

Tortured Sisters

Shanyrria POV

The whole is not complete without its parts. The deep abstractions of philosophy and spirituality boded well for Ni'vim's education, but we must balance them with the practical.

Therefore, I presented her with the following text today. It was one of the recently extracted ones originating from a strange world the Tsa'mar called *Earth*:

Horrific Situations

A flock of albatrosses flew over the oceans. Ripples of oceanic water gushed forth from the aquatic depths of the seas. Before the deep blue of the oceans were two brigantines.

The duo bade farewell, and each sailed their separate ways.

All was plenty for the first ship, and the seas were mellow like honey dripped over a pancake. The oceans teemed with sardines and cod prancing above the shoreline. The seas breezed with the warmth of currents and were calm, almost like monks meditating upon a headland.

It was not so for the second ship, christened the *Bloody Mary*, whose fortune was not as promising. In the first week of her maiden voyage, a stormy tempest that grew as large as England assailed her. As weeks dragged on into months, her mariners shuddered from one current after another. There was no end to the hurricane, and empty bellies formed the new norm.

The day came when the two finally met one another. The first ship's mates had staggered from the injury sustained to the *Bloody Mary*. As it loomed before them, its ghastly visage resembled a ghost – as if the ship had long been forlorn. However, a beam of light glowed from the eyes of the mariners.

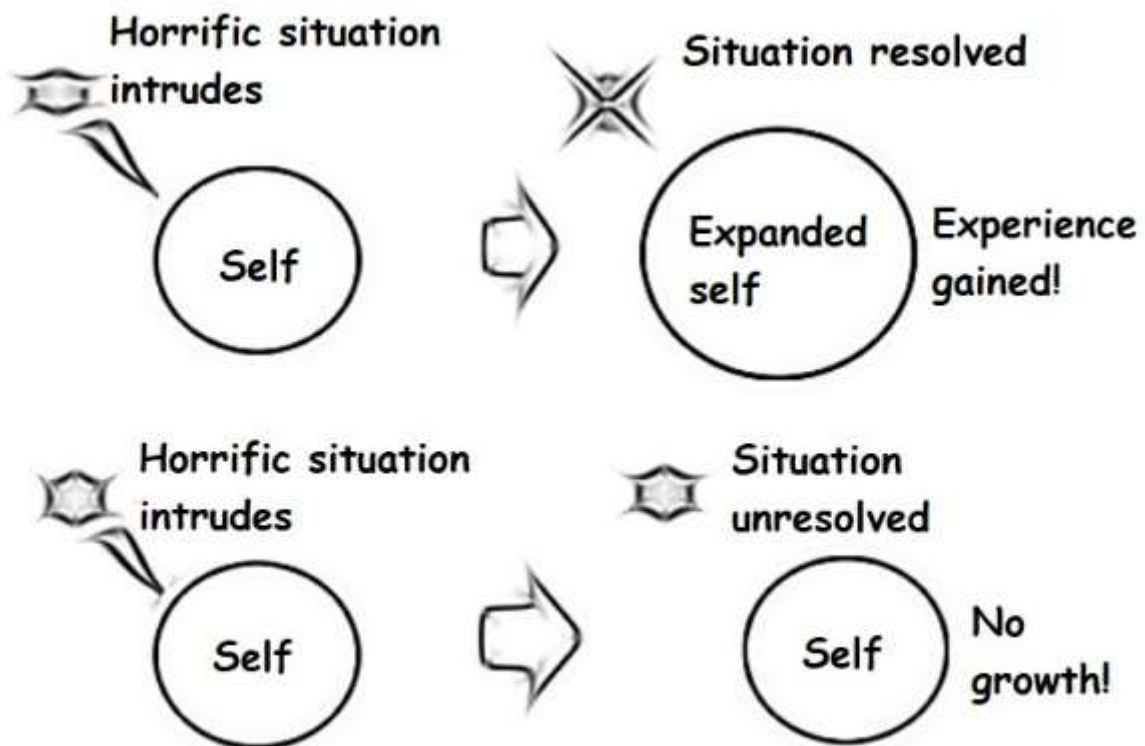
They said to the first ship, "True, maybe misfortune has left us shuddered and torn. However, it is the

ship that survives the harshest winds that is the strongest.”

Having heard the mariners, the members of the first ship alighted from theirs. They boarded the other and went in search of venture and treasure.

The ship that was left adrift was the *Mary Celeste*.

You, my reader, are just like the two ships. You can choose to be on either. Choose one where it enters the serenest of waters, and the most bitter winds would never test you.



As shown in the diagram, horrific situations can allow us to gain experience when dealt with properly. This broadens our worldviews.

Ni'vim invoked the mirage which contained the puzzle. Rivers of light shone before us once more, but she fixated her gaze upon a scarlet below at its base. The light turned into symbols and arced around its bottom. They swirled around the mysterious sign at the center like a spiral. With every swish, chains effused from a trio of symbols, tethering the one at the center with a zap:



"Something has so far prevented me from fully unraveling the conundrum," she said.

"They are like shackles, is it not?" I asked.

"The puzzle resonates with my thoughts. The more I reminisce over my inability to handle my recent tribulations, the more it flares with the glower of red."

The crimson shackles continued to revolve around the central symbol, tightening with every irresolution within Ni'vim.

"However," she continued. "Look at what happens when I meditate on the positive by viewing my problems with stoic awareness. Instead of lamenting, one can embrace them."

The scarlet slowly waned like the waves of an ocean, uncurling themselves around the mystical signs. They morphed into a nebula of azure, with their edges wispy like clouds. No longer were the manacles shackling the central symbol tightly; they had loosened.

"Very perceptive of you, Ni'vim, to relate the current excerpts to solving the puzzle."

"Those four symbols. I think I have figured out what they mean."

We drew the following diagram in a notebook:



Negative karmas



Lack of endurance



**Impediments to positive
freedom**



Lack of Fortitude

Gazing at the notebook, a revelation flashed in my mind.

"Karmas, lack of endurance, and cowardice," I said, "are all hindrances to one's inner freedom."

"The prison is within, not outside." She smiled with confidence. "One must overcome painful events with courage."



Spiritual Tenet

Do not dread bad situations. They provide us with insight into our lacks. Thus, use them as an opportunity for growth.



Another passage of equal relevance shone itself to us. It was no parable, however. Instead, it was a song with an attached musical score. With this, I reached for my lute and twirled my

fingers along its strings. Melodies sprung out of my musical instrument, accompanying each note to its finishing coda.

With voices as high as sirens, we sang:

Light at the end of the tunnel

"Calm oceans must meet tempests.
Gentle winds must be glazed with cyclones.
Eons of peace must be cleaved with war.
Light cannot exist without the shadow."

The teachings had a brief explanation behind them, which wrote:

Life cannot be complete without the challenge of suffering, pain, or negativity to evolve. Nevertheless, the light exists at the end of the dark tunnel.



Inspirational Quotes

"We all have bad days, but one thing is true; no cloud is so dark that the sun can't shine through."

-Miranda Kerr

"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all."

- Dale Carnegie



Ni'vim gazed at me with a sparkle of curiosity in her eyes that mellowed into calmness.

"You know what?" she said. "It's an analogy. The teachings are a brazier that directs one to hope at the end of all things."

"Hope." My voice quavered and morphed into a silence between Ni'vim and me. A tulip blossomed next to me, soaking up the sunshine reigning high above. I cast a spell, and the day turned into night. A fog loomed high overhead, and dark sickles carved into the flower. No longer did it teem. Now, it had withered

into pale death. "Just like this tulip, life needs the light of hope to survive."



Spiritual Tenet

There is always light at the end of the tunnel.



She nodded concurringly.

Life is only a joke where we allow it to be.

"Ni'vim," I said. "Although your travails are painful, you must tell yourself to use these experiences to grow. As said in the scriptures, life sometimes makes a mockery of us. A tragic night hangs over us. But ultimately, we must light a candle and not curse the darkness."

She turned away, never saying yes, but looming with a silence that spoke the language of agreement.

Once more, she invoked the shining lights of the puzzle. With a chant, the remaining scarlet chains around the symbols rang with a euphony, like women singing in a chorus. With a sudden burst, the lights radiated out, unveiling the rainbow signs they once entrapped. The sign representing freedom had been released from the binds of the others symbolizing negativity, weakness, and cowardice.

"Another part of the puzzle has been solved," I said. "Congratulations."

We are both tortured sisters - driven to the verge of madness by our circumstances. Only through the torch of sheer resolution can we dispel this darkness.

I returned to the forest where I first faced my other half using the O'sha Miru again. This time, the twin moons glittered like pearls suspended over the forest's solitude. They were full, and their round, meteored surfaces wore a sheen of beige and blue.

A sign of good luck.

Again, my shadowy half appeared in the sphere as I gazed into it. Its bloodshot eyes sent tremors to my limbs, and I sank into the earth. They stabbed, with every gaze, a torment no less than the memories hidden within. After all, *they were me.*

"Came back again, Shanyrria?" said the voice. "When will you release me from this ... prison that your mentor has entrapped me in?"

"Shut up! I did not come here to pander to your lowly nature!"

"I am you, Shanyrria. I am you. I look up to you."

"*Shut up!*"

I then cast a sliver of spells that spun around me. The verses of Ei'lara.

"You know, those verses do not change who you are, right?" said the voice.

"I never asked you for your opinion!"

Threads of starlight spun around me, and the air around me brewed with a medley of silver. A galaxy of light morphed into those arcane words. As I gazed at them, they shone and chimed with a melody that broke the trickles of a nearby river. My aura flared around me, and its frill extended.

Still beige, black, gray, and red.

No more shall I be defined by them!

The verses enchanted the air, and a song echoed throughout, morphing into a symphony pleasing to my ears. They wrapped around my aura, and I tried to change my auric matter into other forms with more chants.

Sweat trickled from my face until I fell to the ground, breathing with deep gasps. I threw out, and the stink of my vomit stung my nose, tainting my clothes.

Curses!

"You fool," said the dark creature. "You cannot change your spiritual nature with the Kara of Moi!"

"Then, I shall face them. I shall *hide no longer!*"

Memories within me surged like a disturbed current, overflowing until my past had married the present. I was suspended over an ocean where only a timeless present reigned. Many memories once entrapped within me surfaced like foam until waves rippled around me. Many droplets rose to the air. Every stare into them was a remembrance long hidden.

"This is very strange," said the dark entity. "I thought you wanted to conceal these memories? Why are you facing them?"

"*Thus Spake Oneness.* It showed me I must confront my past, and there is always light at the end of all things. It's a start."

Many memories swarmed around me, and the pale blossom of death reigned in every backdrop of my mind. I gazed at them, casting away the darkness that once veiled these thoughts.

I must face my dark past.

I must face my dark past.

Seconds dragged into minutes and minutes into hours. Sweat trickled from my body; I felt humid and hot throughout. My eyes, never shutting, gazed at the deluge of dark memories until I no longer felt the usual tempo of time. However, the longer I stared, the once painful memories mellowed. What was a sharp pain had slowly withered into a tolerable one.

The memories I need to face are too still too many.

Then, the swirling gray around me stopped its spinning, and I lay on the ground, gazing at the twin moons sailing through the heavens.

I got up on a pair of staggering feet and limped to a puddle nearby. Its surface was peaceful, free of ripples. The pool reflected a pair of purple eyes staring into me. Me staring into it. I was all alone in the forest. But now, a single crescent had joined me. Never had my face brimmed with a smile of such joy and relief.

I did not return early to my lodge today. Instead, I spent the day sitting at a cliff's edge, with pearly tears dripping from my eyes.

"Master Sar'termo," I said. "Perhaps, your choice to conceal those memories was not the best. I am happy to, at last, face who I am again."

The self is a glint of light that I may never fully conceal. For so long as we exist, no amount of glamor and lies can bury our past acts.

Our material nature does not define us.

Our acts do.

We do.

I returned to my tent and saw Ni'vim sinking into her bed. Her face was serene, free of her usual nightmares today. I smiled and returned to my bed to welcome the relief of sleep.

I had never slept so well.

However, once I awoke, my hands quivered from the horrific thought of having faced my inner fears. The dread! The woe! The terror!

I washed my face and looked into a bronze mirror.

"It's hard. It's still too hard," I said.

I dropped the bronze mirror, and it clanged on the ground.

I sank into my bed, shaking my head.

What have I unleashed?

Should I just have left the memories buried?

