

## tend to the ones in need / of an honorable griever

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by [icemachine](#)

### Summary

He doesn't know how Tovan copes, knowing the uncertainty of his sister's fate. How does it not consume him? Does it consume him? They avoid the topic when it brushes into the conversation. They talk about everything in the universe, but never loss.

Hiven takes in the quiet hum of their starship, rolls the usually-calming sound of space and machinery around inside of his mind, and decides that it is a particularly annoying noise tonight.

It's always night here. It has been the sharp turn of midnight eternally since Lhaes' death. Hiven repeats it over and over like a chanting prayer: *I am getting my revenge. The Tal Shiar will pay for what they have done. My brother will never be forgotten. I am getting my revenge. The Tal Shiar will pay for what they have done. My brother will never be forgotten. I am getting my revenge. The Tal Shiar will pay for what they have done. Hakeev will pay. My brother will never be forgotten. I will never forget him.*

Curiously, he was not this violent before the incident on Gasko station. He was a peaceful man, involving himself in science and creation rather than fantasies of anger and horror.

It's strange, what loss does to you. Loss has warped Hiven into an amalgam of sickness and desire and fury, loss has ripped his body apart only to rebuild it into something pitifully stronger. Once a gentle giant, that gentleness was extracted from him. Now he is a walking trauma.

Everyone here seems to be a walking trauma. There is one common theme among every single officer on this starship: a scathed past, a terrified mind. No one is safe. There is no unburied safety within these walls.

Instead of spending Lhaes' birthday with him, celebrating yet another year of serene life, he is spending Lhaes' birthday mourning six months of life lost. He should be here. Hiven should be feasting with his brother. Lhaes should be opening gifts and holding appreciation—

There wasn't even time to give him a proper goodbye.

He doesn't know how Tovan copes, knowing the uncertainty of his sister's fate. How does it not consume him? Does it consume him? They avoid the topic when it brushes into the conversation. They talk about everything in the universe, but never loss. Tovan is the only feeling of safety permitted here, the only being that can elicit the kind of safety that Hiven will allow himself to feel. Satra, Veril, the Captain, everyone else — they are wonderful, but his bond with Tovan is galactic.

Hiven feels himself implode within, the loss just too burdensome to bear. He thinks, briefly: *it's time to shed this.*

So he rises from his bed like a sickly, undead being, and stumbles towards Tovan's quarters.

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Tovan is underneath his sheets, resting on his back, his face buried in ancient literature, but he senses Hiven's presence instantly, eyes shifting up to take him in. He slams his book closed — a bit too violently. That is Tovan's essence — a gentle roughness like ocean waves.

“Hey,” he says, moves to sit with his legs dangling over the floor, gestures for Hiven to sit next to him. “Can't sleep?”

Hiven sits, wishes for a different closeness. “Yeah. I'll be honest, I have a lot on my mind.”

“I'm here to listen, if you need that.”

It forces a smile on Hiven's demeanor. How does he manage to balance his anger with kindness? How does he do it? How is he the ultimate calming presence with a frightening capability? How is he everything at once? Tovan is everything that Hiven wishes he could be. Instead of that knowledge creating resentment, it just blossoms more love.

He exhales. If he's safe with anyone, he's safe with Tovan.

“It's Lhaes,” Hiven explains. “I've been thinking about him a lot lately.” Oh, *oh*, he breaks now, has not felt this open vulnerability in a very long time. “I just... I miss him, Tovan. I don't know how you do it.”

“Do what?”

“Survive. Not knowing if your sister is alive or dead.”

Tovan smiles, full of sorrow. “I don't know if I'd call it surviving. It's hard. It's really hard.” He pauses. “You know, despite everything we've been through, I do have hope. I have to believe she's out there somewhere. And I survive for that reason, and I survive to bring justice for every Romulan that has been wronged like we have.” Now he takes Hiven's hand, now he entwines their fingers, an unbearable intimacy. “It's different for you, I get it. I want to rip Hakeev apart for what happened to Lhaes... and for what losing him did to you. I think about it on a daily basis. I'm not like the others, I let all of it get to me.... and I wish I could be more help, but this is something you have to feel for yourself. The rest of us will always be here for you.”

Tovan rests his head on Hiven's shoulder and Hiven shudders. He knows that Tovan is not this intimate with just anyone. They have done this before — it is different tonight.

“I,” Tovan stresses, “will always be here for you.”