

### Side Quest: Diego Starlighter

"Bene," the Kel Dor said, startling the rutian twi'lek who was working on her ship.

It had been two months since coming from Dorin and stopping the slaughter of the Baran Do sages. Since then, she had avoided him. She was slightly intimidated by his ability to see the future. He had given her the statuette he sculpted of her many years ago. She was the age she was now, although when it was sculpted she was still in slavery. It was strange to think that someone knew more about her than she did. Her life had always been an adventure with no one telling her what to do next... and this sage knew not only what she would look like but the exact look of her two heavily modified blasters.

"Koth," she responded with her back to him. He probably knew the face she was making anyway.

"You are bothered by my appearance?" he asked in near perfect Ryl, her native language. He didn't want her to be uncomfortable and wanted to resolve this conflict. Speaking in her native language was part of this, but while on Dorin, he didn't cover his face as the sages did when off-worlders visited. Throughout the galaxy, their omnipresent gas masks and goggles were as recognizable as any of the race's genetic markers. He thought that perhaps that image had stayed with her, and wanted to resolve it.

"No, of course not," she said. It wasn't that. She wanted more than anything, more than life, to be in control. Even when she 'earned' her freedom, it was by sacrificing the fortune she'd made to that point. The females of her race were not much more than well-formed chattel to be sold to the highest bidder. Instead of being consumed for food, they were used to satisfy the sexual appetites of dozens of races. She was no different, but the difference was she was now free. Or so she had believed.

"Your scent tells me differently," he explained. "We Kel Dor are very attuned to non-spoken words. Your species is as well. I cannot read your Lekku, but I can sense your feelings."

"Well, don't," she said bitterly.

"If it is not physical, then why are you upset by me?" he continued.

"You make me feel like I have no choice," she said angrily, "and choice is the only thing in this galaxy worth having!"

"Sorry?" he asked, surprised by this new emotion. It had come on so suddenly.

"Yes you are," she agreed, keeping her back to him. "You don't control me."

"Bene," he continued, "I don't control you, I see you."

"Of course you see me. If you didn't, you probably need to wipe the sand out of your goggles," Filly said sarcastically.

"No," he continued. As mean as she got, he wouldn't go away. "I see you. With my people, to experience a vision of another means you share a bond. I grew up with you as another may grow up

with holoivid heroes. Meeting you, Usul, speaking with Mahdi and Sayyadina... er, Arlynn. This is a dream come true for me, to see you all. After decades, my life can begin."

"But, you have no idea about life," Filly said starting to choke. She finally turned to face him, looking into the black holes of his goggles for any sign of a soul. "I was sooooo scared. When I was sold, I was so scared! The best I could hope for was to be raped and killed. At least then, I wouldn't be repeatedly beaten until my superficial beauty was gone, and then killed. But you knew, across the stars and years before it happened, you knew I would be rich and famous and a ..."

"I still feared for you," he said.

"Why?"

"Allow me to show you something," he said, without moving.

"Uhm, alright," she agreed realizing he was waiting for her permission. He reached into his robe and removed a small portrait. It was exquisitely colored in miniature details. It was of a woman, a miraluka, and she was lovely. Her red hair blazed like an orange sun and she had the perfectly alabaster skin of Visas Marr.

"Who is she?" Filly asked.

"She has no aura anymore," he told her. She was not in tune with the Force, but she was empathetic enough to know he was remembering a painful past. "I saw her at the same time as Arlynn and Mahdi, they were the same age and they were to be trained together."

"Then why isn't she here with us?" Filly asked, completely confused.

"Because the man Visas was to marry was killed on Katarr," he said.

"Dear god," Filly gasped, "that is a picture of Visas' daughter?"

"Yes," Koth replied solemnly, putting the photo back into his satchel.

"Have," she started and caught her breath, "have you showed her?"

"No," Koth replied. "If it pains me, then what do you think would be the effect?"

"So..., so what you see changes?" Filly asked.

"Constantly," Koth answered. "When I can concentrate and see you, my Bene, again, I know you have made the choices that will allow us to finally meet. That is why I say, why my people say, I see you. It means that I am glad you have made your way back to me, or if we are apart, that you will soon."

"Huh," she said, sniffing hard and wiping off a few escaped tears. "That's nice then."

"You are happier with me now," he said, feeling her muscles relax and her pheromones release. She liked him now, and he could smell it, and feel it.

“Haha, yeah,” she confirmed, slapping him on the shoulder. “I guess I’ll keep you with the rest of my jedi strays.”

“Thank you, Bene,” he said. “If you are comfortable with me now, I have another topic I wished to discuss.” Again, he waited for a signal from her to continue. She nodded to him to proceed.

“You rescue the lost. There are times that I see the lost. I believe, and have for a long time, that this is why the Force wants us to be together. Master Marr can see through the Force the strong, but I believe I can help you find the faint. In fact, I have seen you, with another,” he said, removing another picture from his satchel. This one was larger and drawn in black and white with charcoal. She could tell the man was older than she was, he had deep lines around his eyes like he’d lived a hard life. His hair was lightly shaded, probably blonde or gray. His robe was wide at the shoulders and slightly ornate.

“Not bad, but I have a fella,” she said joking. He did not get it. “Is he a jedi?”

“He is,” Koth said. “Was. Wait, ‘will be’ is what I mean, if we can make the right choices.”

“What do you call him?”

“Naib,” Koth replied, “one who will not be taken alive.”

“Well, that’s going to make recovering him hard,” Filly said with an eyebrow cocked.

“His will is strong, but the Force is like a whisper to him,” Koth explained. “Still, it would be amenable to return him to the jedi. He is political now and in the future, and can help the Order maintain their relationship with the Republic. This relationship is a dark cloud in my kinsman’s visions, which is why the Baran Do have retreated to Dorin. They do not want to be swept into the storm.”

“Smart,” she said, having read and heard enough about the Dark Wars and Jedi Civil war to want to hide under a rock when the next one breaks out. She was extremely relieved when the clues they had followed to Dantooine had turned out to be nothing, just some Sith crazies chasing ghosts.

“I believe if he can be recovered, that his choices will help the fight the storm,” he concluded.

“So, it would be like undoing the future?” she said.

“As it is not written, it cannot be undone,” he gently corrected, “but you got it.” His last phrase was more colloquial, a common twi’lek slang. She snickered at his use of it.

“Nice,” she commended. “OK, where do we look?”

“He is close, on this world,” Koth said, “surrounded by money and malcontent. He is strong, but not as strong as those around him. Soon, they will make choices for him if we cannot intercede.”

“Sounds like the pazak dens,” she said. “I know a Mandalorian who will help us shake out the right one.”



