

Vode An/Brother's All

Outskirts of Keldabe

Mandalore

29 ABY

The tunnel shook violently. The sounds and vibrations of the intense bombardment occurring several hundred metres above the gathered Mandalorians rushed through their shelter like water down a drain. Out of the eight armoured soldiers knelt in the cramped confines of the tunnel, only one dared to remove his helmet, placing it on top of the crate in front of him and next to the flickering holocube. The dim light of the cube illuminated easily down the narrow passageways, picking out the silhouettes of the other gathered Mandalorians. One sat directly opposite the bare-headed warrior, his obsidian armour and crimson visor giving him a fearsome demonic look to those gathered round.

“Is it wise to remove your helmet during this bombardment?” He asked, his voice a dull growl as if the man was half-canine. However, from the tone it was quite obvious the soldier wore an amused grin on his face, hidden beneath the unusual visor.

“I won't pass an opportunity to cool down, especially since we're all down here.” Replied the hazel-eyed warrior, his words spoken in a lighter tone than that of his comrade. It seemed that the vibrations had ceased, meaning only that the enemy had finished with the bombardment.

“Next they will deploy troops...” Came the voice of another warrior further down the tunnel.
“...and from there, things get fun.”

The other Mandalorians exchanged vacant glances immediately after the man spoke. The warrior with the crimson visor turned to the direction of the speaker, tilting his head slightly as he replied to the distant soldier.

“None of us doubt that, Bra'shik. Let's just hope these Vong are as skilled as we've heard.”

Murmurs of agreement came from those around the seated warrior, but they soon quickly died down as a ninth warrior clambered down along the tunnel to the small gathering of Mandalorians. By his rigid and well-worn armour, not to mention all the customizations and decorations added over time, it was clear that this was the squad-leader. His presence was one of sheer intimidation, a warrior who was easily capable of boosting the morale of his men with his appearance alone.

“This is it my brothers!” Boomed the Commander. His voice was hardened, indicating the man

was an experienced and dangerous Mandalorian. All eyes were focused on this one soldier, everyone was clearly paying attention for the coming words.

“It seems they have exhausted their ships of ammunition and are now dropping down onto the surface so that we may kill them for their stupidity.”

A few men laughed, the rest remained silent, nodding in agreement.

“We shall show them the true meaning of fear! Of what it means to face the sons and daughters of Mandalore!”

The warriors cheered at their leader, chanting “*Mandalorian glory! Mandalorian Might!*” over and over again. Fala’ner turned back around to face his closest friend and leant across the crate, raising his voice to be heard over the yelling.

“It looks like this is it, my friend. It’ll be an honour to fight by your side for the first time.”

Kalon Dane Beviin reached forward, picking his helmet up from off the crate. He wasted no time placing it back over his head, knocking the sides of his head with his fists several times to make sure the fit was right.

The son of Beviin looked up at Fala’ner, a smile appearing on his own face as he reached out with his hand, offering it to the older warrior.

“As it will be to fight at yours, my brother.” He replied confidently as the other Mandalorian clasped his arm. The contact of the armour resonated down the tunnel for several seconds before subsiding. Though by that time the group of Mandalorians were gone, already making their way down the passageways which would take them to the surface.

---<+>---

Silence was the only thing the Mandalorian could hear, besides a distant ringing which seemed to never stop. He saw nothing but darkness and could only feel the rough, metallic plates which made up the street outside of the cantina.

Only moments before the explosion, Kalon had been making his way from the establishment, searching for the man who had betrayed him so many years ago.

Fala’ner Vexus Beviin and Kalon had known each other ever since their childhood, being the same age and having grown up in the same Clan. They had forged a bond of friendship under the harshness of Sergeant Solus’ca and his combat trials. This connection had later turned the two into brothers of war and conquest, defending their homeworld against the Yuuzhan Vong and later on fighting the galactic invaders at Tholatin and Caluula Station. It had all changed when

Kalon was invited to join the Dark Brotherhood, impressing Sanguinius Tsucyra Entar enough during a duel on Dxun, one of the moons of planet Onderon.

The Mandalorian had been one of the few who raised voice against Kalon leaving, sighting that it was his duty to his people to remain and help rebuilt after the Yuuzhan Vong conflicts as well as continue to serve Mandalore, as they all were born to do. As a result, the two left bitter at each other, each thinking the other was in the wrong.

It had not seemed like much of a problem until a year later, when during a leave of absence from Arcona, Kalon was attacked by his former brother and several well-trained thugs. Although he easily defeated the attackers, fighting Fala'ner had been difficult, the warrior disappearing before any finalisation of their conflict could be reached. This had led to another year passing whilst Kalon gathered information, the results leading him to the cantina in the lower districts of Coruscant.

Unfortunately it seemed that he had been expected.

“Resourceful bastard.” Gaspd Kalon, slowly making his way to his feet. His hearing and eyesight began to return as he staggered, almost falling to the ground once again. The world went from being completely black to a spinning array of colours, but after several more seconds each section of colours began to take shape into buildings and people.

The explosion had come from a speeder thirty metres away, if it wasn't for the armour the Arconan was wearing than it would have almost certainly killed him. He could feel sharp pains in his arms and legs but ignored them, noticing artificial lighting of the streets reflecting against a fleeing armoured figure.

“A short-ranged detonator. I guess you're not that resourceful after all.” Grumbled Kalon, instinctively and gradually breaking out into a run to pursue the escaping individual.

The Obelisk had always been far more agile than the other Mandalorian, as such he began to catch up with the armoured man despite his recent injuries. His journey took him further into the bowels of the city world, past the lowlife scum that clung to the streets looking for any way to gain a credit.

Shoving aside the wide assortment of locals that wandered aimlessly into his way, Kalon watched as Fala'ner took a sudden right, disappearing in an alleyway squeezed between two ugly looking buildings.

The Arconan slowed as he reached the entrance to the narrow passage. It was long and dark, light catching several still objects on the far side. As he began to walk forward, he could only think of what tricks his former brother could have up his sleeve, if any. His thought was disturbed when he heard a click.

“*Osik!*” Swore the Mandalorian, looking down to see a tripwire linked to a basic explosive, similar yet less powerful than the one that he had been caught in earlier. He used all the strength he could muster to sprint forward, hoping silently that there were no more tripwires or traps along the alleyway.

Kalon dove forward as the explosion went off more than ten metres behind him, the shockwave carrying him a short distance before he hit the ground. As he connected with the rusted panels beneath him he tucking himself over, rolling to avoid damage from the impact. Continuing with the roll, the Mandalorian expertly used the momentum to propel himself to his feet, not missing a single stride in his step as he continued to run down the dark lane and back into the light.

It turned out that the thin alley led to a small platform around seven metres by nine metres wide, a small, thin sheet of cheap iron jutting out from the large complex which made up the majority of the district. The drop around the platform would last for miles and the Arconan made a mental note of this as he walked onto it. The landing platform had obviously been for modified speeders bringing in cargo for the entertainment buildings nearby, but due to the blatant state of disrepair Kalon could tell it had not been used in some time.

His eyes trailed to the man standing at the far end of the landing platform, facing away from him. He could clearly see the obsidian-coloured Mandalorian armour.

“*Vod.*” Mocked Kalon, removing his lightsaber from his belt and lighting it, the blade casting a sapphire shadow over his sage armour.

Fala’ner turned around, his crimson visor imitating the hatred both men now felt for each other.

“Traitor.” He spat, unsheathing his *Beskad*, the silver edges of the blade perfectly jagged much like the teeth from a sawfish. “You will die for what you have done.”

“I’m the betrayer?” Kalon mused, his tone of voice remaining ice cold as was his twisted sense of humour. “You broke our creed twice by running away, meaning you’re nothing more than a coward.”

The insulting words proved too much for Fala’ner, the Mandalorian roaring out some offensive warcry before charging at the Dark Jedi.

Blades clashed, the *Beskar* material imbedded in the argent weapon sufficient enough to withstand contact with a lightsaber. Sparks flew across the platform as the two Mandalorians locked against each other, stances differing yet both evidently practised to perfection.

The Obelisk managed to break the lock, dropping to one leg and letting Fala’ner’s weapon pass millimetres above his helmet, swiping with his own blade in an attempt to cripple the warrior.

Thanks to the tough training regime that had taken up most of his childhood along with his impressive combat experience, Fal'ner managed to pull back just in time. The blue saber came into contact with the surface of his leg plates, burning a line through the black armour but causing no real damage to his skin.

Aggravated, the Supercommando forced his blade down onto the saber, locking it against the platform where it began to slice through. Before Kalon could recover, his opponent's knee collided with his face with enough force to crack his visor and push him back to the floor. He lost the grip of his weapon, it instantly deactivating upon the loss of his touch. If he had let go of it seconds later than it would have finished cutting through the platform and the Arconan would have lost it.

Kalon rolled out the way of the warrior's secondary attack, the lunge missing the Galerian and the blade hitting against the iron ground with a loud clank.

"You're out of weapons, *di'kut*." Sneered the obsidian-armoured Mandalorian, slowly advancing on the taller man with his weapon raised. "What a disappointment, you're just as weak as one of my Clan's unproven warriors."

"No." Replied Kalon, pulling his helmet off and dropping it to the ground. "I'm not."

The sight of his glowing red eyes made Fala'ner gasp unexpectedly and hesitate.

The second of confusion on the warrior's part was all Kalon needed. With perfect precision, he used his knowledge of the Hapan combat form to lunge forward with his fist stretched out. The impact pushed the veteran back before he had chance use his blade.

The distance between the pair was acceptable to Kalon, jutting out the palm of his hand to conjure up a Force Push.

"Goodbye, old friend."

Fala'ner opened his eyes in sudden realisation a second before the Force ability pushed him back even more. Helplessly, the Mandalorian reached the edge of the platform but could not grab onto the edges in time, sending him plummeting towards the ground miles below.

Kalon stood motionless for several minutes, his thoughts blank as he eventually picked up his helmet and used his Force abilities to pull his saber to him. Placing the weapon away, he looked over towards Falaner's *beskad* that he had dropped before falling.

Walking over to it, Kalon knelt down and examined it. He remembered the weapon very well, the last time he had held it was when he had just finished making his own and the two were

comparing each other's.

Such memories, happening a long time ago before the Brotherhood and before the Yuuzhan Vong filled the Obelisk with a sudden feeling of immense sorrow. It was an almost alien emotion to him, but he felt it nonetheless.

"I'm sorry, vod." Kalon whispered, holding the blade in his free hand as he looked around one last time before turning on his heels and leaving through the alleyway he just came in.

His journey to exact revenge on his closest friend and brother was over, and yet he felt little satisfaction knowing that it had been his fault for leaving his people and joining the Brotherhood those few years ago.

Such dread remained with him as he walked the metallic district that had not changed at all since he last sprinted through it several minutes ago, in pursuit of the man he both loved and despised.

-End-