

A LOVE IN TAVIS

Written by

Yunqi Feng

z5452381@ad.unsw.edu.au

EXT . FOREST - NIGHT

Rain hammers the trees, turning the ground to mud. Zane staggers forward, one hand pressed to a gash on his side. His jacket is soaked through, his breath coming in ragged gasps -- but his eyes stay fixed on the mountain ahead, the border of Tavis's forbidden zone.

He collapses against a pine tree, sliding to his knees. The sound of footsteps cuts through the rain. He tenses, fumbling for a knife at his belt.

ZANE
(quiet, sharp)
Show yourself.

Tiffany steps out of the shadows. She holds a small blade, its edge glinting in the moonlight. She squats beside him, tilting her head.

TIFFANY
You're worse at hiding than they said.

ZANE
Get away from me.

TIFFANY
Spy's codename. Tell me, and I'll let you walk. Zane sneers.

ZANE
Go to hell.

Tiffany's smile fades. She reaches for his arm -- but Zane's eyes roll back. He slumps forward, unconscious.

TIFFANY
(under her breath)
Great. Just great.

INT. TIFFANY'S CABIN - MORNING

Sunlight filters through dusty curtains. Zane wakes with a groan, his head throbbing. He's in a narrow bed, wearing clothes that aren't his. He sits up, scanning the room -- wooden walls, a weathered dresser, a hunting rifle propped in the corner.

A knock. He freezes, then dives behind the door as it creaks

open. Tiffany steps in, carrying a bowl of soup. He lunges -- grabs her throat, slams her against the floor.

ZANE

Who are you? Where am I?

Tiffany's hand drifts to the knife tucked in her boot -- but Zane's grip slackens. His brow furrows, confused.

ZANE (CONT'D)

Wait... who am I?

Tiffany stills. She eases his hand away from her neck, her voice soft.

TIFFANY

You don't remember?

ZANE

Nothing. But... you feel familiar.

Tiffany's thumb brushes his cheek.

TIFFANY

I'm your wife.

INT. TIFFANY'S DINING TABLE - MORNING

Zane stirs his soup, watching Tiffany over the bowl.

ZANE

A year married. And I can't remember a thing.

TIFFANY

It's okay.

ZANE

How'd we meet? The gash -- how'd I get it?

Tiffany sets down her spoon. She nods at his side.

TIFFANY

Bear attack. You got lost on a hunt. I found you, brought you back. Last night... we got separated. I found you again, same as before.

Zane touches the bandage.

ZANE
Lucky I have you, then.

Tiffany manages a small smile.

TIFFANY
Rest. Hunting season's busy. We'll
talk more later.

INT. TAVIS STATE DEFENSE DEPT. - DAY

Tiffany stands in front of John and Casey, two Alpha operatives. A map of the forest is spread on the table between them.

JOHN
He bought it?

TIFFANY
Mostly. He's suspicious.

Casey snorts, tapping the map.

CASEY
Memory loss? Those rebels really
messed him up. How's he supposed to
give up the codename now?

TIFFANY
I'll delay. Keep playing the wife.

JOHN
We'll send a doctor. To "help" with
his memory.

Casey pulls a folder from his bag -- slides it to Tiffany. Inside: a marriage certificate, with their names typed on top.

CASEY
Forged. He'll have no reason to doubt.

Tiffany picks up the certificate. Her fingers brush the paper.

TIFFANY
This mission's a mess.

She turns to leave. John and Casey snap to attention, voices loud.

JOHN & CASEY
For Tavis's revolution -- toward a
brighter tomorrow.

Casey chuckles as the door closes.

CASEY
She never says it back.

JOHN
She doesn't need to. Her work speaks
for itself.

EXT. TAVIS CITY ALLEY - AFTERNOON

Tiffany leans against a brick wall, breathing hard. A man
lies at her feet, a knife in his chest. She wipes her hands
on her jacket, muttering.

TIFFANY
(quiet, bitter)
For Tavis... She pauses.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
You gave me a life. But what kind of
life?

INT. TIFFANY'S CABIN - EVENING

Tiffany peels off her bloodstained cloak. She's reaching for
the bathroom door when Zane steps in. His eyes fix on her
hands.

ZANE
You hurt?

TIFFANY
Not mine.

ZANE
Big hunt?

TIFFANY
Dangerous one. But the pay's good.

Zane steps closer. He touches her shoulder -- light, careful.

ZANE
I'll get my memory back. I don't want
you doing this alone forever.

Tiffany tenses. She stares at him, then looks away.

INT. TAVIS STATE DEFENSE DEPT. - DAY (3 MONTHS LATER)

George, Alpha's chief, stands behind his desk. Tiffany, John, and Casey stand in front of him.

GEORGE

Progress?

TIFFANY

He's remembering. Bits of the rebel gang. Names, plans.

JOHN

We'll get the spy soon.

GEORGE

Alpha's job is to punish traitors.
Tiffany -- keep your cover. When his memory's fully back, get the codename.
Then eliminate him.

Tiffany nods. But her jaw tightens -- almost imperceptibly.

INT. TIFFANY'S CABIN - DAY

Tiffany finds Zane at the table, staring at a stack of books: The Tavis Manifesto, Regime and Rebellion.

TIFFANY

Where'd these come from?

ZANE

Attic. Didn't know you liked politics.

TIFFANY

School. Required reading.

Zane picks up Regime and Rebellion. He flips to a marked page.

ZANE

Says Alpha operatives kill without trials. No evidence. Just orders.

TIFFANY

They're criminals. They deserve it.

ZANE

Does the state get to decide who's a
(MORE)

ZANE (CONT'D)
criminal? Is that justice?

Tiffany doesn't answer. Zane sets down the book. He leans in, kisses her. She freezes -- then relaxes, just for a second.

INT. DEFENSE MINISTER ANDREW'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Andrew sits at his desk, reviewing papers. The door creaks open. He looks up -- sees Tiffany.

ANDREW
Tiffany. It's late. What are you doing here?

Tiffany's hand shakes. She holds a knife.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
(soft, understanding)
Orders. I get it.

Tiffany steps forward. Andrew closes his eyes.

TIFFANY
(whispering)
I'm sorry.

She strikes. Andrew slumps forward. Tiffany stares at her hands -- covered in his blood.

ZANE (V.O.)
Does state-sanctioned murder make it right?

INT. TIFFANY'S CABIN - NIGHT

Tiffany bursts in, soaking wet from the rain. Zane stands by the fire. She runs to him, clinging to his waist.

ZANE
No hunt tonight?

TIFFANY
It was easy. Too easy.

Zane wraps his arms around her. He leans down, his lips near her ear.

ZANE
XT85. Miss Hunter.

Tiffany goes rigid. She tries to pull away -- but Zane holds her tight.

ZANE (CONT'D)
You've been lying to me for months. I
thought I'd return the favor.

Tiffany's voice cracks.

TIFFANY
When did you remember?

ZANE
When I saw you come home bloody. The
way you held that knife -- you're not
a hunter. You're Alpha.

He lets her go. She stumbles back.

INT. TIFFANY'S CABIN - FLASHBACK - DAY

Zane stands by the window, phone pressed to his ear.

ZANE
Thomas. It's me.

THOMAS (PHONE)
(relieved)
You're alive. We thought --

ZANE
The plan's still on. Spread the rumors
about Andrew. Make Tavis think he's
the spy. XT85 will leak the Alpha
files soon.

He hangs up. He stares at the photo on the table -- him and his father, the rebel leader. His jaw tightens.

INT. TIFFANY'S CABIN - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Tiffany stares at Zane.

TIFFANY
You used me. Used Andrew.

ZANE
Andrew was part of the regime. He knew
what they did.

TIFFANY
He saved me. When I was a kid.
Homeless. Freezing. He gave me food,
taught me to read. And I killed him.

Zane steps toward her.

ZANE
Tavis made you do it. Not you.

TIFFANY
I pulled the knife.

She turns away, looking at the window.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
I never asked for this life. The
killing. The lies. But it's all I knew
-- until you.

Zane's voice softens.

ZANE
Then let's change it.

INT. TAVIS DEFENSE DEPARTMENT - DAY

George slams his fist on the desk. Protesters' chants echo from outside.

GEORGE
Suppress them! Any means necessary!

He turns to Tiffany, eyes sharp.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Zane's memory's back. You knew. You
hid it.

TIFFANY
I didn't know. He lied to me too.

GEORGE
Bullshit! He couldn't have escaped
without your help. Get out. Before I
have you arrested for treason.

INT. TIFFANY'S CABIN - NIGHT

Tiffany shoves clothes into a bag. The door opens -- Zane walks in.

ZANE
You're leaving.

TIFFANY
Alpha will hunt me. Hiding the truth
is treason. But...

She smiles, small and sad.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
For the first time, I'm free.

ZANE
I'm sorry about Andrew. About using
you.

TIFFANY
Don't be. I chose to kill him. I'll
live with that.

She steps closer, touching his face.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
I fell for you when you said you'd
never let me suffer. Those months --
they were the happiest of my life.

ZANE
When the rebellion ends, I'll find
you. I'll give you that normal life. I
promise.

Tiffany kisses his cheek. She climbs out the window, landing
softly in the grass. She looks up -- Zane stands in the
window, watching her. She waves. Then she runs into the dark.

ZANE (CONT'D)
(quiet, to himself)
We'll have a happy ending. I swear.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - DAY

Protesters fill the square, holding signs: DOWN WITH TAVIS!
JUSTICE FOR THE INNOCENT! Zane stands in the crowd, watching
as a rebel speaker takes the stage. Tiffany stands at the
edge of the square, hidden in the shadows. She sees Zane --
smiles.

TIFFANY (V.O.)
I hope this is the right choice.

She turns, walking away. But her steps are lighter. For the first time, she's moving toward something -- not just following orders.