

Choma's Second Ordeal

The forest is just darkening as the light fades into shadow, the stars overhead a fine net of illumination, the two moons absent on this night. In a clearing near the center of this small, dense forest a lone feline creature strides about, picking up sticks and logs and placing them in the center of the clearing. Behind him, flicking from side to side, is a tail very much the worse for wear, with much of its fur missing and some old cuts and scars almost but not quite healed clearly showing along its length. Closer inspection of the feline would render up the fact that his whole body carries scars and wounds, some quite fresh and -- though well cared for -- barely healed, or even still bandaged.

"Ice and snow!" Choma swears, as he throws down the last of the logs for the night's fire. He slowly stretches out on all fours, listening to the loud pops and cracks as he realigns everything, his body still quite sore from the recent mission to Langoria, and yet another brush with death.

"That's two in a row now," he thinks, "Two missions, on both I've nearly died. How many times can I beat the odds? Maybe I should be more careful." A thoughtful expression forms on his face as he muses over this last thought, and then he smiles, recalling the thrill of combat and of the adrenaline-soaked moments in between. He loves the missions. They keep him from thinking about his dying race, or his own lack of purpose in life.

He sighs softly, shaking his head, his semi-shaggy white and black-splotched fur settling back into place with a soft rustle. He slowly lays out his sleeping bag, along with several other small camping items. He knows he won't be able to do so when he's finished. He quickly starts the fire, lays out the ration packs and several gallons of cold clean water in jugs. He then surveys his work and smiles, a feral grin that shows all his teeth and has no warmth to it whatsoever.

He strolls over to several packs that are hung from a convenient branch and draws his vibro-blade and his vibro-ax. The last is a huge weapon, easily five feet in length and over eleven kilograms in mass, the blade a large crescent of steel that when powered can cut through most materials like a hot knife through butter. The cat smiles, running a paw slowly over the smooth durasteel of the weapon. It has served him very well, considering what it has been through. Still, he prefers to use the Force as his weapon; the Force cannot break, cannot be taken from him.

Another sigh escapes him as he thinks of the events earlier that day. The female, Shinsa ... "What a lady, to have come so far alone with cubs to confront those that wronged her. Most impressive," he thinks, smiling as he appraises her, "My brother will have a lot on his paws with that one, that is for sure."

At an unpleasant feeling starting in his gut, he snorts to himself, shaking them off. His is the path of a loner. A female would only tie him down. He doesn't need that. No, not at all.

Choma walks over to the fire he had started, thinking to himself, "Himmrr ... this will be quite interesting. Let's see if my theory proves correct." He breathes deeply, feeling the bright energy inside himself that is his life and his power, then slowly as his heart and breath slows, Choma turns his sense outward, feeling the life around him, in the air and the forest. He then begins concentrating on things closer to hand; the fire is what he seeks, and his perception of it focuses. The Pardu gasps softly as the beauty of the scintillating play of energy within the fire becomes clear to him. Slowly coming back to himself, he pulls his attention outward to include the play of energy within and around his own body.

Choma slowly reaches into the heart of the fire with one outthrust paw. His breath quickens as he feels the heat instantly start to singe and burn him, eating away quickly at his fur. Ignoring the fear and panic he feels, he quickly redirects the energy from the heat of the fire outside himself, shunting it away from his fur and skin, out into the air around him and the ground below him. He reaches deeper, picking up a hot coal and holding it in his paw and then slowly drawing it out of the fire, marveling at its beauty, like a living gem. He smiles, tossing it back into the fire.

He starts to laugh, and madly dashes for the pile of wood he set up before hand. Gathering it up in huge armfuls, he throws it all onto the fire; load after load he throws into the fire's hungry maw. When he is done, the fire roars like a star fighter's engine, leaping over seven meters high, and spread four meters wide.

Choma's eyes glitter, fear and excitement warring inside him as he stares at the towering inferno, and suddenly the balance slips. Excitement winning over fear, Choma leaps into the heart of the flames! The blast of heat washes over him as he passes through, for one instant fear wells up inside him. "It's too much -- can't handle all of this!!" his mind screams. He savagely crushes the fear, snarling a challenge he thrusts the heat and force out and up into the night sky, the fire flaring outward and upward as its heat is forced away.

The feline purrs deeply, a nervous habit, as he tightly controls the inferno that passes around and through him. Any imbalance in the flows could leave him a burning torch. He calms slightly, now carefully monitoring his own internal energies, noting that it is quickly being burned by the effort of controlling the fire. He remains for another moment, letting the fire caress and warm him gently. Choma then walks forward, slowly leaving the flames.

He slowly walks towards the water and food he'd left out, and falls on them both with ravenous hunger, eating and drinking until full. He stumbles over to his bed roll, exhaustion suddenly making itself felt in full. Choma collapses into the bedding, passing out almost instantly.

Several hours later, just as the sun is first turning the sky orange, Choma awakes, and packs his gear, leaving the clearing for the second time, only a slight bald spot on his right arm along the back of his wrist to show that he'd not dreamed it. He chuckles softly to himself and tramps back to the team's base.