

## SELEN - ESTLE CITY SPACEPORT

41 ABY

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“So you’re telling a biologist to go repo a ship, basically?”

“Yeah, that’s the gist of it.”

Silver eyes stared at the A.C.E. agent in utter disbelief, one snow-white eyebrow cocked upwards, posing the all important question– *why?* The Kessurian-Echani hybrid rubbed his face, shaking his head softly. He needed money, and Addyn had asked him to do this. So here he was, taking a ship from a person who probably just fell on hard times.

“Alright, can you run things down for me one more time?” he grumbled, pulling a datapad from a satchel slung over his shoulder.

“You are to go to the coordinates, locate the Tartan-Class Patrol Cruiser, board it, and fly it back here.”

“You’re lucky I know how to fly spaceships...”

“What was that?”

“Nothing, nothing. Go to the location, board a ship with no other information, probably get ax-murdered in the middle of space, and come back. Sounds good to me!”

Before the A.C.E. agent could even begin to say anything, the Kessurian was already turning and walking back to his own ship. He would have to rig a towing system or trust the system autopilot to get it back home. Both sounded like they weren’t going to go in his favor, so he elected to choose which bridge to cross when he got to it.

Sev stepped into his GX1 and flopped his datapad down on the co-pilot seat as the coordinates for the mission came through. It was **extremely** out of the way. The man blinked at the coordinates for a moment and wondered exactly why he was being shipped out into the middle of the Dajorran Asteroid field.

It seemed that the ship was idle, offline, and had been sitting there for at least a few days, placed precariously in the smack middle of the field where it would be difficult to get in and out without getting crushed, and would also make it hard for anyone to come to his rescue.

“Oh yeah, I’m totally gonna get merc’d...” he mumbled to himself as he punched in the coordinates and took off.

## ??? - DAJORRAN ASTEROID FIELD

41 ABY

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Arriving at the cruiser was not the easiest task, although it seemed a lot of the more dangerous chunks of rock and space debris had been cleared by the ship's entry, which only became more evident when he pulled up to the ship itself.

The hull of the ship looked like someone had done target practice on it.

Some of the holes were definitely made by the asteroid field. However, there were clear signs of a struggle— the scorch of blasterfire was evident around some of the smaller punctures. This ship had been through a struggle before it came to rest here.

The normally nonchalant look on Severin's face quickly slipped away and was replaced with a look of concern. He hoped whoever had been on the ship when it got attacked got out safely. Grabbing his datapad and punching in a quick message to the A.C.E. agent that the ship was totalled and might not be operational, he moved to dock his GX1 to the Patrol Cruiser.

He got a reply back as he was donning his enviro suit.

*Unfortunate. Let us know if it doesn't start and we'll send out a demo team.*

Sev replied back with an affirmative, then slipped on a helmet and got into the airlock. A couple of quick button presses later, and he had boarded the cruiser. The artificial atmo and gravity were gone, and pieces of the ship and circuitry were floating down the dark hall in a slow fashion, their momentum from bouncing off walls and furniture propelling them onwards.

The Kessurian-echani sighed. There was no way there was anyone alive in here.

Using the handles along the hall and several different pieces of architecture, Severin made his way slowly but surely to where the cockpit would be. His trip was uneventful— he found no bodies or anything worth noting, and other than having to dodge a few live wires here and there or parts of the ship completely ripped open, he met no resistance.

The researcher pried open the doors leading to the cockpit using a nearby pipe just far enough for him to slip through and then snaked his way through the opening.

A breath escaped him, soft and sorrowful. Two very thin Torgruta were floating, suspended, holding each other in the zero grav environment of the cockpit. It didn't take a genius or a doctor to see that they had been starving. Their gaunt cheeks, loose clothing, and bone-thin limbs spoke loud enough. A couple.. Holding each other as they passed.

The soft flash of a holocron emanated from between their frozen bodies and Severin felt himself cringe hard at the realization of why he had been sent on this mission. Addyn wanted him to recover the holocron he somehow knew that this couple would have.

They must have gone into debt over this thing, died for it.

He hoped it was worth it.

Taking a deep breath and closing his eyes, he reached in between their bodies and pried the holocron from their grasp. It came loose with the sound of ice sheets tearing and the hybrid had to choke down the vomit he felt rising in his throat. He didn't believe in much, not after everything he had seen, but he still offered a silent prayer to the couple's souls—hoping that they had found each other whenever it was that people went when they died.

With the Holocron secured, the Kessurian-echani moved to the flight controls and attempted to start up the ship. It shuttered once... twice... they ground to a halt and died completely. Severin sighed and sat back in the pilot seat, silver eyes cast up at the ceiling. Of course it wouldn't start.

He looked back at the couple's bodies and made the decision that he wouldn't just leave them here. The chances that they would just be left here when the demolition team came, or their bodies destroyed in the efforts to break the ship down, were too high for his liking. A quick search of the cockpit rewarded him with what he was looking for— a tarp to wrap the bodies in to give them some semblance of honor and privacy.

Once he had them wrapped up well enough, taking care not to be too rough or separate them, he began the trek back to his ship with them in tow. He'd need to get back to Selen quickly or they'd thaw and begin to decompose, or even worse liquify. He pulled the bodies into the airlock of his GX1 and held them carefully in his arms as the cabin pressurized and he was pulled back into the artificial gravity of his ship.

His heart sank when the two bodies barely weighed anything in his arms.

Choking back tears, he carefully carried them to his bed on the ship and laid them down. He'd get a whole new bed if he needed too, but he wasn't just going to leave them on the ground. They had been discarded and disrespected enough.

He walked out and replied to the A.C.E. agent.

*Ship is inoperable. Owners DOA. Bringing in the bodies to Selen. I'll alert the authorities.*

*Ah kark. There goes our chance at a payout.*

The Datapad screen under his fingers cracked with the strength of his grip. These people were dead and all this guy was worried about was his kriffing credits? Severin scoffed and tossed the pad back in his co-pilot seat as he undocked from the cruiser and set his autopilot for Selen.

“Come in, Arcona. I’m bringing in two casualties into the Selen Spaceport. I just found them floating out here in the field. Can I get medics to meet me when I land?”

“Affirmative.”

“Severin? This is Sivall Zoria. I will meet you personally upon landing. Can you confirm that the people you are bringing in are deceased?”

“Yeah, they’ve been out here for a while.”

“That’s.. Heartbreaking. Please try to keep them at temperature. I’ll see you when you land.”

“Affirmative, Aedile.”

A choked sound was all he heard from the other side of the comm before it cut. Severin couldn’t help the chuckle that escaped him— It was so easy to mess with her.