’ said I. ‘A thousand apologies. So ashamed, I am.’

"No, no. Not a problem,’ said she.

"Nothing to hurt, she could say. Such an innocent woman, she was."

To my eyes, tears make their way. Stop them, I do. Expect it, I have not. "But the important parts,” say I, "I am not telling you."

"Master Yoda, I... I am so sorry."

"Ohh, nothing, it is. Centuries, it has been,” say I. And my point, I start to make. "So, close, we had become. As a consequence of my efforts... A companion, I made myself to her; visited her; tried to talk to her, even though she would not talk back or even listen. In time, start to listen, she did, and then, talk a few words. Finally, share things, she started to.

"A century or so, it was, since the Sith were eradicated, and their malicious Empire was brought to an end. Or we thought, and still think it was."

"What!” Startled, the young man is. "What do you mean?”

"Listen, listen. Explain everything, I will. Whether the remnants of the Legacy of the Sith or pretenders those two were, we never learned. But this woman, the one to discover them was. Convinced that at least one Sith survived the final battle, she was. What led her to this conclusion, I do not know. But strong in the Force, she was.” I pause again. "Not a vision, it was. Certain of it, I nearly am."

Respond, he does not. Staring, he is.

"All the time she could spare,” continue I, "answers, she sought. To protect the galaxy, her purpose was not. Personal for her, it was. A compensation for all her failings by achieving something much grandeur..."

"I... understand."
"An infinite hunger for knowledge, it led her to. Years after years, she strived for it; searched for ways in the Force, trained herself for it, and... fell. The Dark Side, she ultimately resorted to. And shy away from it, she did not. More and more powerful, she became each day. But also, more and more corrupt. Fear less, she started to, as her power grew. An unorthodox variation of lightsaber combat, she created for herself. ...Alongside a double-edged lightsaber. Purple, it was."

"Her shyness began to fade as she became..."

"Hmm. Maybe. But still, to talk to other people, she feared.

"Slow, her corruption by the Dark Side progressed. But ultimate, it was. So far, she had gone. A master of techniques that have been forbidden even by the Sith, she had become. The book you read... A study for one such use of the Force, it is. In the end, she succeed. Her own army of machines, she created with the Force."

"How is this even possible?"

"Possible, everything is with the Force. So little of it, we know; and even less of the Dark Side.

"Too late, it was; when I tried to stop her. Keep everything about her as a secret, I did. Not to tell anyone, she had made me promise. The only one she trusted, I was. And betray her, I could not. Fail her, I did."

"But what exactly happened to her?"

"Hmmm... Yes. Two, there are; a master and an apprentice. The only information about the Sith, it was. And, also, a Darth Bane who created that rule. But rumors and legends, all this had been. Yet, something else, she found. What it was, she wouldn’t tell. But telling me of one Darth Zannah, she was. That this Sith lived after the war, she kept telling me. And from the legacy of that Sith, she believed the Sith then, to be.

"Unknown to me, much of her actions are. But one day, into the Unknown Regions, she ventured. And one day, came a ship. Commanded by a droid, it was. A holomessage, the droid showed us. From her, it was. ‘Check the shipment, and don’t bother me again,’ she only said. Deactivated, the droid was, after the message. Two dead bodies of men, the shipment contained. With two red lightsabers put on their chest... Concluded that Dark Side users, they were, the Council did; the master and the apprentice."

"So, there were Sith then? And this woman killed them? Both of them?"

"Dark Side users, yes. But Sith... No connection to the old Sith, there were; not one we found. But nothing else. However, mattered at the time, it did not. If Sith they were, eliminated they already were."

"The Council didn’t track it down? Didn’t they want to uncover what more could be behind it?"

"Fail, all attempts did. Out of the droid, nothing was found. Of her journey, we never learned. And found, she did not want to be. Contact us not, she did again."

"But she succeeded. She ended their threat!"

"Yes." Sigh, I do. But when their threat ended, her threat began. Replaced them, she had."

"What? But why?"
"The way of the Dark Side, such is. What she sought to destroy, it led her to become.

"Years after the events, lost contact with a reconnaissance vehicle, we had, on the orbit of an uncharted moon. A team of Jedi Service Corps, the Council of Reassignment sent to investigate. Also lose contact with them, we did. So, sent on the moon, an invasion force was.

"Her, it was. A droid army, she had created. Bound to her will in the Dark Side, they were. Speak her words, they would. 'Why can’t you leave me alone?' 'Get away from this place!' Certain, we were, that her, it was. Such a twisted power, only she could command. Such ways of the Force, none were known to have studied.

"A long and fierce battle, it was. Many a casualty of soldiers and Jedi, we gave. Ultimately, bombarded from the orbit, the moon was. To ruin, her army of machines was laid. But found her, we could not. Escape, she did. And again, track her down, we could not.

"Troubled me, for years, she had. Feelings for her, I still had. So, with the Force, I contacted her. A bond, we had. Answer, she did. After her, the Republic was. The Deranged Jedi, she was known as now. But see her again, I only wanted to. A secret, our meeting, was.

"To a planet in an uncharted region of space, she called me to. An abandoned town filled with machines of all kinds, I landed on. And to her, the droids took me."

"I hate to interrupt a good story. But you two contacted with each other through the Force."

"Yes. A bond in the Force like that which forms between a master and an apprentice, we had. But far more powerful, such bonds of emotion, are."

"I see... So, you met her again."

"Yes. An abandoned house that saw no light, she was in.

"Why are you here, Yoda?’ asked she.

"Please,’ said I. ‘Your face, I only want to see.’

"Why? Why wouldn’t you leave me alone? Don’t you see it is how I like it.’ said she.

"Know this, I do, and respect it.’ said I.

"Then why would you come? To cause me pain? You have no idea how much fear it cause me to speak with a person! These droids... even these droids, sometimes. I hate it when they mimic people!’ And deliriously, she laughed and laughed.

"Sorry, I am. See... Pain, I feel. Fear, I do. Embarrassed, I am. Like you... Please,’ said I. ‘Come back. Healed, you will be. Fine, everything will be.’

"A short silence, there was. And step out of the dark, she did. Old, she had turned. Like me. Eye to eye, we came. In my eyes was hope. In her eyes was fear. Smile, I did, and her knees, she bent. For a brief moment, back into the Light, she stepped. To her hand, I reached...

"...but pull herself away, she did. ‘No, Yoda. No. I can’t. It is...’

"Fine,’ said I. ‘Fine, it is.’

"I can’t come with you. What will everyone think? What if they say something? What if they condemn me, ridicule me... No!’
"Fine, it will be. Better...’ struggled I.

"Why should I trust you? Maybe they sent you? They did, didn’t they? You are here to take me to
them! What did they offer you in return!’ said she.

"Know this to be wrong, you do!’ replied I.

"No, no, no! You, like everybody, are against me!” screamed she.

"And attack me, she did. Her strike with her dual-edged purple lightsaber, I evaded in the last
second. And ignite mine, I did. A fight broke out.

"Her attacks, I blocked and evaded. Attacking me, her machines were not. So, she could be reasoned
with, I thought. ‘Fight you not, I want to’ said I. But listen, she did not. Instead, attacked with
increased ferocity, she did.

"Far more powerful in the Force and far more skilled with a lightsaber, she was. Lying on the floor
after being pushed to a wall, I was; my lightsaber in her hand.

"Kill me, will you?’ asked I.

"I have to,’ said she. Shaking, her body was. 'If I don’t, you will always remember me as... as...

"No. Forgive you, I do. To no one, I will tell.’

"I am ashamed!’ Crying, she was.

"As I am’ said I.

"Please, Yoda,’ begged she. ‘Just leave! Leave!’ And throw me my lightsaber, she did.”

Silence, there is.

"And...” asks the young man.

"Leave her, I did. Seen or heard from her again, I have not.”

"But... I understand.”

"No. Failed her, I have. Tried harder or again, I should have. But in the past now, it is. Centuries, it
has been. Change it, I cannot.”

"Well, she never could take any apprentice, could she?”

"No. Impossible for her, that would be. Safe from a possibility like that, we were.”

"So, was she really a...”

"But understand now, do you?” interrupt him, I do. "Passion and ambition and such hunger for
knowledge; lead to the Dark Side, they do. Careful, you must be, young Averane.”

Comply, he does. "I will. Thank you, Master.”

"Good,” say I. From the desk, I jump down. "Goodbye.”

"Goodbye, Master Yoda.”
Heavy on me, the reminder weighs as away, I walk. Before my eyes, the old days come. Sigh, I do, and take my steps to leave the library.

But something, there is. The same feeling, I sense. Suspicion. Again, centred on Master Reyma, it seems to be. Approach him, I do. Eye to eye, we come.

"Master Yoda," greet me, he does. "Is there something you need?"

"Yes," say I. "A full inspection of the Jedi Archives, I request. ...By the members of the Jedi Services Corps under Master Tassei’s supervision."

"I... understand, but the scheduled inspections aren’t due yet, and the Jedi Services Corps are not responsible for them. I am sure they have more important matters to attend to."

"Ask your opinion, I have not!"

"I am sorry, Master?"

"Explain it to the Jedi Council, you can."

And take my leave, I do.

_Air, I must take._


"I don’t like to speak."

"Speak like me, you can. Maybe like it, you will then, mhm?"

"Think so, I do not."

"It is peaceful here in the courtyard, is it not, Master Yoda."

My head, I turn. Master Tassei, it is.

"Ohh, yes. It is."

"I am sorry for my temper in the meeting of the Council this morning. I think, even a Jedi Master as old as myself needs to learn to restrain herself sometimes."

"Necessary, no apology is," respond I. "Much to learn, all of us have."

Smile, she does. "You are very wise, Master. I only wish I could say the same for the others. Of course, I will not further discuss it today. But there is something else I have to tell you."

"Hmm, of course. Listening, I am."

"It is about the matter of the Deranged Jedi."

"What of her?" immediately ask I.

"As you know, her book of forbidden knowledge has appeared in the Archives to everyone’s surprise. But there has lately been another development regarding her."
"Another development?" Widen, my eyes do.

"Yes. Jedi Researchers in the Academy of Jedi Archaeology have uncovered something very peculiar and... troubling. I have recently been informed myself. As you may judge yourself, the timing is quite suspicious," says she. "It is about the ‘Sith’ she killed," whispers she.

"What? Learned, what have you?"

"It seems that the moon the Deranged Jedi inhabited was also the place where the said Dark Side users were hiding."

"Hmm. Yes. Considered this at that time, we had. So, proven it, the excavation have?"

"Yes. But there is more. Jedi Archeologists in the field have uncovered a secret underground facility, and inside, written documents. Everything in the area has been secured and further studied. But what is more; Jedi Linguists have managed to transcribe some of the materials that were found. I have convened with the Council of Reassignment, and together, we have reached a conclusion. We still do not know whether the said Dark Side users were remnants of the actual Sith or mere Force users or Jedi that turned to the Dark Side somehow. However, from what little that could be uncovered, we could deduce that there was..."

"Yes?"

"A third one."
Taste of the Force

Yet another fruitful hour of fucking learning comes to an end. My brain once again regrets every single word. And the lecturer’s voice, tinkling in my ears screws up my face at the speed of light.

Fuckin’ stupid! I hate classes, and I HATE history classes! And why am I even learning any of this? Too bad I can’t...

"Evail Leetas."

And here we go again. Yes, my babysitter?

"Is something troubling you? You look distressed."

"Nah. Not distressed just..." Bored as hell.

"Mr. Malcom awaits in the Training Grounds. Please, follow me."

"Now?" I alarmedly ask. "Can’t I just take a breath? And a shower... and change my clothes... and put on some make-up... and make my hair."

She looks at me with an eyebrow up high.

"It is for my... mental state," I say. "I don’t feel... confident enough."

"I understand, Evail Leetas, but..."

"Please?"

"Evail Leetas..." she says, eyeing me disappointedly.

"Yes?"

"I understand your situation, but you are not a child."

"Ouch."

I start inspecting the patterns on the floor. The horizontal lines parallel to each other form triangles at the end of each side. It hurts to hear it from a child herself, especially considering she is right. So, I shut the fuck up, and do as my babysitter says like a good girl.

And that is how my little mischief is interrupted.

"Evail Leetas," Orta says as we walk. "Your state of well-being is a primary concern of mine. I hope you are feeling better."

My face returns to normal upon hearing it. Damn. She is actually so cute, saying that. And she doesn’t even know it.

"Oh, I am fine."

Yea. I guess, I am. The thought startles me for a moment. After all this time, it feels strange for me to feel better.

"I feel very good, actually," I say. "I feel... at peace, and I think... Well, I think I can move on. That
Remedial Process thing is still fearful for me, but I guess it is helping, and I guess I am managing to get over it all."

"I am very pleased to hear it, Evail Leetas. I have also observed positive changes on you."

"Yes, Apprentice Orta. I don’t know what they will do with me eventually, but I am actually hopeful, now."

_Yea! I am getting better._

"You know," I say, "I think I can leave everything behind, and start a new life if things get safe for me out there."

"I am sure it would please all of us, Evail Leetas."

_Damn! I never even thanked her, have I? I am such a bitch._

"Hey," I say. "That wouldn’t be possible without your help, too. So, thanks. For everything."

"You are welcome, Evail Leetas. But I am only doing my duty as a Jedi."

"It doesn’t matter. Not for me. From my side of things, Apprentice Orta, you are a very good person."

"You humble me, Evail Leetas," she says, tilting her head.

I change the subject before I cry. "So, this Averane person, do you know him?" I ask.

"No. I am specifically asked not to ask questions about him."

"Really? Huh. Mysterious guy."

She doesn’t respond.

"So, did you meet him?"

"Yes. Yesterday."

"Oh? So, what is your take on him?"

"My take?"

"I mean, your opinion... Maybe... Ehh... You want me to do or not do something when we meet?"

"Didn’t he tutor you yesterday?"

"He did, but you know, you always say I should, for example, bow or address someone as something..." I babble. "Ehh... So, you won’t ask me to do anything like that?"

"Evail Leetas. You don’t do those, anyway."

"Yes, but..."

"To be honest, I have no idea."

_Uhh..._
Oww, I have got to push it.

"Do you think he is dangerous?" I ask.

"Dangerous?" she says worriedly. "Did something bad happen with him yesterday?"

We stop.

"No, no. It is not that." Oww, I am such an idiot.

"I you have suspicions, you can always..."

"Oh, no, really. I am just asking..."

Damn! Gotta try something else. "You know," I say, "girly gossip."

"Evail Leetas!"

And we start moving again.

"Come on," I say. "It’s just harmless small talk."

"Very well."

"Oh?"

"I will listen. Tell me what happened with him yesterday."

"Ehh... I can’t. I mean..." I give out a breath. "Let’s forget it."

"The Training Grounds is just ahead."

So, I follow her through the halls for a few more minutes. Soon, we come to a crowded area where my eyes spot Averane leaning against the wall in a casual manner. The boy just stands out with his casual clothes and manners among a bunch of people dressed like monks. He gets his act together in a hurry when he sees us coming. He gets anxious at my sight.

I smile. Yes! It’s working. Who needs a good look if you are a walking nzemafelatin anyway.

"Eva, Initiate," he greets us.

"Averane," I say.

"Mr. Malcom."

"Initiate, leave us alone."

"Of course."

Harsh.

And Orta leaves.

So, you prefer the privacy, huh?

"How are you today, Eva?"
"Oh, I am fine," I say as flirtatiously as I can. "How are you doing?"

Suddenly, his expression turns grave. "I am fine. Thanks for asking," he says.

I force a smile.

"Come," he says, showing me the space on the wall beside him.

"O-kay."

"Lean back here. Let’s wait for a few minutes."

"Right." Weird. Truly weird.

I do as he says. So, we wait. Just wait.

Talkative, too.

"So," I say. "You forgot your hair tie last night."

"It can stay."

Damn. He is giving me the cold shoulder. I should have known not to overdo my act. It may get much worse now.

"That should be enough. Let’s get going."

"Oh, right," I say, following him as he start moving.

He takes me back to the way I came from. But I say or ask nothing. The half way back, we turn towards a different corridor, and from there, we take the stairs down three floors. When the door out of the stairway opens, what is in front of me is nothing like the rest of the Jedi Temple. The halls are filled with computers, cameras and every kind of other technological stuff I cannot name. We walk in the halls till Averane stops at a large door that has a computer at its side. He types something on it, and the door opens.

"Get inside," he says.

I freak out a little after all that, but do as he says. The door closes behind us. It is a huge room with nothing inside, and it is white all over.

"I will not bore you too much with the theoretical stuff," he says as he walks to the middle of the room.

"That would be great," I say, and follow him to the middle.

"Basically speaking, there are three things we can do with the Force. One: We can use it to achieve a state of being. These are self-centered practises that we use by reaching to the Force that flows inside us. The Jedi mostly use it to achieve a state of peace, calmness, understanding, healing and the like. In these practises, the Force is basically utilised to help one achieve these states of body and mind. These types of practises in the Force are called Control. Most meditation exercises are examples to this. The one you practiced in the courtyard is an example of this as well."

"Oh, OK. I get it."

"The Dark Side technique we practised yesterday was also an example to this. By using the Force
inside yourself, you harnessed your anger, and tamed it, achieving a state of power."

"Huh? But we didn’t use it for that purpose."

"Yes. We did not. We only wanted to dissipate the feeling of anger. Your achieving of a state of power was a natural consequence of it."

"Ahh. So, we kinda used it out of purpose."

"Exactly. You see, it isn’t how the Jedi would see it. Their understanding of the Force is limited to the Jedi Way. It leads them to see the Force from too narrow a viewpoint to make such adjustments. To use the Force differently than they were taught... It is because their perspective is limited by a dogma."

*Now, I am surprised. "You really don’t approve of the Jedi, do you?"

"It isn’t personal. Take the Initiate in charge of you, for example. All the child knows and does is what she is taught. She is deprived of imagination and creativity at such a young age."

As much as I like the kid now, he has a point. "Well, she’s a good a girl, but you may be right. A child shouldn’t be raised like that."

"Well said. Back to our subject now... So, Control is the branch for the self use of the Force. It is the most basic and fundamental use of the Force."

"Got it."

"Since I am already boring you, I will cut this part short. The second thing is to sense the Force. In order to that, the Force User should master Control first. To touch the Force inside oneself is always the first step of using the Force. In terms of Sense, the second step is to reach out to the Force outside. I was told you already managed it."

"Oh, yea. Well, it was a kind of group meditation."

"It is unnecessary for you."

"Is it?"

"You can achieve it quite easily without the need for such an aid. Let’s try it now."

I take a breath, and close my eyes. "OK."

"Don’t close your eyes."

"No? Ookay."

"Just touch the Force inside you. You can do it, simply by willing it. For a Force-sensitive, like you, it is like knowing how to sleep. Then, expand it out to your surroundings."

I follow his instructions. When the area of energy expands, I am shocked at how easily I could pull it off. People in the level above, those passing through the halls outside, I know they are there.

I can’t hide my amazement. "That’s incredible!"

He smiles.
"It is like, even though my eyes are open, I can see those energy orbs that represent people."

"To practice Sense is like to see with the Force rather than your eyes."

"But the last time, it was a really long practice. Could I just do it like that?"

"You, dear Eva, you could."

I get puzzled. "What do you mean?"

"For most, it would take months of practice to reach a level to do it like this. You are very special, Eva."

"Whoa! Really? Wait, wait. How so?"

"I don’t know. But you are stronger in the Force than anyone I have ever known. You have a great gift. It is like you are born for it."

"Right..."

"So, three ways we can use the Force... We utilize it, we sense it, and finally, we manipulate it. The third way to use the Force is called Alter. From a certain perspective, it is using the Force for real. In order to this, an average Force User must have mastered Control and Sense. But you... You are far above average, Eva."

"Uhm... Thanks," I shyly say.

"Just don’t forget. Thinking the Force as an energy field is an easy way to remember how you will use it in any of the three ways."

"Right. I’ll try not to disappoint."

"I hardly think you will. You are very powerful, Eva. Maybe too powerful."

"Ehh, sorry. What?"

He smiles in a devilish manner. "You will understand."

Sure...

"Uhh, high time we began our lesson, don’t you think?"

Begin?

I force a smile "Yea."

"Set: Mountain Ridge. Designate: Two."

"Acknowledged," a robotic voice says.

I ignorantly look around to make sense of what’s going on.

"The voice recognition is verified. The simulation is initialized. Defining... Complete."

Green squares pop up out of nothing. And all of a sudden, the empty room turns into a land in the nature.
"Whoa!"

On impulse, I shuffle my foot on the rocks I am suddenly standing on to test how real it is. "That’s the best tech of virtual reality I have ever seen!"

"It isn’t virtual reality," Averane says. "It is much more sophisticated. The technology creates an artificial dimension in our reality."

"Like a..."

"Not a parallel universe, no."

"How do they do it?"

"Even if I knew, it would take years to explain."

"Right. Sorry," I say, getting my bearings.

"Watch now," he says. He reaches forth to the air with his hand. And the tiny bits of rocks under our feet rise up in the air, and start floating around us.

"Whoa!" My jaw drops.

Then, he raises both his hands up, and the rocks rise up above our heads, and hang up in the air, floating.

"I did things like this before by mistake, but this... It’s fascinating!"

The rocks start falling down slowly on the surface as he puts his hands down. "I am glad you are enthusiastic about it," he says. "Because now, it is your turn."

"Really?"

"Tap into the Force as you would use it to sense."

"OK. Uhm..." I struggle a little to remember how to do that.

Did I just forget that?

"Sorry," I say. "I am stupid bitch."

"No. It’s fine. Think it of as an energy field."

Oh, right. Certainly easier to remember this way. "Right, I remember now. Thanks."

I close my eyes.

"Don’t close your eyes."

"Oh, sorry."

I open my eyes. I take a deep breath on impulse. Then, I reach out to the air with my right hand. I touch the energy field inside me first, and the energy field outside second. My sense of awareness gets unusually sharp again, so I know I did it right.

"I did it. So, what now?"
"You see, using the Force to manipulate anything requires you to be in this state. It is not a big deal."

"Hmm."

"Or at least, you shouldn’t see it this way."

"So..."

"So, lower your hand."

"Oh."

I do as he says.

"Release the Force, please."

Glad I have big enough a brain to understand what he means by releasing, I do as he says.

"Touch it again."

I take a deep breath.

"Don’t take a breath."

Oww! I just touch the Force in me, and then out of me again.

"Good," he says.

"You can understand that?"

"Yes," he brushes it off. "Now, release it, and touch it again."

I do as he says.

"Again. Faster this time."

After about thirty (I guess) attempts...

"It’ll get better with practice. To touch the Force, both inside and outside, is the most fundamental part of Alter. You’ll need to be able to do this habitually when it is necessary."

"When it is necessary?"

"This practice must become such a part of your personality that you should be able to do it without thinking, even in the most dangerous of situations."

"The most dangerous of..."

"Increasing your self awareness and your ability to focus sharpens your senses in the Force as well as in normal. The Jedi make it a constant practice throughout their lives to increase their self awareness through ways both with and without the Force. Meditation, solitude, focusing techniques... All to make it easier and more natural for them to feel the Force."

Then, he taps onto my shoulder. "But listen to my advice. Work smart, not hard. Just practice doing the thing over and over again, and it’ll do the trick."

"Right," I only say.
"OK then," he says, pulling his hand off my shoulder. "Let’s just do this, and be done with it. I am sure it’s getting late."

I fake giggle. "Yea."

And I touch the Force without waiting for him to tell me.

"Good," he says. "So, to lift these little rocks with the Force, all you really have to do now is to... concentrate on the Force you sense around them. Then, will it to rise the rocks up. You can use your hand for it, and visualize the rocks rising up in the air. It will make it easier, tricking your mind."

"Uhm... Right."

"OK. Now, reach with your hand as if you are physically going to lift these rocks."

I reach out with my hand, my palm facing upwards.

"Focus on the Force that you feel around them. Notice it does not penetrate them, unlike us, but encompasses them. They are not a part of the Living Force, but the Physical Force."

"Alright," I say as I focus.

"Now, when you are ready, will it to raise them. You can raise your hand, and visualize them going up in the air as you do this."

I take a breath, and... It happens. The rocks just start rising up above my feet. They drop down upon my surprise.

"Wow!" Averane says. He is as surprised. "Never thought I would see anyone do it in their first try."

"You’re kidding, right?"

"I am certainly not. Do it again. And don’t freak out this time."

I do that again. The rocks rise up and start floating around us.

"That’s amazing!" I express.

"Oh, I know. Have you noticed? How much power you command..."

"Yea. It’s big. This is really serious. I feel..."

_How do I feel?_

"Feel how?" he says. Rocks are still floating around us.

I smile. "I don’t know," I say. "Like, successful?"

He laughs. "So, what are you waiting for? Rise them up above us!"

I will it so they rise higher, rising my hand up and imagining them going sky high. The rocks go up and up and up.

"Slow down," Averane says, covering his eyes.

I just laugh.
"You will have to bring them, too. And slowly."

"OK, OK." I comply.

The rocks float meters above us.

"That’s so fucking amazing!"

"You are so fucking amazing!"

"Oh?"

"Yeah. You command so much power. Just look at it!"

I look at it. It’s… "You are right."

"I am."

So much power...

"Hey... Uhm..."

"What?"

"Can I lower the rocks now?"

"Of course! Let’s end it for today."

"Yea." So, I will it to start lowering down the rocks.

It’s so... easy now.

I lower my hand, and visualize the rocks falling slowly.

"Hey," I ask as I do it. "Do I have to use my hand? Or even visualize it?"

"No. They are just visual aids. As I said, to trick your mind so you can do it more easily. Your body, your mind and the Force are all connected, and we are using it to our advantage. You don’t even have to look, really. As long as you sense, it is enough."

"I get it. Thanks," I say. The rocks start falling back to their place. "Averane..."

"Yes?"

"I feel… powerful."

He smiles. "The Force is a way to achieve great power."

"Hmm."

The rocks are back in their place. For whatever reason, my mind is puzzled.

"End simulation."

Green squares appear again, and we return to the huge white room.

"Averane..."
"Yes?"

"Nothing."

"Fine by me."

"Hey..." Jerk.

"So, till tomorrow, practice touching the Force and lifting objects. Please, don’t break anything in your room doing the latter."

_Really? Homework? And two of them?_

"Come on! You had a lot of fun doing those today."

_Can you read my mind?_

"No."

"What?" My heart squashes.

He laughs. "I am kidding. It was just an educated guess... from your expressions."

"Oww. Right." I fake laugh.

_Too educated. Ahh, don’t think!_

"Let’s get out of here, Eva."

"Yea, let’s."

_Initiate, leave us alone."

Orta turns her back, and moves away without saying anything.

"Hey," I object. "She’s a good girl, you know."

"She is a Jedi. She won’t take it personally. So, why don’t you come over?"

Again, I lean against the wall near him.

"The Jedi are wrong, you know. The Force is not for religion. It is a fact."

"I see you are an atheist yourself."

"It is nothing to do with that." He puts his hand on my shoulder again, but I pull myself back like a professional.

"What is it then?" I ask

"The Force is. It just is. A natural phenomenon... It is like air or water. It is not a god to worship. It is not a devil to curse. It is just there."
"Hmm. Well, I get your point. But you see, I just don’t come up with opinions about things I don’t know."

"I respect that. It’s wise of you."

"Wise..."

"Speaking of which, I had time to practice what you learned."

*I can’t believe I did a homework for the first time in my life, but... "I did."*

"Great. Because it will be a part two of our previous lesson today. Let’s get moving."

Again, we start heading to the area.

*All this secrecy... Wonder why he trusts me. I can dob him in whenever I want, no? Aah...*

"Hey," I say as we walk.

"Yes?"

"Is everything really possible with the Force?"

"Uhh, you must have heard it in one of those lectures."

"Yea. It was boring as hell. Sorry."

"Well, I think it’s an exaggeration, but let me tell you: Most things are."

"Exaggerations?"

"No. Possible with the Force..."

"Sorry. I am just teasing you."

"Teasing me? I hope you haven’t fallen in love with your teacher."

"What? T-that’s ridiculous you... you..." *How could you say that!*

He laughs.

"You... jerk." *Son of a...*

"The less we chatter, the faster this will be over."

*Grrrr!*

We get inside one of the huge white rooms again.

"Set: Space Station. Designate: Seven."

"Acknowledged. The voice recognition is verified. The simulation is initialized. Defining... Complete."

The green squares fill up the place, and the room turns into a chamber of a spacecraft. Strange how it is not exciting after the first time.
"I liked the other one better," I say.

"Do you see those boxes back there?" he replies, pointing out to the objects.

"Yeah."

"I want to see if you can lift them."

"Right."

I touch the Force in and out of myself, sense the shit, focus, reach out with my hand, and... Nothing.

"Whoa!"

"Try again. I am sure you can at least half manage it."

I set only one box as my target this time. Then, I take a breath, and force myself as I much as I can to lift it, making some sounds in the process. The box moves a little, but it is as far as it gets.

"I can’t!"

"No, you can. Just stop using your body. It is the Force that does the trick, not your muscles."

"Stop using my body? But you said..."

"I said it is a visual aid, not the thing itself."

"Pffh."

"Calm yourself and relax. Don’t stretch your muscles while doing it."

"Fine."

I try it again. The box rises up just a little this time.

"Good. Go on," Averane says. "Don’t push it, Eva. Don’t force yourself. It may sound stupid, but the harder you try the harder it gets. So, just relax."

When I just relax, the box just goes up in the air without any restraint. "Fuck yeah!" I celebrate. And I go on to lift the other two boxes just to show off.

"Well done! And yes. Fuck yeah!"

_Damn! To do that feels incredible, now._

I slowly put the boxes down.

"Averane," I say.

"Yea?"

"I don’t know why you are teaching me all this, but, thanks. You are awesome! And I am not saying it because I have fallen in love with my teacher."

We laugh.

"Uhh, it’s nothing, really. Now, come."
I follow him near the boxes.

"I want you to lift this by hand now."

"Fucking seriously?"

"Fucking seriously."

I roll my eyes, bend my knee, and hug the box. When I try to lift it like it is an empty bottle though, I nearly break my back.

"Fuck!"

I try it harder and harder, but no. It doesn’t move anywhere. Shocked, I find myself gaping at Averane, who is grinning like a villain.

"I can’t even move it! Not even for a centimetre!"

"Let’s try it together," he says. And he takes his place beside me. "When, I say three."

"You are kidding, right? You are kidding." I am still shocked.

"One..."

"Pffh."

"Two, three..."

We push the box together, making all kinds of sounds. The box moves just for a centimeter maybe.

"Fuck!" I shout. "How heavy is this thing?"

"Well, you could lift it with the Force. Three of them, actually."

"You are not kidding."

"No. I am not."

"Whoa! Just whoa! It’s strong stuff alright."

"Yea. So, go on. Lift it with the Force again."

"Yea, I’ll just settle for that I guess."

So, I do the Force thing. To my shock, I can’t do what I have just done earlier. And this time, it is absolutely nothing.

"OK. May I ask a question?"

"Shoot."

"What the fuck?"

"It’s simple. Your mind deceives you. In the Force, how heavy or big things are do not matter. When I first asked you to lift these objects, you did not how heavy they were. And since I asked you to that, you thought you just could do it. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have asked you, would I?"
"So..."

"Your subconscious mind presumed that these objects were of liftable weight. So, we didn’t have a problem. Now, we have one."

"Because I know?"

"Exactly. That is why we must trick the mind. Because it is wrong."

"Sounds wrong. But let’s do it."

"It’s really simple. You did it before, and thus, you can do it again. It is illogical to say otherwise. So, stop thinking, trying and struggling, and just do it."

I try 'just doing' it. It works!

"Good, Eva. Very good."

"Whoa, whoa and whoa! It is just incredible, and I don’t know how I can state this."

"The Force works in mysterious ways. It does not always adhere to science."

"And the power it gives… It feels so… I think I am losing myself! I mean... it is just fascinating what can be done with the Force."

"Exactly. The power you can command with the Force is far superior to the physical strength of anybody. It makes things unfair."

That last statement hits me all of a sudden, makes me doubt.

"But is it right?" I ask. "Like is it a right thing to use that kind of power on someone?"

"The Force is not about what is right and what is wrong, Eva. It is not good or bad. Like life, it is all shades of gray in between the Light and the Dark Side. At some point, there is a bit of Dark Side in everything that is of Light. At some point, it all intertwines. What is important is how you will use this power. It is your decision. What do you want to do with it?"

"I... I just don’t know."

"I will respect your decision, no matter what it is gonna be."

"Thanks. You are a good man."

He smiles. "The lesson isn’t over yet."

"Oww!" I nearly fake this.

"Set: Hangar. Designate: One"

"Acknowledged. The voice recognition is verified. The simulation is initialized. Complete."

The station chamber turns into a hangar with a scenery to a planet below.

"So, you see this starship?"

As if it is possible not to... "You must be kiddin’ me! It’s so very big."
"What did we just talk about?"

_Huff… Doesn’t hurt to try I guess._ "Oh, fine."

I try it, but it's no go. The ship is just unresponsive to my attempt.

"It’s not working," I say. "How could it? It is impossible."

"It is impossible because you think it is."

"Don’t fuck with me!"

"Eva!"

"Seriously, if I could lift that baby, I would proclaim myself a goddess."

He half sighs, half laughs.

"Eva, the size of things don’t actually matter, just like the weight of things, as you just saw yourself."

"Oookay, but they were still harder than to lift small rocks, weren’t they," I protest.

"It’s because your perceptions deceive you. And what do we do? We deceive our perceptions in return. However, no matter how hard we try, we can’t fully fix our minds. I am not saying this won’t be harder. All I am saying is you can still do it."

"Come on… No way!"

"Eva, the most important thing to achieve anything is to believe you can do it."

"No, it isn’t. That’s bullshit!"

_Hey! That reminds me._

"If it so very possible, why don’t you do it?"

"Because the point is to teach you?"

"Oh? Go on and show me then?"

He smiles, pointing to my back with his eyes.

I turn around. The shuttle is floating like it just took off. I can feel my pupils shrinking to my amazement.

"H-how? But... But..."

"What?"

"That’s…” Suddenly, I realize something at this point. "That’s not right!" I object.

"Why?"

"It’s just so much power! You... It is just not right! For anyone to have that kind of power..."

"Broaden your perspectives. What is right and what is wrong, it all depends on where you look at it. So much is possible with the Force."
The ship slowly touches the ground.

*I know what I want know.*

I look at his face. I am decisive about it now. "I don’t want that kind of power."

"And what do you want?"

"I don’t know what I want. But I now know what I don’t want!"

"You will have to be able to protect yourself when it comes to it, Eva."

"What the fuck are you talking about?"

"Those who have come for you, made you suffer, killed your loved ones…"

"No. No. Stop. Just stop!"

"...tortured you, deprived you of everyone and everything that mattered to you..."

I suddenly burst out in tears. "What do you want?" I cry.

"I only want what is best for you. The trauma you had to endure was terrible. But you must understand now. They are still out there, looking for you."

"What do they want?" I cry sobbingly. "What does everyone want from me?"

"We do not know. Which is exactly why... Eva... Eva, harness it."

"NO!"

"Let it pain you no longer!" he shouts. "Touch the Dark Side! Harness your sorrow! Make it your own! LIFT THAT SHIP!"

"FUCK YOU!"

"Remember your happy past! Your family, your friends, your future! They took everything from you!"

"FUCK THEM! FUCK IT ALL!"

...

"Don’t you want revenge?"

"Revenge?"

"*You will help me have REVENGE! And I will kill that whore, too!*"

My tears stop, and I lose myself. "Of course I want revenge!" I weep in devastation. "But what can I do? Other than to cry... and wallow in my misery..."

"You now know it is not true!"

"You know what I want?"

...
"I want to paint my skin red with their blood! Whoever they are!"

"I understand."

"You can’t!" I shout. "How could you? I am so miserable! So helpless! All I can do about is to cry like this. But NO!"

I don’t know what gets over me at this point. Something just does.

"NO, NO, NO! Not anymore! Not again! NOT EVER AGAIN! Never again will I let tears touch my eyes! Never again will I let myself wallow in the mud!"

And I touch the Dark Side. My sorrow, my hatred, my anger, I harness it all. They are all gone now. I command them. They are a part of my power. I will it to unleash it. The energy field around me shakes. And I will it that the ship rises, and it does. It merely obeys my command. There is no resistance.

*Such power...*

My power touches everything in the area. I get terrified at it. Even the air is affected. Only Averane is not. He just stands still. There is something in his eyes. He turns them away before I can make out what.

And I release it. The ship bumps down on the floor. I suddenly come to myself. *So strange...*

"How do you feel?" Averane asks.

"Good," I say. "I don’t feel happy, but I am not sad. I am not calm, but not angry, either. I feel... in charge. Of myself... of..." I pause. "Averane, that was... so much power. It was terrifying. It felt... horrible to command it."

"I know." He smiles. "Try not to overdo it."

"Oh, I won’t."

"Good. So, any questions?"

"No, but... Please, don’t tell anyone what I’ve told you."

"Of course, I won’t."

"Promise?"

"Promise."

"Thank you for... listening all that, too. I... I had to take that all out on someone."

"Anytime. You can always be open with me."

"Yea, thanks."

He says something, my head aches and ears ring.

"Eva? You OK?"

"Yea. Yea, it is a headache of sorts."
"Did it happen after our first lesson, too? The one in your room..."

"Oh, yea. Now that you mention it..."

"Using the Dark Side may have temporary side effects as well. A headache is nothing serious."

"Oh... Right."

"You are getting harsher on Orta every time, you know."

"So, you have been practicing?"

"Yea, Mr. Brush-it-off. I have. Actually, I may finally have found myself a good enough hobby."

"I am glad. Because we will get to something else today."

"Right. But may I ask a stupid question first?"

"Uhh... Shoot."

"All the other people here say we must avoid the Dark Side all the time."

"They are Jedi."

"So, they are wrong."

"They follow the Jedi mantra. It is a religion."

"Hmm..."

"The Force and the Jedi mantra are like language and grammar. The latter is a simple set of rules inside the infinite chaos of the first."

"Educated answer," I sarcastically comment.

"What answer did you want to hear?"

"I dunno. Maybe that it is total bullshit?"

He laughs. "Well, not total bullshit, but just bullshit. As I said, only when necessary."

"Oh. I happen to have done it last night though."

"Really?"

"I just got so down, so I decided to harness."

He grumbles. "Didn't I tell you to..."

"Oh, I know. It's just this Remedial Process thing messes with my brain, I get... Well, you must have already noticed it anyway."
"Unstable?"

"Yea! That. Exactly."

"I took the Remedial Process myself when I was an Initiate."

"Really? Why?"

"Some Initiates used to take it just as... you know..."

"A class?"

"Yea."

"That's stupid! Isn't it just terrible? I mean even after everything you had me go through, it feels..."

"You break my heart." I fear he said that in joy. "Well, I was just a child, and had years of Jedi Training back then. It makes sense that it is hard for you. All that will be over soon, though. When you get to the part with the Circlet..."

"Circlet, you said?"

"Don't worry about for now. And about the Dark Side... just be careful."

"I will, I will," I brush him off. *Everything is mutual.*

"OK. Let’s begin. You see that target?"

"Yea, it’s a called a dummy."

"I am glad you are feeling well."

"Shut up."

"I want you to lift it."

"Fine." I just do that.

"Now, just move it right a little in the energy field."

The dummy moves easily in the air when I direct it.

"Now, left."

"OK. It’s simple enough," I say as I move it.

"Be careful not to exert too much power. Adjust it as you move it forward, now."

I just do it, too.

"Good. Your control over your abilities in the Force are already growing."

"Right, thanks."

"Now, move it backwards, towards us."

I get lazy this time, so the dummy nearly kisses us.
"Sorry," I apologize.

"It’s fine. Just practice it a little."

So, I just move the dummy around till I get bored.

"Is it enough?"

"For now. Yes. Hold the target still, now."

"OK."

"I want you to exert all your power as you move it forward, namely push it."

When I do it, the dummy moves fast forward in the air.

"Good. Move it to yourself, now. Slowly. And then do it again."

So, I do it again. "Is it just to test if I can adjust my power?" I figure.

"Not just to. But you are doing it so well. So, grats."

"Thanks," I say while I do it again.

"It’s enough with that. Pull it again."

"OK," I say while pulling it. "What now?"

"The next time you push it, I want you to release."

"You mean disconnect from the energy field?"

"Yes, so the target hits the ground hard."

"Huh. Something fun at last!"

He laughs.

I move the dummy fast forward and disconnect. "Yes!" I cry out as it crashes in pieces on the ground. "Lesson’s over!"

"I see you were a hardworking student," he teases me.

"Oh, I fuckin’ rocked!" I mock myself.

"Just because you trashed the teaching material doesn’t mean the class is over."

"Fuck off..." I comment, amusedly.

"Unit: Dummy. Variation: G. Designate: Nine."

"Acknowledged. The voice recognition is verified. The simulation is initialized. Complete."

"Told you it’s called a dummy."

The green squares pop up in the middle of the white room, and the dummy is revived.
"This dummy is special," Averane states. "It renews itself each time it is trashed."

"Are you punishing me for doing what you asked?"

"Stop kidding. We have a lot of ‘dummies’ to trash."

"Right."


Realized this. Touching the Force is easy. Releasing it is, too. But doing the one right after the other is a mind fuck.

After I crash the dummy for the second time, Averane starts repeating what could be his favorite word: "Faster."

"Pffth. It’s such a mess," I complain.

"Do this now, and the last thing I am going to ask you to do will be quite easy."

"Oh, fine!"

"Faster!"

"I didn’t even push it yet!"

After the dummy meets its fate for about the thirtieth time, I can’t take it anymore.

"If you say ‘faster’ again..."

"It’s enough with that. I just want you to push it over and over again without lifting now."

"I am tired," I complain.

"It’s gonna be much easier. And you don’t have to release the Force and touch it again. We over-practiced it really."

"Grr!"

"I’ll just sit here, and won’t disturb you."

I huff and puff, but start pushing the dummy over and over again.

I don’t why, but I start laughing all of a sudden. Maybe because why not. I laugh. This is actually fun, though.

Farther this time! Woohoo! Yes! This is much better than punching something. This Force thing so relaxes me.

"Relaxes you? Really?"

No! Not you again, you bitch!

I push the red bitch away, but she renews herself.

"Your family is graveless, and you can relax?"
Shut up! You aren’t her. You are a stupid dummy.

I push her away again, savoring the moment she crashes on the floor.

"You think he is helping you, don’t you? Stupid child."

Get out my brain!

She laughs mockingly. "He just wants to use you. Like everyone."

Aaaaah! I am going to kill you! KILL YOU!

I push, push and push; she laughs, laughs and laughs.

Darkness falls down upon the energy field as I crash the mental image of the villainess over and over again.

"Eva!"

"Turn back!"

"Eva!" It is Averane’s voice this time.

I instantly pull myself together upon hearing a real voice.

"What are you doing?" he asks. There is worry in his expression. It instantly angers me.

"WHAT!" I shout. "You had a sudden change of heart?"

He doesn’t answer, but I can see the guilt in his face.

"Didn’t you want me to seek revenge? You hypocritical bastard!"

"Calm yourself! You just touched the Dark Side, and used it without any need."

"So what? Didn’t you teach me that? Didn’t you ask me to do that when there was no need before?"

"Eva..."

"What do you want? Answer me!"

...

"With you? To be honest, I am not sure myself. All I know is... that our futures are tied together... that you hold the answer to a question I do not know."

I try to see if there is a lie in that garbage he said, but sense nothing.


"You are a part of it."

I take a deep breath, and end up saying nothing.

"Eva, I am begging you. Don’t ever again do this. When you touch the Dark Side, you must do it only when really necessary, but most importantly, it must be your own choice."
"I am sorry," I apologize. "You trusted me with it, and... Well..."

"Please, be careful. Its consequences could be catastrophic for you if you do it constantly."

"I won’t do it again."

"Promise me."

"Promise."

...

_Huh. No headache._

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