

'The Adventures of Young Anakin Skywalker'
- excerpt -
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'The Adventures of Young Anakin Skywalker': Prologue ('Shmi's Tale')

Chapter Ten, Part Two(Conclusion)

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As she wandered down the hallway, she clutched the only weapon that she could find and prayed that none of the blaster bolts dancing from around the corner would find their mark in her. The vibro-blade trembled in her hand, threatening to fall right from it, as screams and wails of agony reached her ears. But still she continued, slowly, along the white colored wall toward the corner. She had to be certain he was safe!

The sound of running footsteps approaching from around the corner nearly made her jump. Her eyes widened in terror and she shot the blade up defensively, her hand shaking uncontrollably. The footsteps were nearly upon her now, and soon she would be face to face with her aggressor.

This isn't happening! This can't be happening! She thought over and over again, hoping beyond hope that doing so would make it true.

Suddenly, a man shot around the corner and nearly ran into her raised vibro-blade. His blue eyes widened at the unexpected sight of the shimmering blade, and he bent his upper body backwards to avoid the stab.

“Jacobah!” she screamed, horrified at what she'd nearly done. Sudden tears rushing down her face, she dropped the blade to clank onto the polished, white floor. She rushed at him, burying her head into his muscular chest, wrapping her arms around him in a desperate hug, clinging to him for safety and reassurance.

He returned the hug with a single arm around her shoulders, his other arm holding a blaster pistol at the ready. Quicker than she wanted he released her and took a step back—holding her at arms length as he looked into her face with worried eyes.

“I told you to get to the shuttle! I told you to leave!” Jacobah said. Though his words were forceful there was no anger in his tone, no reproach in his eyes, merely concern.

She peered at his handsome, bearded face for some time, her heart aching at the thought of leaving him. She wanted to be in his arms, wanted to run her hands through his wavy, brown hair. So many times she’d wanted to tell him how she felt, but never had. But now was not the time. Now was not the time.

Shaking her head, she said, “I had to stay! I had to make certain you were safe!”

A blast bolt struck the corner just behind Jacobah, sending a shower of sparks through the air. Immediately, instinctively, he reached out with his free arm and pressed her against the wall, making his back flush with it as well with the blaster pistol held ready.

His wince was subtle, as was the movement of his hand into his long cloak to clutch his side, but she saw them all the same. She pulled back the green cloak. Through his fingers she saw the round patch of burnt cloth and seared flesh.

“You’ve been shot!?” she exclaimed.

“It’s nothing,” he said, brushing her hand away and turning to peer around the corner. He squeezed off a handful of shots, then was forced to duck back around the corner as a hail of red bolts blasted the wall.

Turning to her, his face grave, he said, “Listen to me—you’ve got to get out of here! Do you remember what I taught you about how to fly the shuttle?”

She gave a weak, reluctant nod.

“Then you must go! Now! Before they catch you!” Jacobah shouted as more searing blasts exploded next to him.

“No! I won’t leave you and the others behind!”

“I’M ALL THAT’S LEFT OF THE OTHERS!!” he yelled, anger in his tone for the first time, his blue eyes wild.

She flinched at his outburst, frightened by his ferocity. Yet, she knew he wasn't mad at her, but at the loss of those he cared for most—those he had lived with nearly all his life. *All the others are dead?* she thought, a gasp escaping her lips.

Jacobah's harsh expression softened and his features returned to those of the kind man that he was, though urgency still filled his eyes. "Look, it's **YOU** they're after—you and your unborn child!"

She recoiled, arms wrapping around her large, pregnant belly protectively, eyes wide with disbelief. "What!?" she gasped. Horrified, shaking her head, she said, "But...but you said they'd strayed. ...That they'd rebelled against the ship's leaders."

"They have! Listen to me—it was no accident that we found you, Shmi; that your cruiser was attacked by pirates and you came to stay here with us."

Her heart nearly stopped. "What...did you call me?" she asked, backing away in horror. "My name is Styreeva."

He shook his head. "We know who you really are, Shmi Skywalker. We always have. *The Order of The White Guard* has been searching for you for years now. Decades. **Centuries**--ever since The Prophecy was made known! And now, those amongst our ranks that see your child, The Child With No Father, as a threat have turned against us, have broken the solemn vow our ancestors made nearly one thousand years ago to protect the child!" Anger flashed in his eyes at the betrayal.

Shmi continued to back away from him in disbelief and fear, her hands cradling her pregnant belly. *How could they know?* she thought. *I never said! I never told anyone there was no father!*

Another barrage of laser fire struck the corner. As soon as it subsided Jacobah leaned around and loosed a handful more of his own.

He turned to her again and said, "Once you're gone from here go someplace far away--someplace where they'll never find you. They *will* search for you, so always be on your guard! And make no mistake--they *will* kill you if they find you! They'll stop at *nothing* to make certain the child is never born and comes of age!" He eyed the corner again. "They're coming. I'll hold them off as long as I can."

"No!" Shmi pleaded.

"For the sake of the very galaxy, Shmi—you **must** go!"

Shmi backed away, terror in her eyes. Her unborn child kicked wildly, sensing her

fear. Absently, she lowered her hands to cradle her belly, to stave the kicking. Tears of fear and sorrow at leaving Jacobah to certain doom began streaking down her face. Slowly, she backed away down the hall towards the doorway leading into the hangar bay and the awaiting shuttle, her eyes never leaving Jacobah. She stopped once more at the doorway.

“Jacobah!” she yelled, hoping beyond hope her cry would persuade him to come away with her.

He reached into his green cloak, producing a gold, rod-like object in his hand, then turned to look at her. “Save the child! He’s our only hope. Go!” he yelled. Then, as he turned to rush around the corner, there was a strange snap-hiss noise and a silver-black blade of light suddenly sprang from the golden rod in his hand. The blade hummed as he raised it above his head and ran around the corner.

Shmi turned and ran through the doorway and into the hangar. The small shuttle was right there in front of her; hatch open, fully powered up and ready to go. Tears filled her eyes as she ran. She knew she would never see Jacobah again. Jacobah—the man she had hoped would one day be a father to her child, the man that had died to save her and the life of her unborn child. Her heart ached. He was the first man she had ever loved.

Brushing the tears from her eyes as she pulled herself up into the hatch of the shuttle she heard him shout. She stopped, allowing his words to reach her one last time, hoping it would be enough to last an eternity without him.

“For The Sun Of The Suns!!!” Shmi heard him yell, his voice brimming with devotion, overflowing with passion and faith.

His voice was quickly followed by a stabbing, thunderous barrage of blaster shots.

...Then silence.

“No!” Shmi breathed, her hands clutching the framing of the hatch with white knuckles, unable to move.

“Get her before she gets away!” another man shouted, and suddenly she heard the sound of several people running down the hall outside the hangar.

Shmi sprang back into motion and hurried into the hatch, slapping it shut behind her and running to the cockpit. She slid into the pilot’s seat, strapping herself in as her eyes scanned over the console, trying to remember everything Jacobah had taught her.

A muffled shout snapped her attention out of the viewport, where she saw a group of five men rushing into the hangar. Pointing up at her in the cockpit, shouting to one another in frantic desperation, they opened fire with their blaster rifles and blaster pistols.

Shmi ducked, shielding her eyes as the red lances of light exploded against the viewport. Then, coming up and seeing even more men rushing into the room while the others hurried towards the underside of the shuttle, she quickly began pushing buttons across the console.

The engines roared to life, and the ship began to lift off of the floor. Scared out of her wits, hands trembling uncontrollably, Shmi Skywalker turned the small shuttle around to point towards the magnetically sealed, open hangar door. Through the slight, blue-white tint of the magnetic seal she could see space outside--could see freedom and life for she and her child.

Blast bolts thudded off of the hull in a constant barrage as she sent the ship forward. The thuds intensified, testifying to the wrath of her attackers at her escape. Gritting her teeth against her fear, Shmi shot the ship forward, through the seal, and into space.