

Misery Loves its Compy

Pressing the power button, Kyle relaxed in his chair, listening to the gentle murmur of Bastila's hard drives, admiring her beauty. Flashing blue LED lights shone through vents in the black case, humming fans blowing out increasingly warm air. Inside the sleek exterior, Kyle's cherished 9800GT video card purred.

Kyle watched the computer load, monitor quickly flickering through diagnostic screens, leading to his desktop. Ignoring the death star background greeting him, he navigated his way into a web browser.

Checking Facebook, his email, and various other websites, for awesome electronic or video game deals, he found nothing of interest. Making his way to the desktop, he double-clicked a desktop icon, Modern Warfare 2 popping onto his screen. Quickly joining a game, Kyle immediately began firing upon the terrorists. Hand grenades exploded from every direction, loud blasts masked amidst the constant machine gun fire tearing through building and person alike.

Forgotten, Kyle's video card worked tirelessly, building the virtual war. Flawlessly it displayed the battleground, changing with each step Kyle's marine took, never failing to construct the alternate reality.

Hundreds of deaths and many more kills later, Kyle reluctantly closed the game, upset at quitting for such a trivial thing as school.

Clicking *Shut down*, Kyle walked away, looking mournfully over his shoulder, a boyfriend telling his woman they will be together again soon. Bastila stared silently back, lights abruptly extinguishing.

Bursting through the door, Kyle threw his backpack on the ground, rushing to sweet Bastila sitting silent atop the desk, waiting. Kyle booted her up, watching her every move on the

monitor.

Jaw slowly dropping, Kyle's eyes widened, mouth moving soundlessly; wavy blue lines formed across the screen, blotting out diagnostic info and logos alike. Monitor swiftly turning into a pixilated ocean, he held down the power button, putting Bastila back into a coma, rudely awakening her moments later. Whirring back to life, Bastila again began her loading process.

Fists clenched, eyes burning holes in the monitor, Kyle watched blue and yellow lines vertical lines form on the screen, four, inch thick.

Letting the computer finish booting, Kyle began a self diagnosis and repair. Fingers pounding the keyboard, he downloaded updated graphics drivers and checked his monitor's connection, already securely plugged into his video card. Drivers done installing, his computer rebooted, completing the update. Still the lines persisted.

Shutting Bastila off, laying her lightly on her side, Kyle removed her cover. Grounding himself, so as not to shock his baby, Kyle gently removed his 9800GT.

Blowing on the card's fan, Kyle paused a moment to cough, dust flying into his face. Silently he examined the card, blowing once in the port where the monitor connects, placing his baby back into its slot when he finished.

Reconnecting his monitor, Kyle started Bastila back up, the cruel lines taunting him as Bastila warmed, laughing at Kyle's blank, staring face. Vainly attempting to swallow the ball of sorrow rapidly filling chest, he sat silently, remembering the all great times with his 9800: drifting Lamborghinis around corners at a hundred miles an hour, beating aliens to death with a crowbar, strategically planning attacks on Mordor, and taking on the empire in an X-wing.

Slowly fading back into reality, Kyle forced his limbs to begin removing his card, snuffling. Unplugging its connections, he yanked it out, and once more sat, caressing his baby, whispering his

apologies and goodbyes. Tears streaking his face, Kyle placed the 9800GT in an anti-static bag, reluctantly setting it aside.

Kyle's empty eyes gazed past the un-afflicted screen, monitor sullenly watching Kyle's completely immobile body.

Doorbell ringing, high pitch chime filling the room, Kyle thrust open the door. A cardboard box lay atop his doormat, tape and packing label its only decorations. Snatching it, Kyle bolted inside, ripping through the clear tape with his bare hands. Spilling green packing peanuts, he pulled out the beautiful Radeon 5850, his new baby.