

Dark Jedi Brotherhood

Am I mad, in a coma, or back in time?



Obelisk Exarch Rian Aslar
#10701

Dramatis Personae

Rian Aslar; Dark Jedi, Consul of Taldryan/slave (pantoran male)
Keirdagh Taldrya Cantor, Proconsul of Taldryan (human male)
Brannis; CEO of Brannis Personal Security (zabrak male)
Vodo Biask Taldrya; Consul of Taldryan (twi'lek male)
Andan Taldrya Marshall; Proconsul of Taldryan (zabrak male)
Jannis Danal; Diplomat of the Kr'tal government (zeltron male)
Recan Kirske (the Rattataki); former Jedi Knight (rattataki male)
Rune Durjes; Slave holder (neimoidian male)
Nawera; thug/bounty hunter (twi'lek male)
Boruk the Hutt; local bossban (hutt male)
Siria Tar; pilot (miralan female)

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A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away. ...

1/Package from the Past

37 ABY

Taldryan Great Hall

Rian Aslar, Son of Taldrya and reigning Consul of the Clan rolled out of bed and went into the refresher to splash some cool water onto his face, washing away the last remains of sleepiness. Moving quietly, he made his way back from the refresher through the extravagantly furnished living room, only to pause for a brief moment to watch the first glimpses of sunrise over the near mountain ranges.

He proceeded out onto the open balcony where he stopped and inhaled the fresh morning air. Leaning over the railing he stretched out his view as far as he could, nearly piercing through the mountains and watching the soothing waves of the ocean at the opposite side of them.

"What are you thinking off, hun?"

Rian turned his head, his gaze instantly fixed on woman standing at the threshold of the balcony, the bedsheet that was draped around her delicate features, the only thing holding off the chill morning air. A curl from her shoulder long black hair hung sleep-tousled into her beautiful face. The olive skin of her face was only partially visible in the growing daylight, yet her lips were smiling at him.

"I thought of how happy I should be." the Pantoran replied, a similar smile on his lips as hers. He made his way back in, kissing her softly as he passed by her. "Sorry for waking you up, sweetheart."

Inside he returned into the bedroom, dressed into a light combat robe with deep sitting hood and lastly scooped up his weaponry from the ornate nightstand on the side of the bed – always under the observing form of his girlfriend. It was always the same, Rian stood up early at the morning, watch the sunrise on the balcony and then return into his private chambers to dress up and go on to his morning excercises before he would return an hour later to share breakfast with her before they would leave together for their normal daywork, still there was nothing on it that she didn't liked about that.

When he was done and about to leave she pulled close and wrapped her arms around his muscular frame, kissing him dearly. Then she whispered the same question that she'd whispered he last mornings after she spent the night with him "Why don't you skip your excercises and spend the time with me?"

"You know, I can't do that, I will be back soon." He kissed her for a final time, then left her for his morning excercises.

Upon exiting his private chambers, Rian was barely overrun by an Acolyte of the Clan, stopping just in time so he avoided to crush into the hulking form of the Consul. The young man bowed slightly before the Obelisk, his chest heaving heavily.

"My Lord, I was ordered to deliver you this message, it is from a person called Brannis and it demands your immediate response." the young man said, handing him a small datapad.

The Consul nodded and took the pad to read its content. The message was brief and so far only told him that Brannis had stumbled over a personal package from Rian's former mentor that featured a hint that its content was for Rian but that the package was otherwise encrypted and thus the male zabrak requested him to receive the package personally from him. Sounds like a change of plans, he thought, Siria won't be happy with that.

He dismissed the still waiting acolyte with a nod. "Thank you, now deliver a message to Lord Cantor that I will be on a brief leave for the rest of the week."

"Of course, my Lord."

Leaving for the closest turbolift, the Pantoran fished his comlink from the belt and started to deliver orders to get his ship ready for leave.

Out on the landing pad Rian took the last step that would take him aboard the *Expedition*. Down here where the near mountains still bathed everything into shadows, the air remained chill from the fading night. He smelled moist mixed with the ozone from the star yacht's engines getting hot for a quick departure of the Consul. He greeted the crew that fueled his ship and quickly bowed before him as he passed by them.

Rian took seat in the pilots chair and ran a final preflight-check, including to open a com channel to space-control. "My Lord Taldrya, you are clear for take off and have a nice flight." The voice of the officer at the other side of the channel said and Rian took the *Expedition* into the sky.

Upon breaking the planet's atmosphere and passing through the planetary's defense shield the com signaled an incoming call.

"Rian, is there anything I should be concerned off?" The Proconsul looked worried even at the fact of something as pointless as the Consul taking a short leave of absence. All too often the heads of Taldrya have taken off on private matters, only to get lost during their own little adventures, and thus he appreciated the call of the bearded man. Yet Rian wasn't up to get lost on such a private road trip as his predecessor.

"No, not at all Keirdagh, it is just some family business on Teth, as I told Kooks, I will be back at the end of the week." Rian replied, a wry smile on his lips.

"All right, just don't get lost on that business, I don't want to have to send Kincaid looking after you, got that."

"No need for that, I will be back soon, I promise." Closing the channel, Rian prepped the ship for its jump to Teth and set the chrono to alarm him a couple minutes before the *Expedition* would reach its destination, as he felt like spending the trip in the ship's stateroom thinking about the package Brannis has found from his old mentor. Stars turned to streaks as the *Expedition* jumped into hyperspace.

It has been a while since he had heard from his childhood friend Brannis, he too has been a slave of Durjes, the ruthless Neimoidian who had owned Rian in what felt like an eternity but was merely a decade ago. Together they had grown up, trained and fought in the various arenas Durjes had thrown them in. And later, when Rian had traveled to Cato Neimoidia where Durjes owned a personal retreat to take revenge on his former owner as part of his Journeymen trials, it was Brannis who had helped him to overcome a temporal mental numbness after Durjes had lured him into trap

and poisoned him with a neurotoxin that interrupted him from using any Force techniques.

However, after Rian sought revenge on Durjes, Rian used his former owners wealth to create a fake business and appointed Brannis as the CEO of it so he could never be connected to it while still being up to date and take advantage of the business and the wealth it would produce, in return for appointing Brannis as CEO, Rian ordered him to search for informations about the life and origin of his parents. Now uncovering a sealed and encrypted package from Recan was more than enough for Rian to leave and give his childhood friend a visit. Rian walked down into the stateroom and let himself sink onto the bed awaiting the alarm of the chronometer that told him the arrival on Teth.

2/Setting up new Business

31 ABY

Planet Teth

Rian woke up with a start at the sound of the chronometer indicating his arrival on Teth, he must have drifted into a slight slumber during the flight, however at rolling out of the bed, he felt an undefinable dizziness. Something felt strange as if the place he was in was a different one, also he wasn't alone! There were voices coming from the *Expedition's* cockpit. His hand sank to the lightsaber dangling at his side as he cautiously stalked the way back to the cockpit, ready to bring the weapon to life at the slightest indication of threat. Inside the cockpit, a single man sat in the pilot's seat, listening to music from a galaxy-wide broadcaster. Just when the view of hyperspace through the canopy unraveled and the unknown pilot rose from his seat, Rian snapped the azure blades of his lightsaber to life pointing the one working end at the man. The red-skinned man was about the same age as him and wore a heavy robe bearing the Expansionary Forces insignia mixed with ornate trappings from the Kr'tal system, making the consul hesitate for a brief moment. "Who are you? What are you doing on my ship?"

"E-Excuse me, I was just on my way to you to announce our arrival at Teth." The man stammered, his hands raised in front of him to calm down the situation. "I am Envoy Jannis Danal, but you can call me Jannis I thought his Lordship Consul Biask Taldrya had briefed you on the details of this mission before our departure."

"Consul Biask Taldrya?"

"Y-Yes, the currently reigning Consul of Clan Taldryan. Are you alright?"

"I know who Master Biask Taldrya is, but he isn't the reigning Consul of the Clan, I am!"

"With all due respect, but I have received the mission details directly from the Lord Consul and the Proconsul Andan Taldrya Marshall, see." The man scooped a small holoprojector from within his robe, starting the recorded message once he was sure it was in sight of the Pantoran.

Indeed it was the image of the Twi'lek Son of Taldrya who spoke. "Envoy Danal, Taldryan has had to pay a high price in the recent war against the Yuuzhan Vong, to ensure our Clan will continue to prosper we need to seek new business partners all over the galaxy."

The image changed to that of the zabrak Proconsul, who continued with the mission briefing. "Bossban Boruk the Hutt has answered our call to set up a new commerce lane that will open us a foot into Hutt Regime and he will be your lead contact in this matter. You will meet up

with him on the World of Teth to finish up the details of our business contract with the hutts.

Switching back to the image of Vodo Biask Taldrya, the Twi'lek continued. "Of course you won't be alone on this mission. To back you up on the mission and for your protection, you will meet up with one of our most capable Dark Jedi, he has already been briefed and you will meet him aboard the Expedition, Good luck envoy Danal."

The image went out flickering. "See, just as I told you, so I already told you my name, but what is yours?"

Rian's legs went numb for an instant, everything felt upside down. The Pantoran had experienced visions of the Force before, but this time everything felt different, instead of being just an observer, he was actually a part of it and when he opened his mouth to tell a name it was his own voice and it was his very name it spoke: "Rian, Rian Aslar."

"Nice to meet you Rian, I am sure this trip will be an easy assignment for the both of us. But now, I should get us down onto the planet if you don't mind."

Rian's mind somersaulted. "N-No, I'll leave that to your hands," now it was his time to stammer. "I think I will go back to the refresher, I feel a little bit dizzy."

"I was just about to ask, you look a little bit chalky to be honest, are you sure you are alright?"

"Yes, it is nothing, I will be back on top by the time we settle down on the ground."

Rian shut down the lightsaber and left the cockpit, leaving the one who called himself Jannis with the landing of the yacht, as he had more important things on his mind. Down in the small refresher Rian sealed the door behind him. His mind was still tossing with the worst of possibilities, what was going on? It was him who was the reigning Consul of Taldryan, yet the holo has shown Vodo as the reigning Consul, also he has mentioned the Vong, but the Vong Incursion was even before he has joined the Brotherhood, at that time he has still been a slave and gladiator onT.... A really bad feeling spread out in the Pantoran's gut. Next to the door was a small interface, accessing it he searched the internal systems for the accurate date. 31ABY, Was there anything that could make this situation even more worse?"

Throughout the internal com-channel came the voice of the envoy. "Touching down in 90 seconds, we got luck, the spaceport is heavily crowded due to some local festival, but the bossban has granted us landing place on his private landing pad."

It could, the Exarch thought, the annual huttese championship was the only festival on Teth, a festival of blood and gore, slaveholders from all over the galaxy met there and tossed their best fighters into the fighting pits, either against each other or against the most fiercest predators to fight for their bare lives, but that wasn't the point at all, it was the summary of both time and the event that made him shiver. In 31 ABY the events of the huttese championship have set a series of events into motion that eventually accumulated in Rian's escape from Durjes and his joining of Taldryan and the Dark Brotherhood and it also meant that both Durjes and his ontourage as well as his younger self were on Teth at the moment. What should he be doing now? If anyone on Teth, especially Durjes or one of his thugs would see him they would run rampage at him. But staying aboard the Expedition wasn't an option as well, as it would raise suspicions from sidens the envoy on him. What ever he was going to do, he would have to be careful to neither be seen by anyone who could be a risk to him or the envoy's mission and hope that whatever he does, the reason behind all this will reveal itself soon.

Rian left the refresher and met Jannis at the airlock, stopping him before he could walk down the lowering ramp. "Are you ready Rian?"

Rian hesitated. "Almost, Jannis, please, could you do me one favor? There are people here on Teth who under no circumstances should be aware of my presence or it would risk the outcome of this mission."

"Risk the outcome of this mission? What have you done, have you kissed the local bossban's slimy daughter? Jannis replied giggling.

"Haha...no, let's just say I left a heavy imprint on some citizens in the past."

"Alright, alright, I guess that was some form of Jedi business right? And what may I call you while we deal with the hutts?"

Rian hesitated for a moment, then finally said: "Everything is fine for me, just not Rian."

"As you wish."

The egress ramp touched the surface with a gentle thud and the two made their way out of the Expedition, with Jannis leading the way. Upon touching the ground, Rian lowered his dark hood as much as he could until only the tip of his chin remained barely visible. A small welcoming party has already gathered near the yacht and as soon as he recognized them a rusty C3-series protocol droid teetered towards them. "Welcome distinguished visitors, my master is more than pleased that you have followed his call to meet him here on Teth, may I lead you to him."

Jannis nodded and the group started toward the spaceport's exit. The streets were as busy as he remembered them from his previous life. With so many people crowding this district of Teth's capital it was easy to blend into them as they moved back and forth. Among all of them buzzing around, doing their day-to-day business nobody paid any attention to a lone protocol droid followed by two humans, what at least for the moment made the Exarch feeling safe.

They reached their destination a few minutes later: an particularly lavishly building – the residence of Boruk, the Hutt. Entering the public area of the palace the outer appearance didn't betray the inside, as they slid into a luxurious bar and casino.

"Please wait here for a moment, I am going to inform my master upon your arrival," The droid said. "feel free to get a drink while I will inform my master."

"Alright, we will wait." Jannis replied, already sitting on one of the barstools summoning the barkeeper to him. "Can two thirsty men get one of your best?"

The barkeeper nodded and placed two more or less clean glasses and filled them halfway with an milky-opalescent liquor while Rian took a look at the assembled visitors. Black-market dealers, thugs, bounty hunters, dancers and gamblers, from all genders and species all over the galaxy, and for all unholiness those he wouldn't wanted to see under all circumstances.

Durjes and his most favored thug, Nawera. They had just risen from a table at the far end of the cantina where they left a lone person, the very person that was the one known to him as 'Rattataki', sitting upon a bottle of the same liquor that has just been placed in front of Rian. The

two made their way straight for the barcounter, forcing Rian to turn away from them so they couldn't see them. Nawera was casually slamming his shoulders at other guests, as Rian remembered he had done all too often. Bullying those not as powerful as him, but sadly found no one adding up to his provoking. As they made their way along the counter and past Rian, he considered to do his former self a favor and kill them. He could simply draw his lightsaber, with a fast flicker it would all be over... But no for as long as he didn't know what had caused him being here, he shouldn't interfere with the timeline eventually causing events not to trigger as they should. Instead he turned back to the counter and watched Jannis lifting his glass. The Envoy took a swig of the liquor and then shuddered. "Boy o boy, this has an acquired taste, you should try it."

"No, thanks, but your shudder looks like this stuff could etch away the skin inside my mouth."

"My master is now ready to attend to you humble visitors. May I ask you to follow."

3/Whispers

The Droid let them to a sidedoor and from there through a series of short corridors until they reached an ornate door guarded by a security squad, armed with blasters of various kinds that formed a slight semi-circle around them at their arrival, blocking the door successfully from them. A heavy build human, probably the leader of the squad, judging by the air of authority he thought he radiated, raised his voice. "Your weapons please."

With a swift motion of his hand, the doubleblade was in his hand and lit, the tip of one blade resting only millimeters from the leading guardsmen. "Come and try." The others rushed in training their blasters at the envoy and Rian to force the issue.

"Gentlemen, please there is no reason for such hostility," Jannis interjected, his hand rested on Rian's shoulder. "We come in peace and at request of your master. Let the matter drop, or I fear my friend and I will as well leave at once again."

The envoy's words were addressed to the guardsmen and Rian knew well enough that this was a favor of Jannis that he would eventually have to pay back sooner than later, but it was a fact that under no circumstances he would relinquish his lightsaber.

The heavy built guy made a call and whispered a few things into the comlink, then nodded his acceptance of the situation and made his men part so that the three could continue into what would reveal itself the inner throneroom of Boruk the hutt.

Boruk the Hutt was a greenish, heaving, flaccid lump of flesh, only some other Hutt could possibly find attractive. At the moment of their arrival he had his back to them, his hands folded behind his massive body, staring out the polarized viewport into the casino below they have been waiting just minutes ago. Off to his left two of his slaves sat on a small bench. Both were Rutian and were chained to the wall with chains long enough so they could reach the middle of the room so they could entertain the slimy worm that owned them. When one of them looked up and eyed the visitors with sad eyes Rian more than understood what they might feel like.

The Hutt heaved himself around, laughing a deep hollow laughter. Jannis bowed slightly in front of him, gesturing the Exarch to do as he did, but Rian did not. "So this is the envoy of the mighty Clan Taldryan, but who is the one that accompanies him?"

"Humble Bossban," Jannis filed in. "this is my adviser in esoterical matters, and he would prefer to go unnamed for the time being."

Again the Hutt made his bellowing laughter, pointing at a small vidscreen at the wall that showed an image of Rian pointing the working end of his lightsaber at the main guards throat.. "Oh, I know what he is, and it is all to understandable that your masters have sent one of their own to accompany you."

"Bossban, it wasn't our cause to deceive you."

"I haven't said you did, and for as long as he doesn't interfere with our negotiations, this won't be what I am thinking."

"Of course he won't."

"Good, good. But for now our talk will be over, my servants have prepared an accomodation for you that you will surely find to be of an.... acquired taste... We will talk again later after dinner." Hands clasping over his bulging gut, the Hutt dismissed them.

Again Jannis bowed slightly and turned to leave, the Exarch straight in his wake. Outside they were instantly met by the protocol droid. "Distinguished visitors, let me take you to the accomodation my master has prepared for you. He said gesturing toward a corridor leading away from the throne room.

"Jannis, have you ever dealt with the hutts before?"

"No, I didn't, you?"

"Well, to be honest, I did not in person, but this one... I can't say yet what he has on his mind, but it makes me worry that he has used the exact words you have used down on the bar. We have to be careful while dealing with him."

Jannis stopped and turned coming face-to-face as close as possible, then whispered. "Rian one of the first lessons you learn at the diplomatic corps is to grew yourself a sixth sense as well as a second pair of eyes to cover everything, because you never know when your potential ally becomes a threat. And my sixth sense is currently a constant ringing in my mind."

"Distuingished visitors, please this way." The droid said from up ahead, gesturing at a stairway winding upward circularly. A few minutes later they arrived at their prepared accomodation, it had a spacious living room with several doors leading away on either side, the opposite end of the room was covered with large windows, giving an extended view upon the planets capital.

"Hopefully these accomodation will satisfy you."

"It will serve its purpose, thank you."

"You are free to move freely inside my masters palace and make use of any of its amenities before dinner. There is a fine array of baths, restaurants, casinos and dancing halls as well as the local fighting pit."

"Thank you, but we'd prefer to refresh ourselves before dinner."

"Of course, but let me add, that my master has granted you a preferably credit for the casino or the fighting pit."

"We are thankful for your masters confidence for us." Jannis said forcing the droid toward and out of the door before closing it in front of his shiny head."

4/On the right way

"I thought we never get rid of that droid." Jannis said, his eyes turning from side to side. "Ah there it is." He walked over to a single sculpture, fishing a small device from inside a pocket of his jacket. He scanned the sculpture using the device until he found what he was looking for. With a single burst of electricity the device in Jannis hand overloaded the bugging device.

"Ah, now we can talk without being spied. Now tell me, what was that with the guys down in the bar?"

Rian who was still standing near the door met the gaze of the envoy. "What do you mean?"

"Listen, haven't i told you about the diplomat's sixth sense and the second eyes? The hasty turning when they rose from the table and walked along us at the bar... Were this the guys why I should avoid calling your name?"

Rian hesitated. "Your hesitation is enough, no matter what it is you could have easily dealt with them down there, why didn't you?"

"I didn't wanted to risk our mission."

"Bullshit, that guys have been some low level guys who no one would cry for if they would die. So don't try to fool me."

"I really can't tell you about them."

"Fine then, I need to call your Consul and tell them about our missions progress, want me to tell them anything or do you want to talk to them on your own?"

Again Rian hesitated. He was part of all this, but still his other self wasn't part of Taldryan, from the envoy's mission briefing he recalled that neither Vodo nor Andan has mentioned his name, what if they have never meant him to be part of the mission but any other Dark Jedi of Taldryan, cause at this time he still wasn't part of Taldryan.

"No, I will make give them my heads up later, make your call, I think I will make a walk around the block."

"Well then take your walk, but be back in time for the dinner, oh and next time be a little bit more respectful to the Hutt."

Rian left their accomondation and the palace, picking a direction at random. The streets were still heavily crowded and nobody paid any attention to the lonely person. Inside his mind it was

pretty much like in the streets, his mind still somersaulted on the how but more importantly on the why he has slipped through time. After a while he found himself in front of fighting pit, a large circular arena with a VIP-box stretching over the center of it. His eyes caught the list of scheduled fights for the festival. Following each row he found his own name on a fight scheduled to happen tomorrow, but it wasn't as it should be, the fight that was scheduled was against another fighter not against a young rancor. This couldn't be true. *It is us, who are defining our future, do what must be done* – a voice said inside his mind. Even more questions were filling his mind now, the voice inside his head felt familiar, still it was unrecognizable to him – *You know what you have to do now, do you?* In his mind one piece after another of the puzzle started to make sense after all, yes there was one person he will have to talk to. After all it has been the Rattataki who has told Rian to join Taldryan and maybe it was him to convince the old man to do that as well with his younger self. With re-newed purpose Rian turned on his heels and made his way back the palace, hoping the Rattataki was still there sitting at the table. Upon entering he was already awaited by Jannis. Damn, he must have totally forgotten about the time as the envoy said the Hutt had already called after them for dinner.

The dinner was mostly lavishly with Boruk's servants having arranged a meal, they could only dream of. Still the hutt's manners on how to appropriately eating were still something one need to get used to. A total of seven courses have been served to them while a couple of slaves danced for their entertainment. Both Jannis and Rian have long been full at the last course. Once they were done the Hutt led them into another side chamber and soon after the protocol droid appeared, bearing a tray of drinks and even more food. The droid crossed to a near table, placed the tray before them, and handed each a drink. It stepped back and left the room.

"Hopefully you enjoyed the dinner," the Hutt said, once the droid has left the room. "Now let's talk about business. So what is the benefit for the Hutts to do business with your Clan envoy."

Luckily the envoy chimed in, as politics have never been something Rian was much into, especially when he had other things on his mind. Listening to their negotiations only half-hearted, Rian was entirely caught in his thoughts about how to manage to talk to the Rattataki without divulge too much. Still he ended up watching out of the window at the fighting pit some distance away as the sun slowly sunk beneath the horizon.

"Patchu-jaaaa," The hutt said in a defensive manner. "you came here to set up a trade agreement, isn't that what you have come for envoy?"

"Still you are pushing too far Boruk. Yes we came here to negotiate and sign a new trade agreement with the hutts but not at these conditions, I mean 25 percentage discount on Tibanna gas deliveries and 20 percentage on arms and weapons, I won't agree to such conditions."

"Then maybe I should start talking to someone who will be more open to our conditions, someone who better understand the importance of a trading agreement with us. A person of more importance to your clan as you envoy." The hutt continued, heaving his massive body toward the Exarch still watching the sundown. "Master Jedi, what is your opinion in this matter?"

Thrown off his thoughts Rian faced the hutt. "Uhm... what?"

"I was just telling your envoy, that if he hasn't the authority to agree with our conditions to the outstanding trading agreement, you might have."

"You don't even consider to overthrow me, do you?"

"You are a lucky man envoy, your adviser seems to haven't listened to us at all, he seems to be more interested in the fighting pit. Maybe if I offer you a more competitionary agreement." The lips of the hutt broadenend into something merely resembling a cheeky grin. "Teth is known to see some of the best gladiators of the universe during the annual championship. Some are even known to be strong enough to even challenge a rancor with bare hands."

"Not at all." Rian interrupted smoothly, receiving nothing but a questioning glare from Jannis. "I know there is one gladiator on Teth at this moment can not only challenge a rancor but even win against one in the arena."

"Haha, that is what I was talking about envoy, see your adviser is a sportsman. How about this, the fighter, the Master Jedi talked of against my rancor. Isn't that something of your interest?"

"What do you mean Boruk." Jannis demand to know.

"Isn't that obvious? Your fighter against mine, the winner get all, if the fighter wins, I will sign the agreement to all your conditions as you will to mine if the fighter lose."

"You must be kidding?" Jannis burst in, his face red-hot with rage. "You can't even think of agreeing to that, do you? What am I thinking, of course you do, I can even see it in your face."

"No Jannis, you don't even know anything." Rian responded trying to seem as calculating as possible. "Yes Boruk, I agree to your offer, my fighter against your rancor, but with only an discount of fifteen repective ten percentage, take it or leave it hutt."

The hutt laughed. "Now this is what I understand by negotiating. I agree to that Jedi, so once the fight is over our trading agreement will be sealed."

Rian nodded, feeling the fixing gaze of Jannis burning him to a charred pile. He turned, leaving the hutt looking out of the window. "I will tell your droid the name of the fighter Boruk."

5/Another Point of View

By the time Rian passed the double-door leading out of the dining room, he was stopped by Jannis.

"What the fuck have you done Rian."

"I told you to not use my name, Jannis."

"That was before you have fucked up my life man. I want to know what is going on and I want to know it now, until that I will talk to you as I want to."

"I already told you that I can't do that, there is too much at stake. But trust me, the fighter wont lose that fight, I know that."

"You mean, you have that strange feeling in your gut that makes you think you know. That is bullshit, no ordinary man can fight a rancor and survive it."

"No, I do know that he can and will win this fight."

"For the sake of our lives, I hope you are right, Rian. Now let me send a message to the Consul that there will be an agreement to be declared within the next day." Jannis said, leaving the Obelisk standing alone in the empty hall whispering after the envoy. "Trust me Jannis, I know, because it has been me who fought the rancor down in the pit."

On his way to the bar, Rian stopped to tell Boruk's protocol droid the name of the fighter for the next day. The droid handed him a datapad with all fighters available and Rian marked his name from the list.

The Rattataki was still sitting facedown at the same table as earlier that day, but the bottles of liquor have multiplied since he has last seen him. The man's face was determinedly hidden from view, as if his last conscious thought was to be at another place and time.

Rian walked slowly through the room, eyes and mind peering into every corner, studying the faces and minds he found there for any sign of threat. He took a final look around, making sure that no one paid any attention to either him or the Rattataki. Then he kicked the table, startling his mentor from the past awake.

The Rattataki lifted his head with a jerk and looked at him through glassy eyes. "I've paid for this table, so whoever you are, leave me alone."

"I never expected to see you alive again-"

"I know that voice." The Rattataki's brows tightened. "Is that you Rian? You know that if that is you, you will be punished when Durjes learns about you running around here."

"Not quite," Rian leaned closer and lowered his voice. "old friend."

He blinked his eyes. "It must be you Rian, it's all you, your voice, your figure, your smell, you even leave the same imprint in the - "

" - Force." The Exarch finished the words of the Rattataki.

"And still you say you aren't him." the Rattataki said, slumping back into his chair, now looking more weary than drunken. "So who are you?"

"I said I am not quite the man you think I am. I have grown since I saw you the last time. I have learned the ways of the Force as you have told me when we – " It made no sense telling the man about his death at the hands of Durjes during their escape from his slavery. " - parted."

"You can't lie to me, Rian."

"I know of your past old friend, that is why I came here to talk to you. I need someone to bring some more light into my situation and I think only you can do that Jedi."

"I am no Jedi anymore. You should know that."

"Still you refer to your connection to the Force. Listen, even I don't know what has caused me to be here but still I am."

The Rattataki turned his head in anticipation. "And now you think I can tell you what to do

to get back? I don't know about time travel or visions, your father and I have been sent out to seek out and destroy the spreading darkness not to research the Ways of the Force in its unifying ways." The old man hesitated. "Master Yoda would surely have had an answer for you, something that says all and nothing at the same time, but I am not him."

"Don't worry old friend, I am not here to ask for your advice, but to righten some things."

"Rian, I promised your father that I will take care of you till my last breath."

"I know, and I know as well that you have promised him that you will help me to fulfill my destiny."

"What do you mean?"

"I have been on Tython, I have visited the Jedi Necropolis and passed the trials of its council." Rian leaned forward again. "You have to promise me something like you have promised it to my father. By now Durjes should have promised me to be free once I have won the next fight, but that is a ruse. He will order Nawera to kill me, no matter what, you must promise me to help me escape Durjes and flee to Karufr so I can join the Forces of Clan Taldryan, that is my destiny."

"Rian, why should Durjes deceive you?"

"I can't tell you, but he will do that, you have to promise me that you will help me to escape to Karufr, promise me that."

"Alright, alright, but why can't you tell me."

A sudden commotion near the doorway attracted the Exarch's attention. Nawera has entered the bar, along with five of his weequay bullies. Rian cursed the Twi'leks timing. He sighed and straightened. "I have to go, old friend, it was good to see you again."

The moment Nawera and his bullies arrived at the Rattataki's table Rian was already gone and had blended into the crowd, making his way to their accomodation.

The next day came faster than expected and the hutt invited both the envoy and Rian to attend the fight between the younger Rian and the rancor from his VIP lounge directly above the arena pit. Even though Rian had turned away from the window when the fight had begun, he felt everything happening down below as through seeing it from another point of view.

The hutt was staring down into the pit, not believing what had just happened. He barked something in his native tongue, then faced the Obelisk. "You, you have deceived me." The flesh of his meaty arm bounced furiously. "You knew the slave was going to win! Somehow you knew it! You have betrayed me!"

Rian remained as firm as possible. "Boruk, this gamble was your idea and yours alone, you knew about the risk and today luck was not on your side." A smile spread across his face. "Now the envoy will prepare the contract and get it to you to sign up. He will come back in about an hour, until that I will prepare our departure."

6/Agressive Negotiations

"What do you mean by saying your master is unavailable?" Jannis said into the emotionless face of the protocol droid, blocking the way into the hutt's throneroom.

"I am sorry, but as I already said, my master has some important business to handle and will remain unavailable to everyone for the time being."

"That is unacceptable, your master has given us his word that he will sign the contract with our Clan as soon as we have it set up, that was just an hour ago. What kind of business could be so important that he would risk breaking the promise he gave us?"

"I don't know about such a promise - "

A squad of armed servants approached from the side, moving between the droid and the envoy. "I think the droid already stated that our master is unavailable to you and I suggest that it is time for you to leave, sir."

By the latter words the spaking servant raised his blaster putting the blackened muzzle close enough to his face that he could almost feel it on his nose.

"When you put it that way..." The envoy backed off, lifting his hands. "Yes, all right, I am going."

Jannis turned, backing away faster now while reaching for his comlink. "Rian! Can you hear me? Remember that sixth sense I told you about? Well things have changed, meet me at the palace."

The envoy was running now, hoping to blend into the crowd down in the casino for as long as it would take Rian to get there. Upon exiting the secured part of the palace his way was blocked by another squad of servants, blocking his way out. "Excuse me envoy, but Master Boruk would like to see you now."

The pre-flight checks were almost done when looked up to see the incoming call from Jannis. "Rian! Can you hear me? Remember that sixth sense I told you about? Well things have changed, meet me at the palace."

In all honesty that was nothing he wouldn't have expected, from the very end of his fight in the pit the hutt had changed his mind. But the bluntness itself with which he had turned on them was something he hadn't expected. *Well if the Hutt wants things to end up like that, Rian would be the last one to deny it to that slimy worm.* Rian held the ship ready, then pelted out of it and through the city toward the palace.

The walls of the palace rose before him and burst right inside and through the casino the guarded door that lead into the secured areas his destination. Rian did not slow his advance or any attempt to hide his approach as he rushed through the crowd inside the casino.

They saw him immediately, two guards with blaster rifles at the ready. They leveled their blasters but didn't get the chance to give a single shot. A wave of concentrated Force energy shoed them away, sending the both of them against the wall hard enough to knock them down. Both sagged to the ground, unmoving.

The Exarch walked between their bodies and through the door that led deeper into the palace. Striding through the rooms and hallways of the palace he expanded his mind with the Force

searching for the envoy.

Rounding a corner he saw another squad of guards, the one led by the fat man that had stood in his way a day earlier, the door behind him heavily secured and augmented with metallic plates. Each of the guards wore heavy armor, blasters trained at him – they had been waiting for him.

His lightsaber burst to life as his Force-enhanced reflexes moved faster than their triggering fingers. In a blur of motion he was upon them, his azure blade forming a spinning wheel of light.

Within less than a minute he had dealt with them. Low voices sounded from inside, barely audible through the massive door.

Boruk watched in horror how the Exarch dealt with his guards outside his secured command chamber and then cut at the massive door, melting away the durasteel like soft butter before he jumped through the hole nimbly.

Inside he found both, the envoy sitting on a chair with binders around his wrist and the hutt standing his ground in front of a desk. The hutt held a blaster at Rian who continued to approach with lightsaber at the ready. In a flurry of movement the hutt was disarmed and the envoy freed of his shackles. The Exarch turned then back to the Hutt, whose eyes darted this way and that in a futile search for a way to escape the situation. Rian made a step toward Boruk. "Let's start again, Hutt," he said coolly.

"Master, Jedi, this is all but a mistake," the Hutt replied, tight-lipped, realizing the truth too late.

The Exarch nodded. "This is the end of this game, Boruk. Now we will negotiate a new trading agreement, and you will sign it."

7/All good things

Three hours later, Rian stood again at the boarding ramp of the Expedition. The mission of the envoy has now become a full success with the Hutt signing a new trading agreement with Jannis that didn't give the Hutts any advantages over the Clan. Also Rian had hacked into the local security network to make sure the Rattataki and his younger self have made their run from Durjes. The only thing left now was that he still didn't know how to get back into the year 38ABY.

Something started to beep in his mind, a cruel, annoying sound that caused his head to ache. The annoying sound grew intenser every second. Rian's eyes snapped open, and for a brief moment he felt completely disoriented. The ground beneath him was faintly vibrating and the muffled sound of a hyperdrive in full swing filled the air. He was aboard the Expedition – alone he realized. The alarm might have woken him from that strange dream. But has it really been a dream at all? After all it all felt so real.

Planetary control forced him to delay the thoughts about the dream, vision whatever it was. He was guided to a local spaceport where he was already awaited by Brannis.

"Hey, ol'buddy!"

"Hey, Brannis. Long time, your call sounded urgent."

"Maybe it is, remember what I told you about the package?"

"You said it is secured."

"Yes, that is correct and, well maybe you should better take a look yourself."

"What do you mean?"

"Please, come, this way."

Once more he was led through the busy crowd filling the streets of Teth and a few minutes later they arrived at the former manse of Durjes that has now become the headquarter of Brannis Security. "This way." Brannis said, leading Rian further into the manse and into the evidence room.

The evidence room was a spare room, four by four meters at all with a single desk and a couple chairs but another door leading into a much larger store room on the opposite side of the room. "Wait here."

Brannis left through that other door and returned a few minutes later with a medium sized box emblazoned with the crest of the old Jedi Order, on the one corner there was a touch field for a DNA-decoder lock. "Have you tried to open the box Brannis?"

"No, as I said it is secured with an DNA sensor. But you should be able to open it."

"What makes you think so?"

"First off, you are some sort of a Jedi, aren't you? And also there is a small notice on the edge of the box, stating your birthdate."

Sounds legit, do you mind leaving me alone while I will try to open it?"

"No problem at all buddy, take all the time you need."

Rian faced the box, probing it with both his eyes and the Force, then after a moment of hesitation he pressed his thumb onto the scanner. Lights flashed and from the inside the sound of a lock popping open was audible.

Rian lifted the cover of the box and placed it onto the desk. The box was filled with various datapads as well as a lightsaber and a handwritten note, written by the Rattataki:

Rian, I need to hurry writing this letter to you.

Everything you have said to me has been true. After you left me in that Cantina Nawera ordered me back to the manse where I was able to spy on a conversation between Durjes and the Hutt. The Hutt has forced Durjes to make sure that your younger self will lose the fight with the rancor. I don't know how much time we will have left until Durjes will let his dogs run loose and sends them after us. Anyways I will make sure that your younger self will go to Karufr as you have said to me.

Rian, you have been the son I never had to me, and I wanted to give you this, these are the diaries of your father ever since he took me as his apprentice as well as my lightsaber, I will leave it to you to handle it like you want, just make sure that it will be used for good.

May the Force be with you, always...

The End

OE Rian Aslar (Obelisk) / CON / Clan Taldryan [GMRG: III] [ACC: Q] [SA: IV]

AK / GC-PoDP / SC-SoA / AC / DC-SiP / GN-BL / SN-AgL / BN-BL / Cr:3R-8A-5S-10E-13T-6Q / PoB-BL / CF-PF / CI-PC / LS-BL / SoL-TC / S:10B-7De-3Ret-18Dec-13Aff-7Rn
{SA: MVC - MVF - MVL - DPE}

Son of Taldryan