

Still Waters Run Deep

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/47306218) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/47306218>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	F/F
Fandoms:	Star Wars - All Media Types , The Mandalorian (TV)
Relationship:	The Armorer (The Mandalorian TV)/Bo-Katan Kryze
Characters:	The Armorer (The Mandalorian TV) , Bo-Katan Kryze
Additional Tags:	Pre-Relationship , Post Season 3 , Meditation
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of Femme Frenzy Fics 2023
Stats:	Published: 2023-05-20 Words: 3,597 Chapters: 1/1

Still Waters Run Deep

by [guesswhattimeitis](#)

Summary

Bo Katan, unsure of her place as mand'alor, is stressed. The Armorer suggests a solution.

Written for [Star Wars Femme Frenzy](#) - Week 2: Mand'alor/The Waters

Notes

This work is technically a sequel to [Sha'kajir](#) but I think it's quite easily read on its own. I had considered making each Femme Frenzy fic into just a chapter of one long fic but ultimately realized each would probably do well as a stand alone work.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

“You are stressed.”

The Armorer’s statement was punctuated by the sound of a hundred hammers. Well, not quite. It was, for now, the sound of four or so hammers, but it was busier every day. In many ways the Great Forge was beginning to return to its glory again, as more and more mandalorians returned to their birthright and began to rebuild. Progress was slow, haltingly so sometimes, but it was coming. A *mand’alor* had returned home and brought her people with her. That, for many, was enough.

Bo Katan could always separate the sound of one particular hammer amongst the clanging of the others. It rang with a confidence and assurance none of the others did, though some did seem to try. There were more and more able to work the forge but only one of them had caught her eye. Not that anyone could get that information out of her.

She took a deep breath. Rubbing her eyes with one hand, Bo Katan glanced at her companion. The Armorer was placing pieces of the Imperial cast *beskar* in a large crucible, with a small crane nearby to move it off once it was melted down. She had been taking the pieces of the inferior *beskar* plate collected off the stormtroopers and making billets for storage and future use. Where once the substance had been kept from them, now the mandalorian people were practically swimming in it.

Needing to remove the impurities, enamel, and trace metals from the poorly made pieces took time. The Armorer was one of the only mandalorians present on Mandalore that could properly take care of the material, so she had her hands full processing it in bulk. Though other smiths had arrived over time, she was the only one that had such intimate knowledge of the process and the absolute trust of the *mand’alor*. She had expressed what passed for excitement at being able to work with so much of it at once, and Bo Katan was more than happy to give her that honor. She looked back at the light of the forge as she finally replied to her friend’s statement.

“I am not used to problems I can’t solve with a blaster.” She wasn’t insecure about it. If anything she was proud of her martial ability. Her hands were best while they were moving. Still, there was something nagging at the back of her mind, as she questioned her newfound role among her people. As a leader she was capable, trusted, and feared. But her leadership had yet to be challenged by peace. She missed her sister’s steady hand more and more as time passed.

“The work will suit you one day,” the Armorer responded. Her confidence bolstered Bo Katan’s own. That said, it was easier to feel buoyed by praise when it came from her mysterious...friend. Friend is the word she had been using in her head. It felt nice to have one.

“I know, it’s just so...” She let her voice trail off.

“Boring?” Her modulated voice was lighter than usual. Bo Katan suspected that, while her companion did not laugh or even chuckle, she was smiling under her helmet. She could almost hear the smile. Hearing it was a talent she had been nurturing.

“I’m not cut out for being a leader like this. Mundanity isn’t my specialty.” Even as she said it, she was aware it might sound rather insulting. Didn’t warriors fight so they could have peace? She shook her head, trying to shake off the nagging feeling that she kept putting her foot in her mouth.

Focusing on the smell of the forge, she noticed how the acrid scent of melting enamel tingled her nose. She wasn’t sure how anyone could stay around this all day, but maybe smiths had special filters in their helmets. It wasn’t the time to ask, but her mind wandered as her statement had hung in the air unanswered. There wasn’t much else she had to say, merely basking in the other woman’s presence, and her calm assuredness.

“Perhaps you need to find a way to relax.” Breaking the relative silence, the Armorer inclined her head just a bit. There was a hesitation in her voice, uncommon to hear. Bo Katan huffed, shaking her head again.

“I’ve got plenty of ways to relax, trust me,” Bo Katan responded, quirking the corner of her mouth with the threat of a smile. Screaming, beating her punching bag back in her quarters, target practice, flying. Her hobbies let her blow off steam, though she had felt that many of them weren’t quite getting the job done recently. She was simply dealing with more than usual, and things that she was unfamiliar with, that was all. A sword hung above her head, a shattered sword to match her recently shattered hand, but it was just stress. Bo Katan could handle it.

She always did, when push came to shove. What choice did a princess have?

“Maybe you should try something new.” Cocking an eyebrow at the remark, Bo Katan made no effort to question it. There was always something mystical or mysterious about the things the Armorer suggested. Where she had acquired this aura was anyone’s guess, but she wore it well. “I will come find you tonight, and I will show you.”

She did not elaborate, and Bo Katan did not ask further. It felt like a dismissal, but she stayed a little bit longer at the forge. There was a moment where her mind wandered to less than innocent thoughts of what she might be in for, but she dismissed it. She was sure it was not going to be that kind of stress relief. The forge didn’t remove all of her stress but the hum of the flame did have a calming effect. After one last look at her companion, Bo Katan left, unanswered questions buzzing in the back of her mind.

With every jab, with every kick, Bo Katan could feel her heart sing. Her joints ached, ached so badly, but she pushed and she pushed and she pushed. She would not let pain bring her down, she would not give in, she would not stop. This was the way.

Until she finished her set. Knuckles worn, sweat shining off her arms, she finally paused to get some water. She had hoped that the adrenaline would have dulled her pain, and to a point it had, but only so far. Everything still hurt. She had also hoped that getting her blood pumping would get the pain killers to work faster but they had only now started to kick in, as she felt her neck start to loosen.

The door chimed. She was lucky to have a door at all, or a chime, but everyone was so insistent that their *mand'ador* be the first to stay in something resembling a permanent building. Her luck didn't make her jump less at the sound. Wiping her brow with a towel, she checked the chrono sitting on the table. Adjusting one of her knee braces that had slipped down, she called out to the door inviting her visitor into her rather humble abode. Bo Katan didn't care how she was dressed at the moment, her adrenaline and pain numbing her mind.

The door slipped open with a tortured squeak (she would have to get that looked at) and a familiar golden helmet popped into view. Suddenly, Bo Katan was very self-conscious of her briefs and athletic bra look, wondering if she should have grabbed a jacket or a robe or a shirt or anything. Where she was carefree a moment before, she now felt like a blushing child. She was a grown woman, and she scolded herself for getting so distracted by what should have been a normal interaction between friends. Not that that changed the knot in her chest.

If the Armorer was bothered by her state of undress, she didn't make it known. She merely stepped inside, stood near the door a respectful distance away, and clasped one hand with the other as she often did. Bo Katan nodded at her, a sort of show of deference and respect she'd come to adopt.

"Am I intruding?" Her voice was never uneven, Bo Katan noticed. It was almost annoying how unbothered she seemed to be by anything in the world, completely at peace with her surroundings. She had half-hoped she would get some sort of reaction, but no such luck. It seemed even with how little she was leaving to the imagination, it would take more than that to upset someone as stoic as the Armorer. It was difficult to put into words exactly why she would *want* to get a reaction, but...not that difficult.

"No," she said, standing just a little taller, "I was just finishing up. I didn't expect you so late, I thought something must have come up." There was something in her voice that betrayed her happiness at being wrong, but she wasn't exactly trying to hide it. The Armorer had never been to Bo Katan's quarters, and as clean as she kept them, they now felt unkempt. Running a hand through her hair, Bo Katan picked up a towel and dabbed it across her collar. Nothing bothered the Armorer, that was clear to her, but there was something about her vulnerable state that made Bo Katan consider grabbing something to cover herself.

She did not share pieces of herself like this lightly. Her joint braces, her scarred and pitted skin, her body without her armor feeling much more naked than just lacking clothing ever could make her feel. Trying to shake off the feeling, Bo Katan decided that she had nothing to hide. She would not be made to feel small by her own feelings.

"Are you able to travel tonight?"

Bo Katan paused at that. She wasn't planning to go anywhere; she thought if there was going to be some method of stress relief it would be done in her quarters. Dismissing the thoughts that came to her mind as she considered that, she nodded. If the Armorer asked, it must be worthy.

"You seem to be handling your stress in your own way," she said, angling her head at the punching bag. "But this will be a very different type of stress relief."

If asked, Bo Katan would not say that she was chaste. Nor that her thoughts were, at all times, chaste, either. She would most certainly *not* admit that, in this moment, her thoughts were anything but. Blinking away her ill-timed fantasies, did her best to recover with her dignity intact.

“How so?”

Candles. Honest to force candles.

Bo Katan had not expected anything this...intimate. There had been something in the back of her mind maybe hinting at something actually far *more* intimate, but she hadn't really given that any credence. In fact, she had been actively trying to suppress those thoughts. Their professional relationship was important to her and she would not put it into jeopardy if she could help it.

Before her, standing in the chamber of the living waters, the Armorer had set up candles on the floor. There were not many, and with their electric torches extinguished it was still nearly pitch black.

“Sit.” For a single word, it held profound power. Succumbing to it, Bo Katan stepped forward and sat where the Armorer indicated. “However you are most comfortable,” she added. Crossing her legs, Bo Katan got comfortable, wondering where this was going. When she had settled in, she was surprised to see her companion moving to sit opposite her. Sitting mirrored, Bo Katan saw her own visage mirrored too in an opaque black visor.

“What do you need me to do?” Even when seeking relaxation she felt apprehension and anxiety. She was met with a quiet question.

“Do you trust me?” The Armorer's voice was even but low. Bo Katan almost chuckled. They had been over this.

“You know I hate that question.” It was not an answer. She hoped the answer was obvious.

“I do.” She pulled out a strip of black nondescript cloth. “I am going to blindfold you.” Bo Katan nodded slowly. She made no move to stop her companion.

Rough leather gloves passed across her face, adjusting the blindfold and tying it tight, though not uncomfortably so. Bo Katan absentmindedly wondered if this was some special rite that the Armorer led many of her covert through, or if it was something reserved for her alone. She hoped it was the latter.

“Remove your gloves.” Blind but far from senseless, Bo Katan pulled her gloves from her hands, gently setting them aside. Unsure what to do with her hands, she let them lay in her lap. As she waited for her next instruction, she could hear her quiet companion moving, a shuffling of fabric she couldn't discern.

And then, the sound of a helmet unsealing, and the dull thud as it was placed on the ground.

They had shared meals before. Back to back, trusting one another, they had indulged in conversation and good food more than several times. It was a quiet and strong trust they had fostered, and Bo Katan had been reverent of what that kind of trust meant. Where once she had questioned it, she now understood what it meant to put your faith in someone. She wasn't sure she deserved it, but she relished what she got.

This was altogether different. Never had they faced one another without their helmets. Only cool damp air hung between them now, a strip of cloth the only thing barring her vision. Bo Katan felt something shift in that moment. This was a new trust, and she hoped she could give it the honor it deserved. She hoped that her breathing did not give away the feelings this trust excited her with.

"Each piece of this preparation has been deliberate," the Armorer said, her voice clear and soft, unmodified, "Now I shall reveal to you their meaning." Bo Katan nodded, assuming that even if she couldn't see, she would be seen.

"First, the blindfold." Her voice was warm, even in the cool space. "I trust you to keep your eyes closed; that is not why I have blinded you." This admission of further trust came as a surprise, and the words wormed their way into Bo Katan's chest. The very idea that she would have been trusted to that level meant more than the trust she had been given across all of Mandalore.

"You do not let go of your obligations by choice. If I asked you to close your eyes, you would be burdened by that choice. I have removed it from you," and Bo Katan could almost hear the smirk on her face, "so that you can let your other troubles go as well. Your worries will not follow you here. You will leave them behind, so that you may take them up later." With a deep breath, Bo Katan willed herself to stop thinking of the difficult things she was trying to ignore. It was not a simple task. As her shoulders loosened, the Armorer continued.

"Second, your hands. Please extend them over your knees." Doing as she was told, Bo Katan almost flinched, as she felt warmth across her hands once she had complied. Warm skin, warm hands, were pressed atop her own. It dawned on her that she had heard the Armorer removing her gloves, though she hadn't understood the sound.

"You must focus on the here and now," she said. "Focus. Feel my heartbeat through my hands." This was easier said than done, as Bo Katan felt her entire brain lighting up at once. The casual contact wouldn't have aroused any thoughts or feelings if it was with anyone else, but there she was awash with emotion. Never had she seen the Armorer remove her gloves. But there they were, hand in hand, in the cold dark beneath Mandalore.

When the shock had faded, Bo Katan focused with all her might on trying to feel a heartbeat separate from her own. The warm hands she held had a steady and strong beat. After several minutes, the Armorer spoke again.

"Last, your breath. I want you to follow my breathing with your own." She paused. "Listen to my breath, feel my heart, and let go."

What followed was silence.

It felt like an eternity, each moment lasting from one breath to the next, from one eon to another. They sat there in silence, without speaking, without moving. It was the first time in ages that Bo Katan truly let herself relax. It was not a complete relaxation, her stress held too deeply for that, but it was closer than she had come for years. Finally, she was brought back to the surface.

“How do you feel?” The answer was simple.

“I feel good. I feel...light.” She heard a chuckle.

“That is what I had hoped.” Bo Katan let the words sit briefly, thinking on them. Feeling perhaps a little bold, she wanted to ask a question.

“Did you know this would work? I know Satine used to meditate, but it’s never been something I was able to do...” There was something heavy in the words. Always she wanted to measure up the Satine, especially now when it should have been *her* leading the reconstruction. Especially now that she was home. Especially now.

“I did not. I merely had faith,” she said.

“The foundlings seem to really like watching your work,” Bo Katan mused, watching the little ones leaving the forge. They had been watching with rapt attention minutes before, and Bo Katan had watched them in turn. She had a soft spot for them. They made the empty halls feel less empty.

“So do *you*, or do you think I don’t notice you here?” The Armorer was quick to pick things up, and while her voice stayed even, Bo Katan could sense she was being teased. She was poking fun at her frequent visits to the forge. Those visits had become even more frequent in the past weeks since their meditation sessions had started. Bo Katan countered with the truth of her visits. Part of it, at least.

“It’s been a long time since I’ve been able to watch someone with such skill,” she said. The Armorer picked up a piece of stormtrooper-issued beskar, turned it over, and laid it on the side of the forge instead of tossing it into the crucible with the others. She had been hammering new pieces into shape while waiting for the junk to melt down, but now she took a piece aside. Holding it with her tongs, she lifted her hammer high and brought it crashing down, shearing the part clean in two. It wasn’t even hot. Bo Katan looked with alarm at her companion.

“My skill is what keeps our *beskar* strong, I should hope it is worth watching.” She tossed one piece in the crucible, bending down to pick up the other that had clattered to the floor. “These cast pieces only have the inherent strength of the metal itself; further strength must be worked into the metal.” Bo Katan found her attention consumed by the woman’s words.

“*Beskar*, like mandalorians, is strongest when it is forged,” she said. “The impurities must be pounded out, the structure set, layers folded to build strength on top of strength.”

“This,” she said, fixing her visor on Bo Katan’s face, “is the way.” Bo Katan looked at her, willing her breathing to go back to normal, as she did not trust her voice. If the Armorer was aware of her pause, she did not bring attention to it. She turned back to the forge as she spoke again, bringing the conversation back around.

“Perhaps it’s my strength of purpose that appeals to the children; or perhaps, like all children, they simply enjoy looking at flames.” She shook her head lightly, and Bo Katan could hear just the lightest indication of a chuckle.

Seeing an opportunity, she moved closer, standing shoulder to shoulder. They were alone in the forge for now, and Bo Katan intended to take advantage of what limited solitude she could get. She slipped one arm behind the Armorer’s lower back, resting her hand gently on her hip as she spoke.

“I think something different appeals to me.”

Time stood still. As did the Armorer. She turned her head slowly, her helmet so close Bo Katan worried she would fog up the visor. It was an odd sensation to lock eyes with someone that could not be seen. The moment dragged out for far too long without any words, and dread crept into Bo Katan’s mind. This was too long. She should have said something by now. Anything should have happened. In her doubt, she erred on the side of rejection.

“I’m sorry. That was inappropriate. I’ll leave you to your work.” Bo Katan pulled her arm away, giving a curt nod, and turning on her heel. Taking long strides out of the room, the Armorer did not stop her, or give chase, and suddenly her boldness felt like she had missed some signal. She would not make that same mistake twice.

As she left, Bo Katan didn’t notice a piece of *beskar* had melted across the forge, a simple mistake a master would have avoided, left to drip and pool, unattended by a woman who had not turned back to her work.

End Notes

A note on beskar: I don't think there's any special note about the beskar armor the stormtroopers wore at the end of season 3 except that it was a "beskar alloy" instead of being pure, but I decided that it was also a cast metal and not a forged one, as it 1. fit this fic nicely and 2. this lends extra credence to the idea that only Mandalorians know how to properly make beskar armor, and that even the strongest stuff the Imperial remnants would make would still be a far second in quality.

Special thanks to everyone who listens to me ramble about metallurgy and Star Wars for this one, and to [Star Wars Femme Frenzy](#) again for putting on this event! This one is late, as the next 2 will probably be late, but I'll try to get them done in a timely manner! Tears of the Kingdom has devoured my soul, the release date really sank my expectation that I could get these out on time lol.

I promise this series is going somewhere and they won't dance around things forever.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!