

Title: A Partner's Loss

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*MoDaD Quick Proof-edit*

When conscious thought returned to me, it brought with it a raging storm of pure agony. It always did. Swallowed up in darkness I had no concept of time. My pain-filled mind had lost track of how long I'd been held captive by my tormentor. Had it been days or weeks since I'd been brought here? It felt like years. My time spent in agony, wishing I could just die and end the suffering. I couldn't see, but I could certainly feel what was being done to my body.

The rotting musk of the swamp clogged my nostrils. Each breath wheezed from my chest. I could feel my naked and damaged body stretched out taut on the cold, hard metal table. The vines clamped around my wrists and ankles like iron. My body burned. It burned like nothing anyone could describe.

I could still feel the ghosts of his 'equipment' prodding, drilling and cutting into my body. Still feel the blazing pain of fur and flesh ripping away. Even though I could no longer see it, I knew that snake had a smile on that slimy muzzle of his the entire time. I already knew I was going to die here. That mutant was slowly killing me with his experiments; taking various samples from my body.

I felt more of me slip away each time he was here. Each time my suffering was renewed. I'd already given up trying to get free. I didn't have the strength for it anymore. All I could do was lie here in this world of blackness and suffering. The thought of my partner crossed my mind. Like a balm to my wounds it made the pain go away, if only for a second.

Some part of me, I couldn't tell which, knew he was the only thing keeping me going. The thought he'd come to save me was the only hope I had left. I knew if there was anyone that would be able to find me it would be him. Part of me clung to hope with all the strength I had left like a life raft to a sinking ship. The other part didn't want him to come.

I didn't want him to see his once proud, strong partner like this: broken, battered and unable to see. I knew the chances of me ever flying again were little to none. Even if my body could be healed and my sight restored, what had been done to me mentally couldn't. I couldn't even begin to think about how my partner would react knowing I could never be a SWAT Kat again. One more reason I hoped he wouldn't come for me...

*What was that?*

An explosion takes me out of my shattered thoughts. Flicking my ears around I try and pinpoint the sound. Had I really heard it? Or, had I just imagined it? No. A second muffled thump confirms it. He's here. My partner had come for me.

The fact that the end was so close filled me with mixed emotions. I was glad, but dread filled me again. How would he would react when he saw me like this?

All I could do was listen to the fading sounds of the fight coming from the next room. I was too weak and afraid to call out for him. Unable to let him know where I was.

As the roars of creatures and beasts and a firing Glovatrix filled my ears, all I could do was hope and pray that he'd be alright. Hope that Viper wouldn't get his slimy claws on him. I had no idea if that mutant snake was even here or not. He had been gone for quite a long time. I'd been unconscious for too long to know for sure.

After what seemed like hours to my darkened senses, the sounds of battle died down and were replaced by a new sound. My partner was calling for me, calling out my name as loud as he could. His voice sounded like a bell, clear and strong, tolling that my ordeal was over.

Despite the pain it caused me, I called out for him too. My voice was nearly gone from all the screaming I'd done. My throat was raw and parched from not having anything to drink since my capture. My voice was so weak and soft, so unlike how it should have sounded. I didn't even recognize it as my own. I didn't think he would've heard it, either.

But, by some miracle he had. The sounds of his calling grew louder. My heart pounded in my chest as I urged him on with all the spirit I had left. At last I could make out his footsteps. He was in the lab with me, running up to me. I didn't need to see his face with my eyes. The muffled gasp of shock, sadness and fear painted his expression across my mind clearly.

"Take it easy buddy. I have you now. I'll get you to the hospital. You'll be alright, you hear me? I swear, if I ever find that snake I'm going to kill him for what he did to you!"

Despite the anger in his voice toward my tormentor, his voice is music to my ears. I manage a smile, and slip back into blissful unconsciousness.

END