

What is your price?

Xantros

41 ABY, an abandoned warehouse on Nar Shaddaa

Xantros looked at a short Human with long, brown hair and green eyes. The man was sitting tied to a chair in a corner of an abandoned warehouse somewhere on Nar Shaddaa, the moon of Nal Hutta. Both the planet and its moon were famous in whole Galaxy as a wretched hive of scum and villany, worse even than Mos Eisley, a spaceport on Tatooine. There was no better place to do what Xantros had to do. He made few steps towards his prisoner, keeping a safe distance from the man. He kept looking at the Human male for few minutes without speaking any word.

„Was it really worth following me here? You see where did it get you?” asked the Duros.

„I may die, but I will never help you,” answered the prisoner. „And I am not afraid to die for the Collective.”

„So, do you feel fear?” Xantros asked another question.

„I do not,” spoke the Human. His voice was strong and confident. The man was really convinced that he would never betray the Collective nor reveal its secrets.

„*What a mistake to make,*” thought the Force Adept, looking deep into man's eyes. After few moments of silence, he spoke again, „Oh, I am pretty sure that you believe in what you just said, but I believe that I have means to make you tell me what you know.”

„You can try,” said the Collective member. „Whatever will happen, you cannot save yourself nor your friends from the Dark Brotherhood.”

„Certainly, I will try and I will do my best,” confirmed Xantros. „I am not sure about the usefulness of the information, you had access to, but let me assess its value.”

The Duros remained silent for few more minutes as he focused his mind on man's memories and fears. Indeed, the prisoner was indeed determined not to reveal any secrets of the Collective, but just like everyone, the Human was not completely free of fears. The Force Adept grinned evilly, understanding that his enemy had a weakness that could be used to break the Collective servant and to force him to speak.

„I think there are five ways to deal with this situation,” spoke the Duros. „The more cooperative and talkative you are, the less painful the interrogation will be for you, but there is only one way that will be completely free of suffering. This way is you starting to talk right now.”

However, the man remained silent. Xantros sighed. People tended to make things more difficult, mostly for themselves as their stubbornness was only a minor nuisance for the Duros. He had means to deal with all kinds of stubborn people. Their will of power was not an obstacle for him.

„Very well, then. Just remember that your suffering will grow proportionally to your resistance,” explained the Force Adept.

Xantros focused energies of the Force to bring man's deepest fears to the surface. Despite mind tricks being considered a more subtle way to use the Force, there was nothing of subtlety in what he did to the operative of the Collective. There were no visions, no sounds, just pure fear that caused

the man to desire to run away as quickly as he could, but since he was tied to a chair, he could not do anything. The induced fear was growing to the point that the Human started trembling violently and screaming loudly in panic. The Duros allowed man's fear to grow so much that it caused physical pain to the interrogated man, made prisoner's heart race and made the man barely able to breath. Finally, when the Collective operative was on the verge of turning into a catatonic state of mind, Xantros stopped igniting fear in his enemy and gave him half an hour to recover a bit from the traumatic experience.

„Are you ready to talk now?“ asked the Force Adept.

„What...what...did you...do...to...me?“ the prisoner's voice was still trembling.

„And I thought that your leaders, who have the first-hand knowledge about the Force powers available to the members of Dark Brotherhood and Force users in general, would prepare you better to resist such attacks,“ mocked him Xantros. „On the other hand, no description can match the experience itself and very few have will strong enough to resist our tricks. But it is only the beginning. I still have some more aces up my sleeves.“

The Duros once again focused on the Human's mind. He learned that the prisoner had a teenage son whom the man loved very much. Man's son was the primary reason he decided to join the Collective in a hope to get rid of at least one danger from the Galaxy to make it a safer place for his family. Despite all the resolve, the operative of the Collective had at least one weakness that made his resistance futile. Even though Xantros did not find a pleasure in torturing other people, he did not hesitate to use any means necessary to achieve his goals.

„Dad, help me!“ heard the prisoner.

The Human, still tied to the chair, noticed a slim boy tied to a stretching rack. The boy also had brown hair and green eyes. It took the man, still confused by previous torture, to realize that it was his son.

„What are you doing here, Luka? How did he catch and bring you here?“ asked the Collective operative.

„Please, dad, tell him what he wants,“ cried the boy. „He will torture me until you cooperate with him. He is not lying! I am so afraid...I do not want to feel pain! Dad! Please, save me!“

„I will save you, Luka, but I cannot tell him anything. Other Collective operatives would kill us all, if they learned about my betrayal!“

„Dad, I do not want to die,“ sobbed the boy. Few moments later he started screaming, when the torture device stretched his body to its limits. His muscles twitched as they were stretched to maximum. A little bit more and they would be torn apart. Each breath caused him even more pain. It was too much for his father, who started crying.

„Please...stop it...I will tell you everything...Just do not kill my boy,“ stuttered the Human and the vision of his tortured son vanished into thin air.

„I knew that you would make a reasonable decision sooner or later,“ said Xantros and put a holocamera in front of his prisoner. „Now, tell me all you know about the operations and the plans of the Collective, unless you really want me to find, to torture and to kill your son in a special show organized just for you.“