

Ikarri Itinen
Yuanming
41 ABY

Ikarri walked the halls of the hotel complex, only a few days into his newest venture, having taken a contract within Vizsla to work directly for the Consul. Though he'd yet to meet Korvis, the Rattataki had assured him there would be plenty of work through the hiring process. And plenty of work he'd found: dozens of operations, rumors, informants, and reports on various suspected Mandalorian artifacts awaited him at his newly assigned office.

Three days of sorting paperwork, creating a filing system, and charting reports from nearest to furthest had been taxing but fulfilling work. For the old explorer, the idea of having Vizsla's resources available to assist in the recovery of historic articles was a thrilling opportunity.

Despite that, several days at a desk were nearly as bad as several days stuck in the cockpit of his Star Courier, *The Siren*. Ikarri was surprised by how civilized the environment was; the rumors of Vizsla's intensity and martial prowess seemed tame. The resort was one of the only locations planetside to prohibit weapons or fighting of any kind. A central hub for trade, finding jobs, and mingling with others planetside was a fascinating mask to see worn.

He hadn't realized the time until the lighting modules in the offices shut off while he was still working. Despite the late hour, there was plenty of activity, and over the last few days, he'd been given multiple recommendations for restaurants, diners, food carts—everything possible to be found and indulged in within the resort. Forgetting when he last ate, the minute he'd left his desk, he'd been reminded of that.

He'd repeatedly been told there was a noodle bar called the "Galactic Gourmet Noodles," and after gathering his things, he set out to find the location known for never closing its doors no matter the hour. When you needed noodles, the Galactic Gourmet was the place to go. Unfortunately, much to his disappointment, he found a sign hanging over the door: "Out of Noodles - closed for the foreseeable future."

The massive frame of a Houk finished locking the establishment with a look of resignation on its bulbous face.

"Sir, if I may ask... how could you possibly run out of noodles?" Ikarri inquired, disappointed but more curious than anything.

"Stupid pirates, our delivery was hijacked, and now the bastards are demanding a ransom. So no more Noodles," the Houk began to shuffle away.

"Wait, if they are demanding ransom, then they've given you a location to meet them right?" A gleam of ill intent in Ikarri's eyes caught the Houk's interest.

"Well, yeah... but nobody is gonna go and deal with them."

"I may... know some people." Ikarri grinned.

“Sir, you’re not authorized...” the attendant rushed alongside him, repeating his warnings. Ikarri had gathered every hunter, mercenary, and culinary seeker he could find on short notice. When word began to spread about the situation, the patrons of Galactic Gourmet didn’t disappoint.

“I think we’ll be fine; the keys are already in the ignition anyway,” Ikarri stated, pushing his will on the attendant who seemed confused for a moment.

“I suppose that’s true...”

“See, we’re fine, we just need to borrow it for a few hours,” Ikarri patted the man on the shoulder while smiling.

The hodgepodge array of souls looked at the massive form of the Basilisk II as it sat parked within the port.

“You sure about this?” The Houk, who’d finally introduced himself as Vorrak Gorrak, spoke up.

“Yeah... it’ll be fine... probably,” Ikarri replied, his stomach rumbling even as the group boarded the vessel which had strangely arrived in port but had been left running.

“Besides, when they see this big gal shows up, I’m sure they will reconsider their interest in holding your noodles hostage.”

“Everyone get to your stations! I’m headed for command; anyone who knows how to fly, shoot, or keep things from exploding, do what you do best!” A chorus of responses kicked up, even the attendant somehow finding his way aboard to take part in the rescue effort.

The makeshift crew managed to get the ship off the ground and en route to their rendezvous. Ikarri still wasn’t sure what to make of the ship being left unguarded and powered up, but the Force works in mysterious ways.

“Dropping out of warp in...” the countdown began moments before they slipped out of warp, orbiting a lone abandoned station. What looked to be a modified junker, a YV-666 light freighter, and what looked to be a refitted mining vessel all came to life as soon as the much larger Capital ship dropped in on their party.

“Open broadcast frequency,” Ikarri ordered.

“The first vessel to fire their engines will be vaporized without hesitation. The second will follow suit, and hopefully whoever is left will be smart enough to sit still. We’re here for the Noodles!” As Ikarri finished, the mostly hung-over, half-asleep ragtag crew all shouted in unison, “THE NOODLES!”

“What... the hell, aren’t you here for the hostages?” A reply from the lead vessel came back.

“Hostages?” Ikarri asked, looking to Vorrak who shrugged in response.

“Listen, we’re all hungry, and we’re all tired, and we have to get this ship back before someone notices. So how about this, you bring us everything and we’ll decide what you get to keep.” Ikarri finished just as one the YV-666 began to fire up its engines before he could respond. An overenthusiastic crewman took the only chance he’d have in life to fire a turbolaser and vaporized the vessel as it detached from the floating station.

“Well... hopefully the noodles weren't on that one...”

“That was a warning... now bring us the Noodles,” Ikarri replied, hopeful that they'd not just lost their bounty.

It didn't take long for the ejected cargo to be pulled in via tractor beams. Vorrुक rushing to find the crates of supplies sent the massive Houk into fits of laughter.

“The best part... I already got my refund! FREE NOODLES!” With echoing chants of Free Noodles being taken up as they set course to Yuanming.

On the command deck, Ikarri felt triumphant and positively starving as they made the short journey home. A momentary lapse in his awareness, and he suddenly felt the very cold edge of a blade against his throat.

“Who the hell are you... and how did you steal this ship?” The towering form of Korvis Manda'vod loomed over them as the crew's celebration came to a sudden stop.

“Ah... well... you see,” Ikarri began.

“KORVIS! Free NOODLES for you and your men for what they've done! They saved my business!” Vorrुक swept into the room holding a massive box of his coveted ingredients.

Did Korvis kill his newest Magistrate? Was Vorrुक behind everything to begin with? These mysteries we will never know. What we do know is that anything can happen when the Noodle Bar closes.