

CHRONICLES
OF ELANTIA:

- BURNING OVERTURE -
CHAPTER 1

By
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~Prologue: Memory of Flames ~

Naria coughed about the same time as another rain of missiles struck the already burning city. The explosions from the high yield warheads sent a storm of smoke, ash and hot air into the streets where fire fighters were trying to quell the raging inferno of flames and soldiers trying to defend the city using whatever they had, while hundreds of civilians were trying to escape the death and destruction caused by the hour long bombardment. The attack had come as a surprise to everyone.

It was the day of New Year's Eve. A day where people would celebrate the creation of the consortium, but that thought had been washed away when the first bombs had fallen to the ground, crushing buildings, cars and people alike. The civilians had been caught by panic and had tried to run away, just to get stomped to death or be incinerated as bombs and missiles struck amidst the fleeing people, sending rocks and body parts flying left and right.

The sky had quickly become covered by smoke, as bright fires erupting everywhere and the bitter smell of burnt flesh had filled the air.

Naria could no longer remember for how long she had seen the horrors, or how many times she had thrown up, but now, several hours later it didn't even the sight of a child crying next to his dead parents could result in any sort of compassion, it was just... part of the thing...

Naria turned her head, and looked at a group of soldiers somewhere in the distance. They were manning an anti-air gun, shouting to each other. In the next second, they were hit by a bright blue beam of light and were incinerated on the spot. Their screams of pain echoed through the streets, but this fell on deaf ears as the people in the streets, were ignorant to anything or anyone, but themselves.

Naria looked up at the smoked filled sky as a small group of consortium air-based mecha's passed over her head, heading after those who had fired at the AA gun. The next moment they fell under attack from a different angle by a group of rebel mecha. One after another, the mecha's exploded and crashed to the ground. The skirmish lasted less than a minute then the consortium mecha's had been shot down and the enemy continued onwards to find more people to kill.

From childhood, then Naria, like most other people, had been told that soldiers only fought other soldiers, and that war was nothing to be afraid of, as the consortium was all powerful and had total domination of space. What a lie... Soldiers shot at anything that moved, killed anything alive. The sheer brutality of war had struck the civilians who lived in what was supposed to be the safest location in the galaxy, the capital of the consortium. How it was even possible for war to strike here, was beyond Naria's comprehension.

Naria continued to walk down the ruined street passing by one body after another, as a large ship passed by far above her head, while its cannons kept firing at a target faraway. Naria stopped up, and looked at the ship. It looked like a peacekeeper patrol vessel. It had severe damage all across the hull. It was not a ship designed for direct combat, and only confirmed that even the high command had been caught by surprise.

Naria lowered her head, and continued to walk forward. A house in the distance collapsed in a massive explosion, killing several fire fighters in the process, but it was just one of many.

No matter how far Naria walked, the scenery didn't change. The destruction just got worse, and the amount of corpses increased at a steady rate, and in one more ridicule pose after another. When she came upon the sight of a soldier corpse, hanging from a wire around the foot, spinning around like a children's toy, then Naria laugh out loud.

Naria fell to her knees and just kept smiling to herself. Was she going insane? Or was she already insane? Who, in their right mind, would laugh over the sight of dead people? Naria suddenly remembered her father's words, that war was never fun, and that the same time the sight of his smug face when he had said it, caused Naria to laugh once again.

Mi'Naria Mi'Lorr, daughter of Mi'Malarga Mi'Lorr, a member of the ruling council of the consortium, was on her knees laughing over a pile of dead people. He would surely be ashamed over her behaviour, if he saw her now. It would make a fine article in any news paper; the high and mighty Lord Mi'Lorr's beloved reputation ruined by the actions of his crazy daughter.

Naria looked up at the sky once more. Was it night? Was it day? She had no clue. The horizon had turned red due to the flames, and the sky had nearly been blackened out by smoke, yet she could still see the burning wreckage of ships crashing to the ground and beams of light going everywhere in all shapes and colours.

As Naria watched the sky, tears began to run down her chin. Naria removed the tears with her hand, and looked at the tiny drops, reflecting the burning fires around her. Why was she crying, without being sad? Could this what doctors called a trauma? Was she traumatised by all that had happened? She didn't know...

The eerie sound of metal striking against metal caused Naria lower her head and look forward, where a peacekeeper mecha had crash landed, with smoke rising from its back. Naria watched as the mecha opened up, and the pilot crawled out, but barely had he managed to get on his feet, before he was struck by several beams, which entered his back, and exited through his chest.

The pilot fell to the ground, without even knowing what hit him. Several armed soldiers, wearing pure white uniforms rushed from a side street, and stopped at the pilot, where they fired a few more shots, into his already dead body.

Naria just sat there, looking at the uniform. It was the same as the one she had seen in historical records at school. It had been worn during the Zionite wars by the geneless rebel soldiers in their fight against consortium dominance. But why were they here? They should all have been destroyed decades ago. If this was truly the same group, did it mean that another rebellion had started? As Naria was wondering about these things, the rebels came under fire from peacekeeper soldiers, and several of them were gunned down while the rest was forced to retreat back the way they came.

Naria slowly got on her feet and wandered towards the wrecked mecha which was now surrounded by corpses. She stooped right in front of one of the rebel remains and looked down. Why were they doing this?

The man was already dead, so why had they shot him over and over? Were they really so hell bent on death and destruction, that they had lost all human emotions?

Naria, and her family, had always treated the geneless with respect, unlike other pureblood families, so why this barbarism? Naria bowed down, and took the dead soldiers rifle. It was heavier than it looked.

Naria kept looking at the weapon for some time. It was actually nothing more than a lump of metal, put together with screws and bolts. It didn't look fearsome or dangerous yet, it could easily be used to kill people, without having to think about it... Was the rebel soldiers just like this piece of useless metal, which didn't feel remorse or regret about what it had been used for?

"Well, what do we have here?" Said a male voice all of a sudden.

Naria turned her head, and looked directly, at a group of peacekeepers.

"Looks like one of those rebels to me." Said another man, and the two of them laughed while checking their weapons.

"That's enough you two!" Said a third man, who walked in front of the others. He had the symbol of a field commander on his chest.

"But sir, she's carrying a rebel weapon, let's just shoot her." Said the first man.

"And so what? Are you two so stupid, that you can't see the difference between civilians and armed enemies? God!" said the commanding officer, who then turned towards Naria.

"Listen kid! You better get out of this area. There are large enemy ground forces approaching, and they don't take prisoners." Said the officer.

Naria did not say anything, but simply dropped the rifle on the ground, and continued to walk away. She could hear the peacekeepers talk as she continued to walk, some were laughing while others were more serious. Maybe they were talking about her behind her back? Like how crazy she must look, or how pitiful she was because she didn't talk back. It did not matter, as they were all very likely to die soon.

After a while, Naria found herself standing next to a large fountain, but instead of water, she found the fountain full of blood, at least it looked that way. Half of the fountain had been blown to bits with the centre statue was nothing more than a pile of rubble.

Naria looked up at the sky once more. The explosions seemed to have faded from the local area. All she could here were the monotone sounds of the flames. The sky was even redder, than before. How long had she been sitting here? An hour? A day? Or was it just ten minutes? It was impossible for her to say, and she did not care about it or anything else any more. Naria sat down, leaning against the fountain, and closed her eyes...

Naria opened her eyes and sat up in her bed, gasping for air. Her body was bathed in sweat yet she felt like she was about to freeze to death. Naria got out of bed, swept in her bed sheet, and walked over to the large window, the only in her room.

It was still dark outside. In fact, it was in the middle of the night. Only the sound of the wind could be heard. Naria placed her hand on the window and looked up at the twin moons, Meki and Yola, both in orbit of Evolia, her homeworld.

How long had it been since the attack on Orion Prime? It would be around four years or so. The assault had been lead by Jeremiah Cor'Dell, a direct descendant of the consortium's founding father, which was why his betrayal could not have been foreseen. Yet, no one knew why he had lead the rebel attack which had resulted in the destruction of the entire system fleet, and killing tens of thousands of civilians, including her own mother.

Yet, Naria could not understand why she was dreaming about the events now, as she had never done so before. The consortium's post trauma counselling was supposed to repress any memories of the horrors she had seen. But it was not only the images of death people and the destruction. Naria also had the feeling of being betrayed, and she even knew the reasons why.

Her mother had abandoned her, to go help someone else. Back then, Naria had only been 16, and was hardly as grown up, as she was now day, but that was not why she had the feeling, it was not related to the death of her mother, because her mother had been that sort of person, always concerned about everyone she met, but Naria had not been able to understand her mother's feelings at the time.

Naria could not help but smile, when she remembered how much of a snob and a brat she had been, when she was younger. Always did she question her mother's care for the geneless population on Evolia. They were not purebloods, so why help them? It was first after her mother's death that she had realized what her mother had tried to do.

The ground attack on Orion Prime, had been led by geneless soldiers, survivors of the Zionics wars and the outcasts from the society. Those who had not been killed during the battle had all been exiled. It was something Naria had made sure of. She had helped them, who had killed thousands of people escape with their lives, at least, that's how the council had seen it, when in fact all she had done was to point out that the geneless had been misled and they were not at fault for their inferior thinking.

Afterwards, then sentences such as, *she is indeed her mother's daughter*, and *good for nothing, carefree child*, which was both recognition of her bloodline and insults at the same time lead to a great deal of confusion amongst the citizens when the judgements had been announced.

The council had promised the ringleaders that their crew was to be spared, which they did, of course those rules did not apply to the geneless crewmembers, or the families of the ringleaders.

Naria had spoken of their behalf, and a single sentence had convinced the council to follow her suggestion. Why? Why did they change their mind all of a sudden? All she had suggested was to send them where people of impure bloodlines were sent; the junkyard, a small planet on the rim of consortium space, located in sector 749.

It was hardly out of compassion they had agreed to it. Her father was a member of the consortium council, and he had advocated the executions of everyone related to the leviathan incident, as it had been called. Yet, even he had looked like a ghost, when she had made her suggestion.

It was the last wish of the man who had lead of the attack, Jeremiah Cor'Dell to meet with Naria in person. A rather weird request as Naria had never met him before, but she had agreed to talk to him, with the intention of killing him herself. Yet once she had met him, she had somehow stopped caring about

revenge, but she had never understood how. He had been very charismatic and Naria could understand why so many people had followed him.

He only had two requests in return for information as to why Naria's mother had died. At first, Naria had refused to believe him, but then he had said something only her mother would have known. It would appear that her mother had something to do with this man, so Naria had decided to listen to him.

His first request was that the geneless and the families of those involved in the rebellion to be sent to sector 749. The only way to ensure that they would listen was the word *Elantia*, that was all she would have to say, and it had worked, the council had just looked at each other, then agreed to her every demand. What were they so afraid off? Was the council hiding something about sector 749? Naria could not help but ask herself that one question over and over.

The council had often hid a lot of things from the public, like the fact that it was their own prototype ship, the leviathan, which had been taken over by Jeremiah Cor'Dell, and used against them, but that was hardly enough reason for them to become so afraid. Everyone knew that sector 749, was used for dumping trash and people alike. Anyone who was a danger to the overall good of the consortium was sent to that sector.

Naria turned around and walked over to a small desk besides her bed. Here she opened up a drawer, and took out a small box along with some papers. Naria put the box on the desk, and sat down on her bed, and began to look through the papers.

The papers contained the details of her mother's testament, or last will, in case of her death. It had been written two weeks before she had been killed. Had her mother known about her fate? Likely not, but it did not change the fact, that the papers said not to tell her father anything no matter what, and after having read it right before the trial, Naria could understand why.

It informed Naria, that she had inherited a huge fortune, which her mother wanted her to use for good deeds, no matter of it was purebloods or geneless. But Naria had not really spent it, like her mother had suggested, at least not in public.

Her father had become isolated from the world, not caring for anything, or anyone, just like Naria had felt the day her mother died. He never really had cared for the geneless, but he had tolerated the reforms, Naria's mother, had suggested, but those reforms had been long forgotten and now the legion were doing as they pleased.

If Naria had publicly stated her desire for those reforms, then she would likely be married away, to some idiotic fool, just to keep her silent. In fact, she had heard rumors about it already. She was said to become engaged to So'Ran So'Nirr, son of council member So'Gantis So'Nirr, leader of the military faction.

Maybe her father had caught a wind of what she was doing? Well, rather that, then him finding out what she had wanted to do all along. Maybe this Ran fellow, could become useful somewhere down the road. He might even be a decent man, unlike his father, who was the most brutal man, ever to sit on the council.

Naria put the papers on the bed, and took the small box from the table, and opened it up. Inside, was a necklace, her mother had used to wear on official matters and the sorts. It was not pretty at all, but looked more like a small cone, which had been squashed flat.

Naria took the necklace out, and dropped the box on the bed, and got on her feet, and walked back to the window again, and looked at the necklace, as it was hit by the moonlight. A faint green glow appeared briefly from the center of the Mi'Lorr crest. This was not the first time she had seen it, as her mother had shown it to her, when she was a kid.

But why did the gem, necklace, or whatever this thing was, glow like this, in the moonlight? Was it some sort of mechanical trick, or a hologram? Naria did not know, and she was not going to ask her father about it either.

Not because it might make him sad, but he might actually known the truth about this gem, and those like it. This was not the only one of its kind, as Naria had held another one, two years ago, even if it was just for an hour.

The identical necklace, she had held, had belonged to Jerimiah Cor'Dell, of whom she had visited shortly before his execution. It had been rather hard for her, to be in the same room with the man, who was reponsciable for her mother's dead, but she had done it anyway.

Naria could only remember the clam that the man felt, before his impending death. He did not look like a monster at all, but was indeed very kind. All he requested was for her to pass on his necklace to his son, who were to be shipped off world, the moment he was dead.

Naria had not done it herself, but had asked an old friend of her mothers, an admiral Baltaras to hand the necklace over, as he would not raise any suspicion. Naria had heard from Baltaras, that the boy had accepted the necklace, as the guards dragged him and his family away.

Naria closed her hand and leaned against the window. She could feel the heat from the necklace in her palm. A tear ran down her chin. Naria could taste the salt within the tear. It was bitter, yet, she did not feel sad.

A few minuet's later, then Naria sat down at the desk, and had two piles of data discs in front of her. The discs to her right contained detailed information about various people, who were known to have a weakness for money. They could be bribed to do anything.

The pile on her left, contained information about people, who might help her out for free, for a favor or out of loyalty. Naria had already decided which people to contact from both piles, but before that, she had something to do. There was someone, who could help her, without raising suspicion.

Naria turned on the video phone, and pressed the green button, which was the call for the lead butler. It took a while, before an old man appears at the other end.

“Who the hell are calling this late at night?” Yelled the man with an angry voice.

“Oh? Is that how you speak to your employer?” Asked Naria with a little smile.

“Mistress? Oh, forgive me, I did not mean any insult.” Replied the man quickly.

“None taken. It is my bad, for waking you up this late at night.” Said Naria.

“I see... So what can I do for you miss?” Asked the butler.

“I need you to send the maid, who cleaned my room yesterday here at once. I have noticed that some things have gone missing.” Replied Naria.

“That damn dirty wrench! Did that geneless kid steal something from you?” Asked the butler.

“No, I doubt she would dare that. She may simply have misplaced the items. Send her to my room at once, so we can get things sorted out.” Replied Naria.

“Very well miss. Shall I accompany her?” Asked the butler next.

“That will not be required. I can deal with her myself. But thank you for the offer.” Replied Naria.

“Very well. She will be with you shortly.” Said the butler.

“Thank you.” Replied Naria and turned of the video phone.

It took a while, before someone finally knocked on the door. Naria, who had placed herself on a chair, with her back to the large window, gave permission to enter.

A young girl, dressed in a nightgown, opened the door and walked inside.

“Close the door, and come closer.” Ordered Naria.

The girl, did as Naria told her, and closed the door, before she walked closer.

“You, outside, may leave. I don’t like people snooping at my door!” Yelled Naria, who could hear the sound of footsteps rushing away.

“That old fool, think I didn’t notice.” Mumbled Naria, who then turned her attention towards the maid.

“How can I be of service my lady?” Asked the maid.

“I have heard that you are a good guest, with various... Open minded people.” Replied Naria.

“Oh? And where have you heard that, my lady?” Asked the maid next.

“Does it matter? I have also heard that you tend to visit the legion quarters in the city district.” Replied Naria.

The maid looked at Naria, her eyes were carrying signs of anger.

“It is not polite to inquire about other people’s lives is it?” Asked the maid. “That depends, if we are talking about theft.” Replied Naria.

“Theft?” Asked the maid, acting confused, while it was clear that she was not.

“I have a report, that several members of the legion has lost their wallets. Some even their weapons. All described a maid being the last one seen in the vicinity.” Replied Naria.

“Your point... My lady?” Asked the maid, this time clearly angry.

“42.520 credits, that is the total amount of money stolen, over the past six months, and then comes the weapons. I wonder where they went.” Replied Naria and smiled softly.

The maid simply looked away, knowing that she had been discovered, yet there were no signs of regret or fear.

“Tell me, what is your name?” Asked Naria shortly after.

“Rebecca.” Said the maid.

“Well, Rebecca, what do you think about the legion, and I want your honest opinion, not the one hidden behind your little act of innocence.” Said Naria.

It took a while, before Rebecca answered. Naria could see that the girl was thinking hard about a way to get out of this.

“Most of them deserve to die. Nothing more than dogs of the legatus that fat, corrupt son of a bitch.” Said Rebecca finally, while she looked away.

Naria got up from the chair, turned around and looked at the twin moons once more.

“I see.” Said Naria, and folded her hands on her back.

“You not going to fire me, or report this to the legion?” Asked Rebecca, with a low voice.

“Why the hell would I? I can’t stand that asshole any more then you do. Vi’Cerus Vi’Corn. He has been running this city, while my father have been isolating himself. I know he is looking the other way, when purebloods abuse geneless, and without seeing it myself, there is little I can do.” Replied Naria.

“So, you think it is because of the legatus that I am doing what I am?” Asked Rebecca.

“No, I do not. You can not do any more then I can, and that is why you are giving away the money, and weapons you steal, to the underground movements, who work against my father.” Replied Naria.

Naria looked over her shoulder, just to see how Rebecca acted to her last sentence, but the maid, had simply turned her head away once more.

“That is high treason, punishable by death, if my father were to find out.” Said Naria next.

“What is it you want?” Asked Rebecca shortly after.

“What do you mean?” Replied Naria.

“To keep quiet of cause. Don’t act all stupid, damned pureblood.” Said Rebecca.

“About you being part of a rebellion against the legion? Nothing at all. But I do want you to connect me to certain people, within the legion, who feel the way you do. And don’t think everyone is a mindless drone, who believes anything the legatus are saying.” Replied Naria.

“What kind of people?” Asked Rebecca.

“The kind, who will do as I tell them, without telling my father. Do that for me, and I will see too it that your crimes... Vanish.” Replied Naria, who had turned around, facing Rebecca once more.

For the first time, Rebecca’s face seemed to show signs of fear. Maybe she had gone a bit overboard. But anyone who could cause her plans to fail, would have to be removed.

“I can take care of my own problems. I don’t need your good grace! There are others who can use that! Like the local church, in the geneless district.” Said Rebecca, who seemed to have closed her fist.

“The Church of Saint Jove?” Asked Naria.

“So, you do know it!” Replied Rebecca.

Naria did not reply, but simply walked over to the video phone, and entered a number. There was a response at once.

“Donate a million to the church of Saint Jove. Do it at once, and be sure that my name is written on it.” Ordered Naria, and turned off the phone once more, without even waiting for a reply.

“Why the hell did you do that? To gain my trust?” Asked Rebecca shortly after.

Naria looked over her shoulder and smiled.

“No, to piss off my father, while helping the priest there. He is an old friend of my mother.” Replied Naria.

“Hmm? Well, since you have donated that money, maybe I can help you out, but only this time.” Said Rebecca.

“As you wish, but I do hope you can help me again, in the future.” Said Naria, who then took the pile of discs to the left, turned around and handed them to Rebecca.

“Contact these people, and give them these discs.” Said Naria.

“And if they refuse, or try to arrest me?” Asked Rebecca.

Naria smiled, held out her hand, and took off her ring, carrying her personal insignia.

“Show them this.” Said Naria, and handed the ring to Rebecca.

Rebecca got on her feet, and looked at the data discs.

“Why do you need so many soldiers?” Asked Rebecca.

“I will turn twenty in a few days, after that, I have the right for my own personal bodyguard, and I will no longer have to rely on my father's good for nothing soldiers.” Replied Naria.

“That cannot be the only reason.” Said Rebecca next.

“It might not, but I won't tell you anymore. I trust you as little as you trust me.” Said Naria and smiled once more.

“Guess one favor is worth another, but what happens to me when I've contact these people?” Asked Rebecca.

“Well, you become my personal assistant, officially.” Replied Naria.

“And unofficially?” Asked Rebecca next.

“My informant. I want to know what Vi'Cerus Vi'Corn, is planning, as well as those underground groups you sell your weapons too. I don't want the two to go against each other just yet.” Replied Naria.

“Do you think I would rat out my friends?” Asked Rebecca.

“I don't ask you to, just be sure to keep them at bay for now.” Replied Naria.

“I doubt they will listen to your words, being the daughter of Mi'Lorr.” Said Rebecca, while looking at the ring, Naria had handed her.

“Then don't tell them. I don't want to become caught in a firefight between the legion and rebels, while trying to aid the people, who suffer in this city.” Said Naria, and turned towards the window again.

“So, you want to do charity? May I ask why?” Asked Rebecca.

“Because that was what my mother would do, if she was still alive. You may leave now.” Replied Naria.

“Very well, but don't come crying to me, if your plans go down the drain!” Said Rebecca and walked towards the door.

“One more thing.” Said Naria suddenly.

“What is it?” Asked Rebecca.

“I will know if you betray me.” Replied Naria.

“You going to kill me if I do?” Asked Rebecca, with a sarcastic voice.

“Oh, not you, but those close to you.” Replied Naria, with a serious tone of voice.

Rebecca did not reply, but simply opened the door, and walked out, after which she closed the door behind her.

Naria sat down on the chair, which she had moved back to the desk. One pawn had been settled. Rebecca was a geneless with high connections within the legion. She would do the job, out of pride, Naria did not doubt that fact.

Naria took the first disc from the remaining pile. It was marked with the name, Admiral Bay' Baltaras. He might not even demand money for himself, for what she was going to ask him. Naria smiled to herself. Things had been set in motion. She would find out the truth, no matter the cost...

Paradaisu, Planet Evolia, the core. GE 448, Sun 13, Moon of Aprilia.

Capital city Paradaisu of the core world Evolia. Religious centre of the Consortium.

April 13th Galactic Era 448 (2996)

“Search every building! Arrest anyone suspicious! Kill anyone who resists! Find that thief! Recover the data!” Yelled Vi’Cerus Vi’Corn, legatus of the Mars Legion or the Praetorian Guard, as they were better known.

They were the elite of the elite soldiers, of the consortium. Not once had they ever lost a battle, no matter whom they were up against.

Shanli Yuko watched as the soldiers kicked down doors, dragged people into the streets, and began to beat them. Curse them all.

And all this because of a simple data disc. Shanli looked at the small disc in her hand. The council must really want to keep the information secret, if they were willing to deploy the praetorians, but that would also mean, that it was very valuable data.

Shanli cursed to herself. Those bastards would have to pay for their crimes. She really wanted to kick some ass right about now, but she would not stand a chance against the legions, and besides, then it was not her job. She had to get the data back to the others.

Shanli pulled the hood over her head, turned around, and walked away, from what she knew would end up in a bloodbath. Only those who had money, or status could avoid being directly attacked, but the people of this enclave, were mainly geneless, an unwanted cast of the consortium, simply because they did not have a family name.

Shanli walked in the shadows, avoiding the legion for nearly an hour, before she reached her destination. It was normally a 10 minute trip, but the legion was everywhere.

Shanli looked around, to make sure no one was around, but there was nothing but the wind blowing, carrying the screams of people being beaten in the distance.

Shanli finally felt confident that it was clear, and then she began to perform a strange ritual, which looked idiotic to outsiders. A few seconds later, the wall in front of her disappeared, and a stairwell appeared inside. Shanli quickly walked inside, and pressed the button next to the stairwell.

The wall appeared once more, hiding the entrance. No one would know that the wall was a simple hologram. Shanli smiled. The advances in solid holograms had speeded up the past decade. Of course, it was top secret research, which her, and the others had received from their benefactor.

Whoever that person really was, then it was someone with connections.

Shanli walked down the stairwell, with rapid steps, as she was not sure how many of the others had managed to get to safety, since the legion made their move.

Despite the information, given to her, by their benefactor, then she had taken it lightly, and that had resulted in the alarm going off, when she was on her way out, from the databank.

Shanli reach the bottom of the stairwell, but as soon as she stopped up, then she found herself surrounded by hooded men, armed with various weaponry.

“Damned legion bastard!” Yelled a large man, and stormed towards Shanli.

Shanli cursed out loud, and knocked the man down in a single blow.

“It’s me you freaking idiot!” Yelled Shanli and pulled her hood away.

“Oh... Sorry about that...” Said another man, who also took off his hood.

“Shinji? What the hell are you doing here?” Asked Shanli confused.

“What? You surprised about seeing your big brother here? And here I thought I was the leader of this little gang.” Replied Shinji and smiled softly. Despite the darkness, Shanli could clearly see the shape of his face. It was her big brother alright.

“Idiot! That’s not what I meant... But enough of that... Is everyone here?” Asked Shanli.

Shinji turned his head, and looked at the others.

“We are... All that’s left...” Replied Shinji.

“What? Only this group made it? Out of a hundred people?” Asked Shanli.

“Yes... Our southwest group was anihilated two hours ago. We got the word just after you left, we went to try and help them but... We ended up losing many of our friends...” Explained Shinji.

Shanli cursed to herself. This was just their luck.

“We all knew this could happen... But I doubt any of us ever expected it would... We were careless.” Said Shinji next.

“The hell we were! We took every precaution! It’s that damned noble’s fault! He dragged us into this!” Yelled another man, a young boy, named Jenis.

Shanli had known Jenis for nearly a year, and his hatred towards the noble’s had always influenced his thinking. It was not hard to understand, why. As a child, he had seen the legion execute his entire family, during the mythic riots, seven years earlier.

Everyone here had lost a loved one to that riot, and everyone blamed the legions, but Shanli and her brother were different.

They did not hate the legion, despite their parents had been killed. They hated the man, who had order the legion deployed; Mi’Malarga Mi’Lorr, the elected leader of the mythian’s, and council member for the past twenty years.

He was the one who would have to pay, but each time someone had tried to take him out, and failed, even more innocents had been executed. While it might not have been his intention to kill so many people, then the legion commanders had taken matters into their own hands.

The old Lord Mi’Lorr was said to be a weak-minded fool, easily manipulated. Others said that the death of his wife, four years ago, had made him lose his mind. Ever since then, the death toll of geneless had increased dramatically.

Of cause, all of this was mere rumour, but Shanli knew, that Lord Mi’Lorr would, some day, be forced to take responcebilly for the crimes of his men.

“Let’s not jump to conclusions just yet Jenis.” Said Shinji.

“Heh. I’ll do what I want. If that noble bastards just as much as looks funny at me, I’ll kill him!” Said Jenis, who then turned around and disappeared into the shadows.

“Shinji, just how many of us are there left?” Asked Shanli, and looked directly at her brother.

“Well, with you, then we are 11 in this room. The old man are waiting for you, with another group, think he have six others with him.” Replied Shinji.

“So, we are only 19 left?” Asked Shanli next.

“No, Hanjo is also still alive, but he and his men have not arrived yet. The last time we heard from them, it sounded like they were under attack, but I cannot be sure if he is able to get here.” Replied Shinji.

“For the love of good, don’t go write me off just yet!” Said a male voice above them.

Shanli looked up at the stairwell. She immediately recognised Hanjo’s imposing figure. He was a very tall and muscular man, who was easy to identify even on a moonless night.

“Hanjo! You made it!” Said Shinji, clearly relieved.

“I did, and so did my men, but we got several wounded, so if you guys could give us a hand.” Replied Hanjo.

“Of course. Everyone, help Hanjo and bring the wounded to the old man at once.” Ordered Shinji, who then turned towards Shanli.

“Sis, you better bring the disc to the old man as well.” Said Shinji.

“You told me already, fool!” Replied Shanli, and walked towards the door.

An hour later, Shanli found herself, sitting around a table with Shinji, Hanjo and the old man, named Populos.

Shanli had finished describing what had happened during her mission, and it had left the others puzzled.

“So, when you broke into the databank, you set off an alarm?” Asked Hanjo.

“Yes, but as far as I can understand, the southwest group was attacked before I even got to the databank.” Replied Shanli.

“That’s true. But how could this happen. Did someone betray us? Asked Shinji.

“I think that is a good bet, or maybe the legion just got lucky during a routine patrol.” Replied Hanjo.

“That would be impossible.” Said old man Populos.

“Huh? How come?” Asked Shinji, confused.

“The southwest group was in charge of our weaponry. They had the strongest defences, and while the legion soldiers are elite soldiers, then a simple patrol would quickly fall short in terms of firepower. The southwest group had 30 men, always on alert.” Explained Populos.

“That is true...” Mumbled Hanjo.

“Furthermore... Then it takes time for the legion to gear up. If my memory serves me right, then it would take about an hour for them to get ready. And that is when all their men have reported for duty. I would assume that they began arming themselves for this attack at least 3 hours before Shanli left.”

Continued Populos to explain.

“Then it is easy... They knew about the southwest base, and if they knew about that one...” said Shinji, but he was unable to finish the sentence, not that he needed to, as everyone knew what it meant.

Their hideout had likely been compromised, and it would only be a matter of time, before the praetorians came for them. This, and the fact that many people had died, made the anger begin to boil within Shanli.

“How many men, do we have ready for combat?” Asked Shanli, and looked at the tree others, with eyes, as cold as ice.

“37, including us, but 6 of those are severely wounded, and won’t be able to do combat.” Replied Hanjo, and lowered his head.

“So, that’s it? We going to give up?” Asked Shanli next.

“I guess so...” Mumbled Shinji and looked away.

“That’s nonsense! The legion will...” Began Shanli, but someone interrupted her.

“...Will kill you all, no exceptions.” Said a mechanical voice.

Everyone turned around, and looked at the new arrival. The small figure, dressed in all black clothing. The only thing, which was not black, was a single, red mechanical eye, glowing on and off, like the heartbeat of a person.

“What the hell? How did you get in here?” Yelled Hanjo, a bit surprised, over this sudden arrival.

“I have been here the whole time, and I have heard everything you have said. You suspect that someone leaked our plans, am I right?” Asked the hooded doll, as the small band of rebels called this.... Person.

“Damn right we are! And I am sure you know something!” Replied Shanli and took a step forward, who was now on the verge of losing her temper.

“Of cause I do. Our plans were leaked, by someone in the southwest group, so I had to intervene.” Said the doll.

“You... You sent the legion after the southwest group?” Asked Shinji, clearly surprised.

“Don’t be stupid. I do not control the praetorians, only a small group of men. We were too late.” Replied the doll.

“Don’t give me that crap! You allowed our friends to be killed, despite your promise!” Yelled Shanli, and tried to punch the doll, but Populos quickly grabbed her hand, and held her back.

“Don’t let your emotions get the better of you.” Said Populos with a calm voice.

“Shut up old man! I am going to beat the crap out of this tin can!” Yelled Shanli, and struggled to get lose, but the old man, was much stronger then he seemed, as he had little difficulty holding Shanli back.

“You left our friends to die! You didn’t do anything what so ever!” Yelled Shanli next.

“And you didn’t follow my instructions, and the alarm went off, and now, innocent people are being beaten, and killed by the praetorians. What is the loss of a emre 30 people, against the hundreds who will now suffer injuries due to your carelessness! If you had done as I had said, then there would not be any punishment towards the civilians, you damned ignorant child!” Yelled the mechanical Doll.

Shanli froze. This was the first time, she had ever heard the doll angry, and this was not just anger towards her, for having being discovered. Shanli felt, that this person was also placing blame on it’s self, but still...

“You could still have helped our friends in the southwest!” Yelled Shanli.

“I agree. What proof do we have that you or your people did anything to aid them?” Asked Hanjo, also fired up, due to Shanli’s anger.

“That is enough! Everyone get out!” Yelled Populos, and pushed Shanli away.

Shinji quickly grabbed her sister and held her back.

“Why! Why are you always covering form this bastard? Tell me old man! Tell me now!” Yelled Shanli.
“Shanli... You...” Mumbled Shinji.

“Let me go Shinji!” Yelled Shanli.

“That is enough! Take her away and let her cool down.” Ordered Populos. Hanjo, and Shinji had to drag Shanli away. Her screams could be heard for a long time.

“I am very sorry about that. I guess the truth have finally caused her to collapse.” Said Populos and looked at the doll.

“It’s okay. I would be worried if she did not.” Said the Doll.

“Of cause... She does ask some valid questions. I need to know... Did you send help to the southwest group?” Asked Populos.

The doll’s one red eye looked at him for several minuets.

“Do you not trust me?” Asked the doll finally.

“I do, but unless I know the truth, then I doubt we can keep this group together for much longer.” Replied Populos.

“Those I sent never returned. I barely made it away myself.” Said the doll.

“Oh? You were there?” Asked Populos surprised.

“Of cause I was! You think I would let those who have helped me die?” Replied the Doll.

“My god... If your father finds out your involved with us... He would never forgive me...” said Populos and sighed.

“Leave my father out of this! And don’t forget, that I asked you to help me, not the other way around.” Said the doll, and smashed it’s hand against the table.

“I know that... My, my... Your really dedicated to this... Well, in any case... As I am sure you ehard, then we did get the data, but it will take some time to decode, and this location might have been leaked as well.” Said Populos.

“I heard that. How long will it take to decode it?” Asked the doll.

“At least 48 hours, and I doubt we can last that long, if we are discovered.” Replied Populos.

“Blast!... Then we have no choice. Move to the other hideout. We can not risk being discovered now.” Said the doll.

“Indeed... How long can you stall the praetorians?” Asked Populos.

“I am not sure. If I call in a few favours, I may be able to delay them.” Replied the doll.

“Very well I will get us moving before morning. But... What about the civilians?” Asked Populos next.
“Don’t worry about them. There won’t be any deaths. I will do what I can for those who are injured.” Replied the doll.

“Oh? How can you be so sure? Shanli’s report said the traetorians were causing a lot of damage.” Asked Populos, with a little smile on his lips.

“They may be rough, but they are not stupid. They won’t kill anyone when the media is there, and I made sure they were.” Replied the doll.

“Hmm? That is sure to have cost a lot of money.” Said Populos.

“I do not care about money. I will give everything to learn the truth about what happened back then... Anything.” Said the doll, who then suddenly vanished into thin air.

“Once again, you avoid too talk about it... It must be really hard for you...” Said Populos and sighed.

Shanli woke up, and found herself confused at first, over the new surroundings, but then she remembered, that the old man Populos, had ordered everyone to evacuate their hide out, early in the morning.

It had been done so swiftly, that Shanli had not noticed her own exhaustion, before they had arrived at the new place, where she had crashed at the first possible location, in this case, a set of large crates.

Despite having slept for the better part of the day, she still very tired and angry, but it could not be helped, since their benefactor was such a prick when it came to directly aiding them. Maybe she had been carried a bit away when she had insulted the man, but he deserved it, having caused so many deaths, due to his hidden agenda.

Their benefactor did tell them anything, except for what to do, but no reason as to why. How long had it been, since she and Shinji had been approached? It was close to a year, maybe more. Shanli could not even remember how it had happened, they ended up in this anti-consortium group, but it had been good times, until recently, when it had all gone to hell, as the legion had assaulted them.

If not for the benefactor, they might not have been alive now, but it was also their benefactor’s fault, that many of their friends had died over the past year. Everyone seemed to mistrust the strange man in one way or another, and only old man Populos seemed to trust the strange man, but why? How could Populos trust a man, who could easily send other people to their deaths? Did the old man know something the rest of them did not? Of course he did, there was a reason why Populos had been elected as the mediator, but what did he know? Shanli looked up at the ceiling, while wondering.

Was Populos blackmailing the benefactor? Or was it the other way around? No... That could not be it. There was something else between them... A special bond of friendship, like the one she had for her brother, but they were not related.

Shanli suddenly sat up, as a thought crossed her mind. Did Populos know the true identity of their benefactor? Shanli could clearly remember that Populos always covered that one eyed freak, every time one of the cell leaders wanted to bitch about something.

Redeye, on the other hand, always seemed to listen to Populos suggestions, when it came to missions, and in other matters. It was the only way they could trust each other so much.

Shanli got on her feet, and put on her coat, and walked out of the room. She had to ask Populos now, when she had been fired up. She really wanted to be able to trust someone else, in the same way Populos did, even if it was the red-eyed bastard.

Shanli found Populos in a small room, where he was looking through some data discs, while working on his computer. The old man looked up, and smiled when he saw her.

“Ahh, Shanli. You're up late.” Said Populos.

“You could have woken me, if you needed to.” Said Shanli, who was no longer angry.

“Well, that would be a shame, since you look so calm when your asleep.” Replied Populos.

“Right...” Mumbled Shanli and closed the door, and leaned up against it, while looking at Populos, who seemed to be in a very good mood.

“So... Is there anything you want?” Asked Populos.

“Actually... What do you know about our benefactor?” Asked Shanli back.

“Not much really, except for the connections our friend has provided us with.” Replied Populos.

“So, you don't know his true identity?” Asked Shanli next.

“What would make you think that?” Asked Populos, who seemed a bit surprised over this sudden question.

“Well, you trust him, when no one else does, and he seem to trust your judgement quite a lot, so I figured you knew who he was.” Replied Shanli and smiled softly.

Populos put the disc he had in his hand on the table, and leaned back in his chair. Shanli could see that he was thinking very hard. He had a habit of blinking his eyes at a rapid speed, when he was under pressure.

“Of cause I trust our benefactor... But I do not know the identity of said person, nor do I want too. It could cause problems for everyone.” Said Populos finally.

“So, you do know who he really is!” Said Shanli, and had a smug smile on her face.

“I never said that!” Replied Populos.

“I know when you are lying old man. You are not the only one with brains, even though you are the smartest and most experienced one. Tell me who he is!” Said Shanli.

“Let us say, you are right, which you are not, and I knew the real name of the person in question, and I told you, then what would you do?” Asked Populos.

“I would seek him out, and give him a slap in the face, then maybe kick him in the nuts.” Replied Shanli.

“Kick him in... The nuts?” Asked Populos and blinked a few times.

Shanli nodded.

“Well... That would be a bit hard I think... In any case, then I do not know the true identity of our benefactor, I am sorry.” Continued Populos.

“You're lying worse than Lord Mi'Lorr when he claims his actions are for the good of everyone.” Said Shanli and sighed.

It was impossible to get Populos to confess to anything, unless she managed to get some evidence. Shanli turned around and opened the door, when Shinji suddenly appeared at the same time.

“Oh? Hi Sis. What's up?” Asked Shinji with a smile.

“Nothing, and that’s the problem!” Replied Shanli, with a harsh tone of voice.

“Huh?” Said Shinji with a perplexed look on his face.

“Just get out of my way!” Said Shanli, and pushed her brother away.

“Where you going?” Asked Shinji, as she passed by him.

“I am going out, and I’ll be back when I feel like it!” Replied Shanli, and walked down the corridor.

“What’s up with her?” Could Shanli hear Shinji ask.

“That is something between me and her.” Was Populos reply.

Shanli decided to walk faster, before Shinji came to follow her, like he had often done. She wanted to be alone right about now.

About twenty minuets later, Shanli found herself looking at a rather ugly piece of clay, which the salesman, kept calling an antique, but even a blind man could see, that it was one of several mass produced items.

Shanli sighed, and continued her walk down the street. The area was full of shops, in every shape and size. Some offering foods, others offered items, some were useful, while others were useless.

Taking a walk, had not helped Shanli’s mood getting better, and there was only one thing she could blame it on, and that was these people, who was selling, and those who were buying. Their carefree activity, had made her even more angry.

No one seemed to care about the fact that many people had been beaten, and killed less then a day ago, in these same streets the peopled walked on at this very moment. All who seemed busy to buy stuff before the market closed at six in the evening, like always.

Did they not own one ounce of dignity to even mourn the dead? Or didn’t they just care, about what happened to everyone else, but themselves? Shanli shook her head. She knew that it was not true. These people had suffered greatly at the hands at the Legion, and the various rich kids, simply because of their DNA.

Many wanted to speak up, but they were afraid. It was fear which dictated the order in this part of the town. There was shown no mercy to any geneless who committed even the smallest crime. Or rather, what every pure blood considered a crime.

Shanli was not sure who, she hated the most. The legion, who was using violence to keep order, or the rich kids, who considered this area as their personal playground.

There had often been shots heard, late at night, when Shanli had been a child, but it also happened now. No one spoke of it, but everyone knew what it was. A hunting game.

A geneless was forced to run around the city, while being hunted by rich kids, for mere sport. The reward was either money, or they had been forced to do it, because a loved one had been taken from them. A woman’s scream caused Shanli to awaken from her endless walk. She looked around, but could not see anything. Another scream, followed by the sound of a weapon being fired caused Shanli to spin around, while the people around her either ran away, or fell to the ground in fear.

Less than fifty meters behind her, stood a group of men, six or seven of them. One of them was holding a gun. Shanli could clearly see the smile on his face.

“Ups... Guess my gun went off.” Said the man with the gun, and his friends began to laugh out loud. Shanli saw a young man fall to the ground, holding his stomach. A young girl tried her best to stop his fall.

“Brother!” Shouted the girl, as she fell to her knees under his weight.

“It’s his own fault!” Said one of the other men, and grabbed the girl by the hair, and pulled her away. The girl screamed out loud in pain.

“Oh shut up!” Yelled the man who had grabbed the girl, and slapped her hard in the face, causing her to fall backwards.

“Hey, don’t go beat her up. She has a pretty face. No need to ruin it.” Said a third man.

“Why not?” Asked the man, but before anyone could give him an answer, the young girl and thrown herself on top of her brother.

“Please... Leave us alone...” Cried the girl.

The large man with the gun, bent down, and grabbed the girl by the neck and threw her away, like she was a paper doll.

“Shut up!” Yelled the man.

“Hey... How about we teach her who is the masters around here?” Asked one of the other men, and kick the girls brother, who screamed in pain.

“No! Please no!” Shouted the girl.

“Gee! She’s still saying shit like that.” Said one of the men.

“Let’s just kill the guy, and take the girl, much easier that way.” Replied the man, who had been looking at the girl the entire time.

Shanli looked at the people around her. Everyone was moving away, or just ignoring what was going on. Did they, despite their fears, not care? This was different from the legion, who despite their anti-geneless attitudes, would at least prevent something like this.

The girl screamed, and Shanli turned her attention back against the men. One of them had begun to fondle the girl, in the middle of the street.

“Hey! She got a nice rack!” Yelled the man to his friends, and laughed out loud, but not for long, as he soon fell backwards, away from the girl, with blood running from his mouth and nose.

Shanli stood between the man, and the girl, with a piece of wood in her hand.

“You son of a bitch!” Yelled Shanli, as she gasped for air, due to her anger.

Everyone seemed stunned over what she had just done, even herself. The men just looked at Shanli, who looked directly back at them. None of them seemed to notice the girl, who had quickly run back to her wounded brother.

“Who the hell are you?” Asked the man with the gun finally.

“Who I am, is none of your freaking business!” Replied Shanli.

“What the... A woman?” Said one of the other men confused.

“It does not matter! Anyone who goes against us will...” Began the man with the gun, but he stopped talking when one of his friends poked his shoulder, and pointed backwards. The two men turned around, and looked towards the girl and her brother.

Shanli could see that a third person was kneeling down besides the girl.

“Press this against his wound, firmly.” Said a female voice.

“What the hell?” Said the man with the gun, and moved a bit to the left.

Shanli could now see the new arrival clearly. The woman was wearing a white hooded cloak, with silver stripes.

“Don’t just sit there, your brother will die if you don’t help him.” Said the woman, with a firm, yet kind tone of voice.

The girl seemed baffled at first, but quickly did what the woman had said.

“Who the hell are you?” Yelled the man with the gun.

Shanli looked as the woman simply ignored the man, and reached for something within her cloak. It was a set of bandages, which she handed to the girl.

“Take these, while I get a doctor.” Said the woman next.

“Hey bitch! The boss asked you who you are, answer him!” Yelled one of the other men, and put his hand on the woman’s shoulder.

What happened next, happened in an instant. The man went to his knees, screaming in pain, while clutching his hand. The woman had broken it without breaking a sweat.

“Argh! My hand!” You bitch! You broke my hand!” Yelled the man.

“You should be glad, that’s all I am going to do to you!” Said the woman, this time with a tone of voice, which was used to give out orders.

“Why you!” Yelled one of the other men, and ran towards the woman, who simply evaded him. Unable to stop, the man ran directly into the wall, knocking himself out.

“That’s three of you swine, four remain.” Stated the woman calmly.

“Get her!” Yelled the man with the gun to the three others, who then ran towards the woman, but one of them didn’t get more than a few steps ahead, before he fell to the ground.

“Freaking bastards!” Yelled Shanli, who had thrown the piece of wood she had used against the first one, directly in the neck of the seconded one.

“What the...” Said the man with the gun, surprised over the attack from Shanli.

When he looked back at the woman, he froze, as he saw the two other men slowly collapse to the ground, clearly in pain. Shanli could see that the man was totally confused about what had just happened, but it was not a good thing, cause he was the type of man, who would do something stupid when cornered.

“Why... Why... Freaking bitches! Die!” Yelled the man, and aimed his gun directly at the woman in front of him, but he froze just as fast as he had shouted.

Less than an inch away from his face, was the sharp end of a green glowing energy blade; a proton saber.

“It would be unwise to try and fire that gun at me. You will never make it away from here alive!” Said the woman, with a voice as cold as ice.

The man began to shake, and then he dropped the gun, while screaming out loud.

“Monster... You’re a freaking monster!” Yelled the man, who then turned around, and ran away as fast as he could.

“Boss?... Boss wait up!” Yelled one of the other men.

Shanli looked around. It seemed the everyone had come back to their senses.

“Piss off!” Said the woman, and the men quickly disappeared, all but the one Shanli had knocked out. He was still lying on the ground.

The woman sighed, and turned around, and began to talk to the girl again. Shanli slowly walked over towards the man.

“Wake up!” Shouted Shanli and kicked the man in the stomach.

The man gasped for air, as he finally came to. He spat in his hand, and realized that he was missing several teeth.

“You fu...” Began the man, but froze, and Shanli pointed the gun directly at him. She had picked up the same gun, used to shoot the girls brother.

“Kiss your ass goodbye you shithead!” Said Shanli, and began to squeeze the trigger.

Just as she was about to fire, the woman from before intervened.

“And what do you think you are doing?” Asked the woman.

“Getting rid of the trash! Don’t get in my way! He deserves it that freaking rapist!” Replied Shanli with a voice, that even scarred herself.

“If you kill this man, then you’re no better than they are!” Said the woman.

“Do I look like I care?” Asked Shanli with a loud voice, and looked directly at the woman’s hooded face.

A pair of emerald green eyes starred directly back at her. It was eyes of extreme beauty, but also a pair of eyes that meant business.

“It is useless to kill this man.” Replied the woman.

“Well, then are you going to let him get away with what he tried to do?” Said Shanli next.

“Killing him won’t do anyone any good. It will just cause a lot of unwanted attention to everyone.” Said the woman, who removed the gun from Shanli’s hand.

“Well, what do you suggest we do then? He’s pure blood I am sure, so the legion won’t do anything to him.” Said Shanli.

The woman simply smiled, and then she kneeled down besides the man, and whispered something into his ear. Shanli could see his face turn pale, very pale. He looked up at the woman, who showed him a devilish smile.

The man swallowed something, and then he got on his feet and ran away, as fast as he could.

Shanli looked after the man for several minutes, before she turned her head and looked at the woman.

“What the hell did you tell him?” Asked Shanli.

The woman deactivated her proton sabre, and smiled.

“I told him I would castrate him with this very saber if he didn’t report himself to the nearest transport of the planet within the next hour.” Replied the woman.

Shanli sighed and shook her head.

“And you really think he will do that?” Asked Shanli.

“I hope so, for his sake. I am very well informed about who comes and goes around here.” Replied the woman, who then turned her attention back towards the girl, and her brother.

Shanli looked around the market place. People had begun to resume their shopping, but very few of them seemed to be curious about the whole incident. In fact, many people just looked away, and walked in a big circle around the young girl and her brother.

Only a few people had any interest, all of them well up in the years. Shanli could hear two of them whispering to each other.

“What a terrible thing to do, to such a poor girl.” Said the first man, tall and bald with a long beard, in various colours.

“Indeed. Those men deserve to be punished for this.” Replied the man he was talking too, a short and fat man.

“I agree but... I doubt they will get punished, by the legion, even if we reported this.” Said the tall man.

“Heh! Those damned pure bloods think they are so superior to us! I really want to get hold of those bastards who did this.” Said the fat man.

“Then why didn’t you act while it was happening?” Asked Shanli out loud.

The two men looked at her, as well as several others.

“There was hardly any need to really.” Said the fat man shortly after.

“What a weak excuse.” Said Shanli, and crossed her arms.

“Don’t give me that tone young lady! I know your type! You think that all who do not get involved in these incidents are cowards or afraid of retaliation from the legion!” Said the tall man.

“Oh? But you are afraid, are you not?” Asked Shanli, with a little smile.

“Maybe... But we have our reasons.” Replied the tall man.

“How old are you young lady?” Asked the fat man.

“Way to young for you!” Replied Shanli.

“I see... Your accent is not one of this planet, so I assume you’re an immigrant.” Said the fat man.

“So what if I am?” Asked Shanli.

“You might have heard of the mythic riots, which took place in this very street, around 11 years ago.” Replied the fat an.

Shanli looked at the two men. Everyone across the galaxy had heard about the mythic riots of GE 439, an event that had claimed many lives.

“So, what about that riot? Did you see it?” Asked Shanli.

“See it? I was part of it, so was my friend here. Along with hundreds of our friends, we marched against the corrupt Legatus Hi’Shi Hi’Toll. The march was a simple demonstration against the actions taken by the legatus in the absence of the Mi’Lorr family.” Replied the fat man.

“We arrived at the steps of the council building, shouting our demands. The legatus simply ignored our demands, and forced people away, so he could take his car and leave for the military base. We moved away as fast as we could from his path, but several people were hit by his car, including a little girl, who was killed on the spot.” Said the tall man.

“Hi’Tall stepped out of his car, and ordered us to remove, what he called trash, from the street. He then pointed at the little girl, whose parents were trying to bring their daughter back to life. When no one reacted, then he had his bodyguards kill the parents without resentment.” Said the fat man and rubbed his eyes.

“After that, the crowd suddenly became violent, and the riots began.” Continued the tall man to tell. “It was horrible. People had been consumed by madness, and attacked pure bloods no matter who they were. The legion was sent in... You know the rest. Over a thousand people were killed, six thousands arrest, and nearly ten thousand people wounded.” Said the fat man.

“My wife was crippled, and my two brothers were killed by the legion.” Said the tall man. “I lost my entire family during those riots.” Said the fat man.

Shanli lowered her head.

“I am sorry for your loss, but what does this have to do with your claim, that your help was not needed today?” Asked Shanli.

“Let me finish the story.” Said the tall man.

Shanli looked up again, and stared directly at the tall man.

“The riots ended, when a group from the Apollo Legion, turned on their master, and slaughtered Hi’Toll and his bodyguards. What drove them to do it, I do not know, but I am grateful for their actions.” Said the tall man, who then took a short break, before he continued.

“Hi’Toll was killed by the sole survivor of the lost legion, as they were later called, but before the legatus death, the survivor had fought his way past forty guards, using only martial arts. That art was the lost art of Makai, part of the So’Kari martial arts family.” Finished the tall man.

“The style of Makai, has a focus on the use of fist’s and sword weapons.” Said the fat man. “The same moves as that woman did, only minuets ago.” Said the tall man.

“So, you are saying that...” Began Shanli, but the tall man interrupted her. “I am saying, that this fight was settled as soon as that woman landed the first hit. The users of Makai are deadly if they get serious.” Said the tall man and smiled.

“I am not expert, but that girl does have some skills, in that art.” Stated the fat man with a smile. “You two are hopeless. Such a story does still not approve of your lack of action!” Said Shanli.

“Heh! You would never understand.” Said the fat man.

“Whatever... What happened to him?” Asked Shanli next.

“Who?” Asked the two men at the same time.

“That legion lost, or whatever you called it. What happened to the survivor?” Asked Shanli.

“Oh... No one knows. Some says he died, but I believe he is still alive, somewhere in the galaxy.” Replied the tall man.

Shanli walked away from the two men, and towards the woman, who was treating the wounded boy.
“How is he?” Asked Shanli, several minutes later.

“He will be fine. He was shot with a pyroblaster, so he will have a tough time, and it will hurt a lot. But do not worry. I will have someone take care of him, and his sister.” Said the woman, and smiled.

“Eh? How can you do that? Geneless are not allowed to get proper medical attention.” Asked Shanli.
“You do not need to concern yourself with that.” Said the woman, who waved a pair of men closer, both of them were wearing the same colored cloak as the woman.

“What the... Who are they?” Asked Shanli confused when she saw the two men.
“Racial Relief Rescue. Spare time medics, who dedicate themselves to help the geneless, who suffer from the crimes of pure bloods.” Replied the woman.

“What? You’re a doctor?” Asked Shanli confused.
“I am no doctor, I just happened to pass by.” Replied the woman.

“But, you are wearing the same cloak as they are!” Stated Shanli.
“Everyone in our group does. I am more of a scout. I go around and report when something happens, like today.” Said the woman.

“That does not make sense at all...” Mumbled Shanli to herself.

“What did you say?” Asked the woman as she looked at Shanli.
“Oh... It’s just confusing. I have never heard of a relief group scout, or whatever you said, using a proton dagger.” Replied Shanli.

“Well... A girl has to have protection of sorts, and it’s a saber.” Said the woman.
“Protection? Protection would be an armored suit, or a gun. Not a freaking relic weapon like a sword!” Said Shanli.

“Saber.” Said the woman quickly.
“Whatever! Why the hell would you use something like that? What if those after you, was wielding heavy rifles, or auto cannons? What then?” Asked Shanli.

The woman tilted her head, and looked at Shanli, who could now partly see the woman’s face, even if she was trying her best to keep it hidden.

“And which people, in this area, carry such weapons?” Asked the woman.
Shanli could not help but feel that the woman was praying for information. Shanli knew, that it was only crime lords and the military that had access to such heavy weapons. Maybe the woman thought that Shanli was a member of a crime syndicate?

“Well... Erm... The legion does have such weapon...” Said Shanli, a bit unsure if it had been the right thing to say.

“Then I am safe enough to use my saber. I do not have any issues with the legion at all. They do not bother me.” Said the woman.

“What? Everyone has problems with the legion. At least us who live in this area.” Said Shanli.
“Oh? That is not what I have heard. Apparently, the legion does not venture into this area unless ordered too.” Said the woman. Shanli could have sworn that the woman was smiling.

“They were here last night! They killed several people, and hurt a lot of others. Without reason!” Said Shanli.

“Without reason? Are you talking about those terrorists cells that’s been operating lately?” Asked the woman next.

“I... Forget it! I don’t want to talk more about it.” Replied Shanli and sighed.

Shanli knew that she had already said too much, and if she continued, then it was likely, that one of the consortium informants might report her views to the legion, which meant interrogation, and jail.

“Very well, then I shall not dwell on this topic any longer.” Said the woman.

Shanli froze up for a second. Did the woman really give up so easily? Was it really that simple? Was this woman really just a simple relief worker, or could she be a legion spy?

Shanli was preoccupied with her own thoughts, so she was caught off guard, when the woman suddenly grabbed her arm, and pulled her with her, down an ally.

“What the hell are you doing?” Yelled Shanli, as she stopped up and managed to get herself lose.

“No time to chat! Come on!” Said the woman, and continued to run down the ally.

“What the hell is wrong with you?” Yelled Shanli, but the answer came before she had expected it. Not from the woman, but from someone else.

“There she is! Get her!” Yelled a male voice.

Shanli quickly looked over her shoulder, where she saw a group of people, all dressed in black cloaks, standing at the entrance to the ally.

“Oh crap!” Yelled Shanli, and then she began to run down the alley following the woman.

“Come on!” Yelled the woman, several meters ahead of Shanli.

The two of them continued down the alley, while the people from before was trying to catch up to them.

“Who the hell are those guys? Why are they after me?” Asked Shanli, who had managed to catch up to the woman.

“They are not after you, they are after me!” Replied the woman.

“What? Then why the hell am I running away from them?” Asked Shanli, as she barely avoided a trashcan.

“I don’t know, why are you running?” Asked the woman back.

“You tell me, you pulled me along damn it!” Said Shanli, as she lowered her head, to avoid a fire escape ladder.

“I don’t know why, maybe because it was a good idea at the time?” Said the woman, as she jumped over a pile of garbage on the ground.

“What? A good idea to drag me into your trouble?” Asked Shanli, while she looked at the woman.

“Okay, maybe it was a bad idea then!” Said the woman.

“Maybe? MAYBE? It was a very, very bad idea! I have enough trouble on my own! I don’t need to share yours!” Yelled Shanli.

“Oh, come on! You got to admit that this is fun!” Said the woman.

“You think it's funny, that we are running for our lives?” Asked Shanli just as the two of them turned around a corner, and ran down another ally.

“Of cause! It's quite safe. I know those guys. They suck at running for long periods of time!” Said the woman.

“You sure?” Asked Shanli and looked over her shoulder. There were only two people following them now.

“See! I told you. They can't keep up with us!” Said the woman.

“They don't have too, look ahead!” Said Shanli and pointed forward.

The alley they had been running in, were coming to an end, as a wall, several meters high appeared less than fifty meters ahead of them.

“Crap!” Said the woman, and cursed out loud, in a language that Shanli didn't know.

“It's a dead end! We have her now!” Yelled one of the people chasing them. It was a man.

“The hell you do!” Yelled the woman, who then began to move closer to the wall.

“What the hell are you doing?” Yelled Shanli.

The woman didn't reply, but simply began to run faster, and faster. She quickly managed to get ahead of Shanli. What happened next caused Shanli to nearly lose her focus. The woman had, in an incredible feat, managed to jump up on the left wall, but that was not enough.

The woman used the wall, as a catapult, and launched herself over the wall ahead of them. Shanli cursed out loud, as she realized that she, herself was running out of space. In the last second, Shanli noticed a dumpster right in front of the wall, to the right.

Shanli ran over to the dumpster, and began to push it ahead of her. Luckily, it was mostly empty, so it was easy to push. Shanli pushed the dumpster up against the dead end, and quickly climbed up on top, and was about to jump up, when someone grabbed her left foot.

“I got one of them!” Yelled a man, to the other one, who was a bit behind.

“No you don't!” Said Shanli, and kicked the man in the face, with her right foot causing the man fellow backwards to the ground with blood gushing from his nose. Shanli quickly jumped up on top of the wall, and dropped down on the other side, where she fell to her knees, gasping for air.

“What took you so long?” Asked the woman.

Shanli looked up at the woman, who was smiling kindly.

“Shut up!” Replied Shanli.

“Heh. Well let's get going shall we?” Asked the woman next.

“Wait Miss Mi'Lo...” Began a man to shout.

Just as Shanli looked up, then she saw the man being struck in the chest, with what looked like a brick. He fell backwards over the wall. The sound of smashed wood, and metal, echoed trough the ally. Apparently, he had landed right on top of the dumpster.

“The girl told you to shut up! So do so already!” Yelled the woman.

“No... That was directed at you actually...” Said Shanli.

“Oh... Well, he should shut up too!” Replied the woman, and shrugged.

“Who the hell are you?” Asked Shanli shortly after.

The woman bowed down, and looked at Shanli, who could, once again see the woman's emerald green eyes.

"Who do you think I am?" Asked the woman back.

"Well... That man called you Milo..." Replied Shanli.

"Then you shall call me Milo!" Said the woman, Milo.

"Milo eh? What a strange name for a girl. Well... I guess you have your reasons." Said Shanli and smiled.

"If you think my name is weird, then tell me yours!" Said Milo.

"I am Shanli, Shanli Yuko, not too nice to meet you." Said Shanli.

"Well, screw you too then!" Said Milo.

Shanli could no longer help herself. This was the most ridiculous thing she had ever experienced. She began to giggle at first, but it quickly turned into a wild laughter.

Milo didn't seem to fully understand what was so funny, as she looked a bit confused, despite Shanli could not fully see her face.

"Beating up thugs, running away from a group of stalkers, jumping over walls... Your one strange kid, Milo." Said Shanli after she had finished laughing.

Milo tilted her head to the left.

"Why do you think I am a kid?" Asked Milo shortly after.

"Well, maybe your childish attitude with those men. It seemed to me, that you have experience in running away from them." Replied Shanli.

"Well, let us just say, that they have yet to keep up with me. I like to consider it a training exercise or something." Said Milo, and began to giggle.

"For them or for you?" Asked Shanli, with a kind voice.

Milo did not reply, but simply reached her hand out to Shanli.

"We better get going, before they wake up. They are slow as hell, but too damned persistent in their duty." Said Milo.

"Duty eh?" Said Shanli, and grabbed Milo's hand, who then helped her get on her feet.

"Duty, or job, whatever you want to call it. It's just so annoying. It makes it really hard to help people in need with those idiots chasing me all the time. If just I had a palce to lay low for an hour or two." Said Milo, and sighed.

"Lay low? Hmm... Then I know just the place! I hope your old enough to drink." Said Shanli, and began to walk towards the ally exit.

"Old enough to drink? What is that supposed to mean?" Asked Milo, who seemed a bit confused.

"Oh, you will know when we get there." Replied Shanli.

"Very well, lead the way." Said Milo and shrugged.

Shanli simply smiled, as the two of them headed towards the place she knew.

If there had been any spectator, to their conversation, they would surely think that Shanli's invitation was out of kindness, but Shanli had other plans. If this woman, or girl, who called herself Milo, were to get just a bit drunk, then maybe, just maybe, Shanli would be able to get some information out of her.

No one could change from a relief worker, into a fighter, and then put on a little girl attitude without good training. Milo was good, very good, but she was just a bit too good. And then there was that insane jump the girl had performed a few minuets ago. No normal human, could do such a thing.

Shanli would do whatever was necessary, in order to find out, just who and what this girl really was. Even if it meant spending what limited cash she had.

The two of them walked for half an hour, before Shanli finally stopped up, and pointed forward, towards a small bar, across the street.

"That is where I want to go." Said Shanli.

"The Rusty Rat? What the hell is that?" Asked Milo.

"It's a small bar, where me and my friends hang out, once in a while. It is a nice place, and no rotten legion or hood freaks will ever find us there." Replied Shanli, and began to walk towards the bar.

"Okay, but why the rusty rat? That is a silly name." Said Milo, who was walking right behind Shanli. "Ask the owner. But such a bar should have a stupid name I guess." Replied Shanli.

"Maybe I will ask the owner, cause that name is dreadful!" Said Milo.

"Oh? Well, what would you suggest as a name?" Asked Shanli, and looked over her shoulder.

"Erm... Good point... Guess it is really hard to come up with good names for a bar." Replied Milo and smiled softly.

"It was not a point, just a question. In any case, let's go have a drink or two." Said Shanli, and opened the door into the bar.

Milo simply shrugged and followed her inside.

Shanli sighed, and looked at the clock on the wall. It was just past midnight. She had spent the past five or six hours, trying to get something out of Milo, but she had not been very successful.

All she had learned about Milo, was that the girl was roughly twenty years old, able to do crazy jumps, good at martial arts and was able to drink anything and not get drunk at all, no matter what. Did the girl have a purifying implant or something? Shanli sighed again.

"Why are you sitting alone?" Asked man, who sat at the end of the bar.

Shanli turned her head and looked at him. He was fat, bald and looked like someone had played woodcutter on his face, as he was scared and ugly as hell.

"Get lost fatso!" Replied Shanli shortly after.

"Hah! Stupid brat! You don't know what you are missing!" Said the man, followed by a series of curses.

"What was that about?" Asked Milo, who had returned from the bathroom.

"Just some old fart trying to impress me with his ugly face or something." Replied Shanli.

"Hmm? He's too old for you I think." Said Milo as she sat down on the bar chair.

"I know that! He was making a move on me damn it!" Said Shanli with a harsh voice.

“Oh... I must have heard it wrong.” Said Milo and smiled, as she took a sip of her drink.

“How the hell can you keep drinking, and not get drunk?” Asked Shanli all of a sudden.

“Huh? What do you mean?” Asked Milo confused.

“I have been buying you drinks all night, and you are not even tipsy!” Said Shanli.

“Drinks? But I have only been drinking water all night...” Said Milo, who seemed a bit surprised.

“W-water? You have been drinking water all night?” Asked Shanli.

“Of course! I don’t drink alcohol. I act... Weird when I am drunk.” Replied Milo with a smile.

Shanli slowly placed her head on the bar.

“For the love of god... You are impossible to get info out off.” Mumbled Shanli as she banged her head gently against the bar, several times in a row.

“Get info out of me?” Asked Milo, again confused.

Shanli was not sure if this girl was really confused, or just acting like it.

“Yes... I wanted to learn more about you.” Replied Shanli shortly after.

“Oh... Well, then what do you want to know?” Asked Milo.

“What?” Asked Shanli back, while raising her head again.

“What do you want to know about me?” Repeated Milo.

Shanli hid her face in her hands. This girl was driving her crazy. All that acting and little girl attitude!

“Well, for starters tell me how the hell you could jump that wall.” Said Shanli, out of the blue.

“Oh, that was easy!” said Milo, and turned around, and put her leg out, and pulled up on the coat, revealing a pair of white metallic boots.

“What the...” Mumbled Shanli.

“These are called Jump boots, and are normally used for deep space mining. I had them modified so they work on the surface as well. They are not as powerful but they work just fine. They also have one other function, which I might show you some day.” Explained Milo.

“I know that! But how the hell did you get your hands on these? That kind of equipment are not something a geneless can get access too. Not even with money.” Said Shanli.

“But I am not a geneless, but pure blood.” Said Milo.

“WHAT?” Yelled Shanli as she jumped up from her chair, and slammed both her hands against the bar.

There was an awkward silence in the bar. People had stopped talking to each other. Even the music had stopped playing. Shanli looked around, and realized that everyone in the bar was now looking in her direction.

“What? She has a pair of nice boots! Mind your own freaking business!” Yelled Shanli, and pointed at the boot, which Milo was still holding out.

The people in the room, mainly men, just kept looking at Shanli for several seconds, before they all burst into laughter, and resumed their own doings.

Shanli sat down on the chair once more, and finished her drink, before ordering another one.

“Is there a... Problem?” Asked Milo, a bit hesitant.

Shanli turned her head, and looked at Milo for several seconds, before she looked back at her drink.

“No... No problems... It’s just that... You don’t strike me as the normal pure bloods... They are no exactly liked in this part of town.” Said Shanli and took a sip of her drink.

“I see... I guess some of us pure bloods are a bunch of dirty bastards, doing stuff like the incident earlier.” Mumbled Milo.

“Some? It’s nearly everyone who thinks the way those thugs did. In fact... You are the first pure blood, I have ever met, who have shown concern about us geneless.” Said Shanli.

“Pure bloods... Geneless... Calling people that don’t make any sense to me... Are we not all humans?” Asked Milo, and looked at Shanli.

“I do think many people, no matter who they are, would call the other side for humans, if it came down to it. Pure bloods live high and mighty, while geneless lives in the slums. It has always been like that.” Replied Shanli.

“True... One would think that the consortium was to be fair to everyone, despite of their cast or bloodline... But I know that many people of my status, see your people only as pests.” Said Milo and looked at her glass of water.

“It is more than just seeing us as pests. At times, some rich kids come down here, and begin to hunt us down, like animals. And no one cares about it. Not even ourselves. We simply act like nothing happened and are happy to live another day.” Said Shanli and emptied her drink.

“That is not what I had hoped to hear.” Said Milo.

“I know, but it is human nature to be afraid of those who are stronger than you. Which reminds me. Why are you, a pure blood, doing all you can to help us? The real reason is what I want to know.” Said Shanli and looked at Milo.

“That’s... Because... Because I can’t forgive them! Those bastards!” Said Milo, with anger in her voice.

Shanli looked down on Milo’s hand, which was shaking, as she said it. Clearly, this girl had a very good reason, but what could it be? Shanli, who was preoccupied with her own thoughts, did not hear the doors to the bar open up, and a group of men come in.

It was first when the group became extremely noisy, that she turned her head and looked in their direction. The group pushed the other guests away, from a large round table in the far corner of the bar. The other guests began to move away from the new arrivals, which could only mean one thing; Pure bloods!

The group ordered beer as soon as they had taken over the nearby area. One of the maid soon walked over towards the group, with her hands full of beer. Shanli could see, that the maid was used to that kind of people, and she did not flinch no matter what kind of perverted comments the pure bloods could come up with. She simply ignored them, much to their dismay.

Shanli turned around and looked at the barkeep .

“Since when did those guys begin coming here?” Asked Shanli.

“They first began to come here few weeks ago.” Replied the Barkeep.

“Have they caused any trouble?” Asked Shanli next.

“Some broken tables and chairs, and a lot of destroyed glass, but they normally don’t cause anything serious, and they always pay for the damages. All they do is to drink and boast about themselves.” Replied the barkeep, who had begun cleaning the bar.

“Odd. I have never heard about that kind of people being so nice. Do you know why they have decided to come to a geneless bar?” Asked Shanli, and looked over her shoulder at the group, who just sat there, laughing about some joke or story.

“Not really. No one seems to know anything about them, except that they have cash... A lot of cash.” Replied the barkeep.

“Hmm? They look like thugs to me, more than some rich kids.” Said Shanli.

“They are not rich. They are more like hired hands, off-worlders as far as I can tell. Guess they got a money man backing them up.” Said the barkeep, and placed the glass in row, with countless others, and began cleaning a new one.

“Hmm. People still seem to fear them.” Said Shanli next.

“Would you not? You never know when one of them might go crazy. But as I said, then they do not cause any issues what so ever, and I for one, hope it stays that way.” Said the barkeep, with a harsh voice, making it clear that he would not tolerate any trouble, no matter who would wish to start it.

Shanli was about to resume talking to Milo, when the door opened up again, this time it was only three men, who walked in, which was not uncommon, but Shanli recognized one of them. It was the same man, which she had knocked out several hours earlier, the one whom Milo had told to leave the planet. His nose was covered by a big bandage.

The three men looked around, and saw the other group of purebloods, who waved them over. Where they in the same group? Shanli bit her lip, wondering what those bastards were up too, no matter what, then it could not be something she could handle alone, so Shanli turned her head and looked at Milo.

“Guess who just walked in.” Said Shanli.

“I saw him... I thought he had left already.” Said Milo, who just kept starring into the mirror on the other side of the bar.

“So, what are you going to do about it?” Asked Shanli.

“Nothing. I want to hear what they are talking about first.” Replied Milo.

“What? Are you serious? You’re not going to beat him up?” Asked Shanli a bit surprised.

“There is nothing more I would rather do, but don’t you want to find out why they attacked those kids earlier today? I sure as hell want to know.” Replied Milo.

“I get your point. I will wait for a while, but not for long!” Said Shanli.

Milo simply nodded in agreement. Shanli tried her best to do as Milo had suggested, to listen to what they had to say. It was hard at first, as she had to filter out the other noises, from the few people, who were talking out loud. Slowly, but surely, Shanli began to hear what the group was talking about.

“...And then he began to cry, like the kid he was!” Said one of the men, a little fat guy, which had a striking resemblance to the fat man, who had tried to get Shanli’s attention.

“Oh zip it Gendo! We have heard that story so many times already!” Said a tall, bald man, who looked like a skeleton.

“True... But nothing is happening on this lump of rock! We won’t hear any new stories for a good while, until we are done here.” Replied the man, named Gendo.

“Well... I do have a story, you have yet to hear.” Said the man, who Shanli and Milo was watching out for.

“Oh? Anything good happened to you today Dinaous?” Asked the the skeleton man.

“Indeed I do. You want to hear about it?” Asked Dinaous, with a big smile on his lips.

“Of course you idiot! Spit out already!” Replied Gendo, and the others.

“Very well. It actually happened today. As you know, then my group has this job for the boss, but we ran into some issues with it. Some would be hero interfered when we offered the chick a job. A little brawl came out of it, so we taught him a lesson, and gave him a little flesh wound, nothing serious or anything but...” Explained Dinaous, but stopped as he looked around on the others, as to see if this was something they liked.

“But what? Tell us already!” Demanded Gendo.

“Well... There was this pair of bitches, who didn’t like us doing our job, and began to cause a havoc. I was the first one to get knocked out. I was hit by a bat or board, not sure which, from behind. The others were also beaten up good, before we got the upper hand. We managed to get one of those girls, and gave her a single slap in the face, and then she collapsed crying and screaming for mercy. Like a real cry baby. The other one ran away like a geneless would do.” Said Dinaous.

“So, what did you do to the cry baby?” Asked Gendo, clearly interested.

“Well, I sat down besides her, and told her, that if she left the planet today, then I would stop hitting her, she agreed to do so, and then she ran away as well, crying out loud.” Replied Dinaous.

The group burst out into laughter.

“Hah! Typical cowardly geneless freaks. They easily lode their guts as soon as things go against them.” Said the skeleton man.

Shanli looked at Milo. It was clear that the last comment was directed at her, personally.

Milo just sat there, looking into the mirror. At first, Shanli thought that it didn’t bother Milo, but then she looked at the glass in Milo’s hand. As the group continued to boost Dinaous ego, agreeing with him and praising him, Milo kept squeezing the glass tighter and tighter.

“What I don’t get is why that cry baby interfered with anyway. It’s not like those geneless are humans. Just garbage.” Said Dinaous out loud, followed by the agreement of those around the table.

The sound of shattered glass reached Shanli’s ears, causing her to nearly fall down of her chair. Milo had grabbed the glass so hard, that it had splintered in her hands. Shanli watched as Milo’s blood began to run between her fingers, and onto the bar desk.

That last comment had caused Milo to lose her temper it seemed. Shanli could see the fury in Milo’s eyes as the group ordered more beer. It made her feel uneasy being close to this girl, of whom she knew nothing about.

Shanli, who wanted to try and ease up the situation, was about to say something, but Milo beat her to it. “You remember that I told you, that my boots have another function?” Asked Milo.

“Yea... What about it?” Replied Shanli, having a bad feeling about the question.

“I’ll show you what it is!” Said Milo, and then she got off the chair, and walked over to the waitress who was about to head towards the group with a tray full of beer bottles. Shanli saw that Milo told the waitress something, and then she took the tray, and walked towards the group.

Shanli watched as Milo walked directly towards the group, who did not seem to have noticed her yet, but everyone else in the bar seemed too. Shanli could see how the eyes of the other bar guests were following Milo’s every move. But was it the look in her eyes, or the small trail of blood, flowing from her hand? Shanli could not be sure.

Shanli, herself, slowly walked over to an empty table closer to the group, so she would be able to hear what they said, without concentrating, and also be able to help Milo if required.

Milo was very close to the pure bloods, when the group began praising Dinaous once more.

“So, what did you guys do to the girl you offer the... Job?” Asked Gendo.

“Well, you all know that I am a nice guy, so I convinced the boss to let her go. We also arranged for some medical aid for her brother, I believe it was. You know, the idiot who got in the way.” Replied Dinaous.

“Oh? And here I thought you guys took the girl, like we do to the others.” Said the skeleton man. “Heh. It would have been a waste really... By the way, where the hell is our beer?” Yelled Dinaous. Barely had the yelled it, before Milo smashed one of the bottles on his head. Dinaous fell backwards on the chair and slammed his head against the floor.

“What the hell?” Yelled Dinaous, as he quickly got on his feet, but before he could do anything, then Milo had grabbed another glass, and smashed it in his face again.

“Didn’t I tell you to get the hell of this planet?” Yelled Milo.

Dinaous looked up, with fury in his eyes as the blood ran down his face, but it vanished the second he saw Milo, standing in front of him.

“Y-you...” Began Dinaous, but Milo interrupted him.

“Yes it’s me you prick! Did you really think I would not find out if you were still on the planet?” Said Milo with a large, evil smile on her lips.

Everyone attention was centered on Milo and Dinaous at this moment. Even Dinaous friends were speechless.

“What? You lost the ability to speak? And here I thought you would be happy to show your friends, just how you took care of me earlier today, because as far as I recall, then you were the one running away like a little baby!” said Milo.

“B-but...” Began Dinaous, but he stopped talking, when he realized that his friends were looking directly at him. Shanli could see that he was thinking for a way out. He would either have to admit the truth, and lose face to his friends, or have to resort to violence. Shanli knew that a pure blood would never admit a lie, so there was only the other option left.

“ Y-You bitch!” Yelled Dinaous, who began to move in a half circle around Milo, who kept following him with her eyes. Shanli could see that he had selected a charge attack stance, of some sort of primitive martial art.

“You remember what I told you? I will punish you for what you and your friends did to that innocent girl!” Said Milo, who slowly reached inside her cloak, making ready for his attack.

“You bitch! I’ll beat the crap out of you!” Yelled Dinaous, and charged towards Milo while scream out loud.

For a moment, Shanli thought that he would ram into Milo, but in the last second, Milo simply stepped away from his path, causing Dinaous to run directly into the table, where his friends were sitting.

The wooden table was smashed to pieces, and Dinaous and several of his friends, who did not get out of the way fast enough, found themselves on the floor, with pieces of wood, glass and beer flying everywhere.

Milo simply looked at the men, who were lying on the floor, totally confused over what had just happened.

“You bastard!” Yelled Gendo, and turned towards Milo, who was not late to see through his intentions, as she struck the man directly in the chest with her boots, which, upon impact sent out a bright blue light. Gendo was sent flying directly into the wall, with such a force, that he was knocked out on the spot.

“Fool!” Said Milo simply as she lowered the leg after the attack.

The skeleton man looked at Gendo, and then at Milo. Just then, he pulled out a knife, and ran towards Milo, who easily avoided the blade, by spinning around, and as the skeleton man passed her, Milo struck him directly in the neck with the upper side of her closed fist, sending him flying as well. If Shanli had not been concentrating on this fight, there would have been no chance in hell she could have seen that strike.

Two of the other pure bloods attacked Milo at the same time, from two different directions, but instead of avoiding them, Milo went into a split, holding out her fists, and struck both men directly in the crotch, stopping their attack.

Milo then leaned her upper body backwards, and used her arms to push her body into a vertical position, from which she could easily regain her footing.

The remaining pure bloods seemed clueless as to what to do against Milo. Within two minutes, she had taken out four of them, with ease. Even Shanli had to admit, even if she would never say it out loud, that she was impressed by this girl agility and skills.

Milo seemed to have the upper hand, but then a young girl screamed out. Shanli and Milo looked in the direction of the scream. It was Dinaous, who had grabbed a knife from somewhere, and held it directly at the throat of the waitress.

“Make one move and this bitch dies!” Yelled Dinaous.

Milo cursed out loud.

“She can’t do a thing now! Get her!” Yelled Dinaous, to the others, who quickly approached Milo, grabbed her, and pushed her to the floor, and held her down.

Dinaous pushed the waitress away, and walked towards Milo.

“You not so tough now, are you?” Said Dinaous.

“Cut her up! Cut her good!” Said the Skeleton man, who was sitting on the floor, rubbing his neck. The men, who held Milo down, pulled her up on her knees, allowing for a perfect strike from Dinaous.

“Not so tough now eh? Are you?” Said Dinaous and smiled.

“You better let me go, or you will regret it!” Said Milo, with the same tone of voice she had used earlier.

“Shut up!” Yelled Dinaous, and slapped Milo in the face, cause blood to run from her mouth.

“Guess you won't have time to regret it. I will simply kill you on the spot!” Said Milo, and smiled softly, but it was a smile which could deceive everyone. Milo was serious, dead serious. Shanli could tell it, simply by looking at Milo's eyes.

“You are the one who will die!” Yelled Dinaous and raised the knife, preparing to kill Milo on the spot. Shanli was about to interfere, when the sound of a weapon being discharged, but unlike normal weapons, this gun had a special ring to it. It was a weapon, used only by the military.

“What the hell is going on here?” Yelled a commanding voice.

Everyone turned around, and looked directly at the new arrivals who stood in the door with their weapons raised. Shanli could feel the anger and hatred boil up within her mind the second she saw them: The legionaries.

Five of them, lead by no one other than a centurion, a legion officer in command of an entire cohort. The officer had his weapon pointed towards the roof, where there now was a large hole, left over by the plasma bolt from his weapon.

“Oh... Not much Mr. Legatus, sir.” Said Dinaous, clearly with fear in his voice.

“I am not a legatus, just a centurion. Explain to me what the hell is going on, now! And if I don't like what you have to say, then we will purge this room!” Said the centurion.

Shanli closed her fists and bit her lip so hard that she could taste blood. A purge... They would actually perform a purge of the entire room? A purge order meant to kill everyone in sight, no prisoners, no survivors. It was the most dangerous command a legion officer could give.

“Emm... This bitch... I mean, this woman, attacked us without reason, as we were quietly having a drink amongst these good folk.” Said Dinaous.

“You have permission to be in this sector?” Asked the centurion next.

“O-Of cause! Show him our papers!” Said Dinaous to one of the others.

One of the others quickly handed a small data chip to the the centurion, who ran it through a small handheld device, in the shape of a datapad.

“Hmm... You are here on business... gathering a work crew for a Viscount Ve'Jimo Ve'Cuma, is that correct?” Asked the centurion.

“Yes sir. Mister Ve'Cuma is our employeer.” Replied Dinaous.

“Are you and your friends, the only one in your team?” Asked the centurion.

“No. We are 36 in total. Some are in the hospital, thanks to this woman here!” Replied Dinaous.

“What? You telling me that this girl sent some of your friends to the hospital?” Asked the centurion, clearly a bit surprised. Even his men looked at each other for a split second.

“Yes! Yes she did!” Said Dinaous, who then told the centurion the entire story, based on his own side of the story of cause.

“That’s a freaking lie!” Yelled Shanli and took a step forward, looking directly at the centurion. The centurion looked at Shanli, seemingly unimpressed by what she had just said. Then he took one glance at Milo. Shanli could have sworn that she could see the bastard smile.

“I have seen nothing here. Please resume what you were doing.” Said the centurion and lowered his weapon.

“Thank you very much sir!” Said Dinaous and smiled.

“I am the one who should be thanking him, not you!” Said Milo all of a sudden. Shanli looked at Milo, who was still on her knees. Dinaous did the same, just as confused as Shanli was.

Within a second, the people who were holding Milo, fell to the ground, unconscious. Milo threw a set of darts on the ground in front of Dinaous.

“What is that?” Asked Dinaous.

“I told you, that I would kill you...” Said Milo and, then she slowly pulled out a small metal handle. A green beam of light appeared shortly after. Shanli had totally forgotten that Milo had a proton saber.

“No...” Mumbled Dinaous, but it was too late, as Milo quickly moved in on Dinaous. Shanli could see the proton saber going through Dinaous stomach, leaving the smell of burnt flesh in the air. Milo pulled out the saber, and Dinaous collapsed to the floor, screaming in pain, dropping the knife on the floor.

“...But I cannot do that, as that would be murder. We still have a use for you!” Said Milo, and then she turned towards the centurion.

“Take this swine to jail. Charge is assault, starting a fight, attempted murder and property damage.” Ordered Milo.

“You really like to command people don’t you Missy?” said the centurion, and made a sign to his men, who quickly moved in to secure the room.

Shanli just stood there, numb about what had just happened. It was first when Milo waved her hand in front of her eyes, that Shanli returned to reality.

“You okay?” Asked Milo.

“Y-Yes... Di-Did you just issue orders to that centurion?” Replied Shanli.

“Of course. Every member of the legion has to listen to charges brought forth by another pure blood. That is the law.” Said Milo and smiled.

“The law eh?” Mumbled Shanli and looked as the legionaries dragged the screaming Dinaous out through the door.

Half an hour later, every member of the pure blood group had been thrown into a legion patrol craft, in chains. While Shanli should feel happy that the legion did the right thing for once, then she did not, and it seemed that Milo had seen that something was wrong.

“You okay Shanli?” Asked Milo.

“No... Not really... You know that they will get released by tomorrow. Don’t you?” Asked Shanli back.

“That might be true... Especially if they have a count backing them up. I think that only that Dinaous guy will get to serve time, for the attack on me.” Replied Milo.

“Damned Pure blood laws! Only when they get hurt themselves, they act, but not when we, the geneless gets hurt.” Said Shanli and cursed.

“Hmm... I am a pure blood too, remember?” Said Milo.

“You said that, but you are different from the others... You don’t act like they do. You actually care for us. You have convinced me of that, and I have always hated Pure bloods. Specially that son of a bitch, Mi’Lorr!” Said Shanli, and leaned against the wall.

“Mi’Lorr? What does he have to do with it?” Asked Milo.

“Everything! It is his fault, that the legion are running amock, and pure bloods like those bastards can get away with hurting us geneless. I would kill him if I had the chance!” Replied Shanli, with anger in her voice.

“That sentence could cause you to lose your life.” Said Milo, with a cold voice.

“That might be true, but I really don’t care much for that rotten bastard! In the past, he would often walk trough the city, and talk to people, but now... He only sits in his castle, raining death down on his!” Said Shanli, and slammed her right hand into the wall behind her.

“People change...” Mumbled Milo, and lowered her head.

“Oh? Then why did he change? Why did he lose interest in us all of a sudden?” Asked Shanli, and looked at Milo.

It took a while before Milo raised her head and looked up at the stars in the sky.

“He changed... After the death of his wife...” Replied Milo finally.

“His wife?” Asked Shanli confused.

“Yes... She was killed, during the attack on Capitalia by Jeremiah Cor’Dell. As you know... That admiral led thousands of geneless soldiers against the consortium council, causing the deaths of thousands of civilians... that was when it started... He simply stopped to care about anything, or anyone...” Explained Milo.

“I... I didn’t know that... I mean, I knew his wife had passed away, but I did not know it was during that attack... But it does not change the fact that he is the one I hate the most in the world. Both him and his entire rotten family. They all deserve to die!” Said Shanli.

“Hmm? Everyone? Even those not involved in his leadership?” Asked Milo.

“Down to the last unborn!” Replied Shanli.

“That attitude... Revenge... I guess you have your reasons to hate him...” Said Milo.

“I do... I have a very good reason... But let us not talk more about this... I don’t want to make you mad... I am just...” Said Shanli, but Milo interrupted her.

“Agitated?” Said Milo.

“Indeed... I am, and many others are.” Said Shanli.

Their conversation was interrupted, when the centurion form before approached them, followed by two men in black clothing.

“It is time to return home, for the both of you.” Said the centurion.

“Oh? Says who?” Asked Milo.

“Says I!” Said one of the men in the black cloaks.

“Please Miss. Do not cause more problems... You have already sent several of us to the hospital today. You really make it hard for us to protect you.” Said the other man.

“Heh... Guess I have enough fun for today.” Said Milo and shrugged.

“Thank you Miss... Thank you so much.” Said the man, while the other one seemed to be preying to god.

“You leaving?” Asked Shanli.

“I have too. I have to get up early tomorrow. Its orphanage day, and I have made a promises to be there.”

Replied Milo.

“The orphanage eh?” Mumbled Shanli.

“If you got time, why don’t you drop by? I am sure the kids there will be happy for more guests.” Said Milo.

“I’ll think about it.” Said Shanli.

“Good. I hope to see you there.” Said Milo, and then she turned around, and walked down the street, followed by the men in black, and the centurion.

An orphanage? Just what did that have to do with that girls insane combat skills, her ability to command around with a legion centurion, and her seemingly never ending acts of kindness? Shanli shook her head. She did not want to think about that just now, it was getting too late already.

Shanli turned around, and began to walk back towards the base. Shinji and the others were sure to be concerned about her, even if they never showed it. It was just typical men to act all macho, in front of women.

Shanli suddenly heard the sound of footsteps behind her, and realized that someone was following her. Two, or three people at most. What did they want? And more importantly, who were they? Shanli began to walk faster, but the people following her also began to walk faster, to match her speed.

Shanli turned left, down and ally, where she began to run as fast as she could. Shanli looked over her shoulder, and saw that the people behind her had also begun to run. And they were quickly gaining on her. These were not regular thugs. No one could run that fast without training.

Shanli quickly looked forward, where she saw two shadows drop down in front of her. Shanli stopped up, and looked at the two people in front, and then she looked back at the people behind her. Four in total.

“What the hell do you want?” Yelled Shanli at the men, all dressed in dark cloths.

“Your life!” Said one of the men in front.

“I figured as much, but why?” Asked Shanli.

“Enough talking!” Replied the man, and then he pulled out a short bladed sword, and ran towards Shanli, with a speed, that made even Milo seem slow.

Just as the man was about to stab Shanli, a blue light struck the man in the chest, and sent him flying backwards with a scream, while the hot plasma burnt through his body, and the stench of burnt flesh filled the air.

As Shanli turned around, one of the men behind her fell to the ground, as a bright blue blade, was withdrawn from his back.

“Four men against a single woman. That is hardly fair!” Said a male voice. Shanli recognized the centurion from the bar.

“Blast!” Said one of the other men, and pulled out a gun, but he did not have a chance to raise it, before his chest had been pierced by the centurion's proton saber.

Even before the man had fallen to the ground, the last of them, turned around on the spot, and ran away from the screen, at an insane speed.

“After him! Don't let him escape! I want him alive!” Yelled the centurion. A group of legionaries appeared from the darkness, and ran past Shanli, after the escapee.

Shanli was about to say something, when a large legion mecha appeared right behind the centurion. “You, follow that man. If it looks like he will escape, kill him.” Ordered the centurion. The mecha extended its proton wings and disappeared into the sky within a second. Shanli could hear the characteristic those mechas made for several minutes afterward.

“You seem to get into trouble a bit too often, do you not?” Asked the centurion, all of a sudden. Shanli turned her head, and looked directly at the man.

“None of your freaking business! Why are you here anyway? Don't you have some candy to steal from babies or something?” Replied Shanli with a harsh tone of voice.

“No babies are awake at this time, so there is hardly any candy for me to steal now is there?” Said the centurion.

Shanli lowered her head, but kept eye contact with the centurion. She was seriously pissed off at this man, who could take an insult and turn it into a joke without even thinking about it.

“You didn't answer my question! Why are you following me?” Asked Shanli. “Following you? I was following those, who were following you.” Replied the centurion.

“Stop being such a smart ass and tell me!” Yelled Shanli. “I see you are not a very talkative woman. No matter. I was asked to make sure you got home safely, by your friend... Milo was her name? In any case. She wanted to be sure you did not come to any harm.” Said the centurion.

“Milo sent you? Why?” Asked Shanli next, without hesitation. “One thing at a time. First I want to know who these men were.” Replied the centurion, and bowed down besides the man he had stabbed in the back, and began to search his pockets.

“Hmm... I think you will find this interesting.” Said the centurion, and threw what looked like a wallet to Shanli, who nearly dropped it on the ground.

Shanli opened the wallet, which was in fact, a digital notepad. But Shanli could not access it, as it was encrypted.

“This is hardly interesting.” Said Shanli.

“Looked at the crest, on the front of that thing.” Said the centurion.

Shanli turned the notepad around, and saw what he meant. The silvery insignia resembled something that looked like a mask mixed with a demons head. Shanli had never seen it before.

“That is the crest of the Black Guard. A group, under the direct command of the consortium council. Yet, they act more often on their own accord, then on the command of the council. I guess one could call them an officially, unofficial approved renegade group of rebellious loyalists.” Explained the centurion.

“Ehh... What?” Asked Shanli, confused over the last sentence.

“Guess you are really easy to confuse. Anyway, you must really have pissed someone off, since you have these guys after you. Only a member of the council can issue commands to these people.” Replied the centurion.

“Heh, and I bet I know who it is. It can only be that old fool Mi’Lorr. He has the position, power and money to fund such a group. But they appear to be rather weak, if someone like you could defeat them without breaking a sweat.” Said Shanli, and crossed her arms.

“These were indeed weak, only low ranking footmen, but the brigade has more powerful people under their command, as well as their own space fleet and production facilities. In any case, you better keep your eyes open. I am not sure if it was you, or the missy they were after. They may have targeted you, because you’re her friend.” Said the centurion.

“Milo is not really my friend. I only met her today.” Said Shanli.

“Oh? You could have fooled me. Whatever the case... Just keep your ass safe.” Said the centurion and turned around, and walked away.

“Can you tell me one thing?” Asked Shanli all of a sudden.

“What do you want to ask about?” Replied the centurion.

“Just who is Milo really?” Asked Shanli.

“She can be your worst enemy, or your best friend.” Replied the centurion and vanished into the darkness of the night.

Shanli was not sure what the hell the centurion had meant with that sentence but it did not strike fear in her, instead it made her want to learn more for some strange reason.