

## Some Time Off

The shuttle shuddered violently as it descended through the thin atmosphere of the Smuggler's Moon, causing several of its passengers to wake up with cries of 'wha?' As the dilapidated vessel bucked against the cross winds generated by the massive skyscraper buildings that dotted the surface of the world, at least one occupant was very much awake already. Near the center of the small passenger craft, having graciously allowed all others to take the much coveted window seats, sat a Ryn. Well, sat isn't the proper word for what the blue furred alien was doing, but it's easier to explain than the rictus like grip he had on the thinly padded seat.

Kordath Bleu hated flying, it hadn't been so bad on the interstellar vessel that had brought him out to Nar Shaddaa but the short range shuttle was not pleasant. At least while aboard the passenger transport he'd been able to pretend he was on solid ground, long as he stayed away from the view ports he was fine. The shuttle was making it very apparent that he was flying, as he could hear the wind rushing around the small craft. Even his tail was wrapped firmly around the outside armrest of his seat, right next to the clenched hand that was turning white under his hair. He was on leave, this was meant to be a fun time, a time to relax. And he was going to bloody relax even if it killed him, as soon as he survived the landing sequence.

It took him some time to unclamp himself from his perch, every muscle in his back, arms and legs aching as he disentangled himself. With a stumbling step the Krath disembarked, bending at the waist and planting his hands firmly on his upper thighs as the fetid air of the moon hit him. Once he'd finished throwing up the lovely complimentary breakfast the ship had provided him with earlier in the day, he inhaled deeply. Eyes watering, both from vomiting and from the general pollution that hung about the world, he felt a smile start to spread. Solid ground, he chose to ignore the fact that the platform he was on was likely kilometers above the surface. It wasn't bloody well moving.

Besides, it smelled and felt like home, very nearly. The Ryn had spent a lot of time on this rock before he'd been shanghaied into Arcona. Simpler times...no, not really, he thought to himself grimly. Between living as a thief for hire and a punching bag for gangs, this place hadn't treated him so well. But still, it was easy to feel nostalgic about it now, after all if any old 'acquaintances' who might remember him popped up...well....

They'd likely be several kilometers above the surface. And now he knew how to move things with his mind. That brought a bigger grin on, as the Priest whistled to himself and wandered away from the dreaded shuttle, towards the bright lights of Nar Shaddaa proper. As he passed from the more well lit areas around the shuttle port into the darker parts of the district, the bright glow of the Red Light district beckoning, he felt the first group. With a sigh he palmed a knife out from his sleeve, still whistling to himself as he continued on. Getting the jump on tourists was a Nar Shaddaa time honored tradition, he just didn't consider himself a tourist. This was coming home for a while for a visit.

He knew what was coming, the Force helped with that sure, but years of living on the dirty moon had instilled certain instincts as well. The two burly Humans who stepped around the corner ahead of him would try and stop him, their...three, he was almost sure of it, friends in the alley he'd just passed would take him down. How hard they'd try depended on how desperate they were feeling, if it'd been a while since they'd had a success they might just outright shoot him. The ones before him were radiating...smugness rather than desperation, Kordath forced himself to keep from smiling more as he made the token effort of stepping off the sidewalk to go around the two men.

A beefy hand landed on his shoulder, holding him in place while one of them stepped in front of him. Yellow teeth and a ragged beard, with a disgusting smell coming from the mouth of the hulking Human.

"Ello der, lil' rat. You lost?"

*'How bloody cliches,'* he thought with a sigh as he turned to face the man. "I don't guess saying I'm not looking for trouble would get you morons to leave me alone?"

"Well now, smart mouth on this one," spoke the one behind him. "How's about you empty your pockets, and we'll see how far you can get down the road before we gut ya, huh?"

"Bah, it's a Ryn," came another voice, the group from the alley dropping any pretense of sneaking at this point. "Just cut him and toss him in the gutter, he don't got no creds on him."

"Before we start," spoke up Kordath, holding a finger up and glancing at the thugs he could see. "You lot in the employ of any big shot crime lords? I'd hate to spend my little vacation dismantling a minor cartel because they decided to send lackies after me for kicking seven kinds of poodoo out of you."

"Hah, we's independents, rodent, we don't need no Hutt tellin' us what ta do."

"Fantastic."

The thug holding his shoulder gasped in shock as the Ryn's palmed blade pierced his diaphragm, collapsing his body as his lungs quit sucking in air. His friend who'd blocked Kordath's way was slack jawed for a moment from the surprise of one of the space gypsy folk actually fighting back while outnumbered. Right until the Priest's booted foot came up and impacted on his temple, dropping him like a sack of useless rocks. The other three yelled and ran at him, Kordath turned and dropped into a familiar stance as he took in the knife, pipe and chain the trio of thugs were wielding.

A smirk on his face as he stepped in, Kordath moved towards the one with the pipe first. It struck him as ironic that he couldn't be less than a kilometer or so away from the dojo of the old Jeswandi master who'd taken him in so many years ago. Master Bahn'sing never appreciated outright violence, but he'd also advocating defending oneself. The thug with the pipe raised it over his shoulder for an overhead blow and the Ryn waited for it to start coming down before stepping into it. Driving a knee into the man's midsection as his out stretched arm hit Bleu's shoulder, the pipe had gone far past its intended target.

Kordath followed up by twisting his body around as the thug doubled over, grabbing the man by his extended arm and twisting it hard enough that he heard the joint pop out of place. The man screamed and fell.

The one with the knife tried to stick him in the side as he finished off the pipe wielder, only to gape in surprise as his blade skittered across an invisible barrier. Kordath was enjoying himself, fighting mundanes was far easier than sparring with his fellow Arconan's. A flash of warning from the Force allowed him to lift his arms up in time to keep the chain of the other thug from wrapping about his neck. Light flashed off the knife as it came at him again, this time the Ryn grabbed hold of the chain and pushed off the ground with both feet. First he kicked the knife aside, then used his tail to snag the man by the throat as he stumbled past. His momentum spent the Ryn fell back, still gripping the chain and the other thug by his neck, who tumbled to the street with a grunt.

Squeezing his eyes shut Bleu let go with one hand, channeling the energy of his own body into it before lifting it over his head. Palm facing the thug trying to choke him out, he released the energy in a bright and blinding flash. The thug screamed and loosened his grip enough for the agile Krath to escape, before gesturing towards the pipe that had been left on the road after the first thugs ill fated attack. With a thought it flew to the Ryn's hand who twirled it once to gauge the weight. He turned to face the thug who was clutching at his own eyes, and swung the pipe back under his shoulder before driving it upwards. The man let out a wheeze as the pipe destroyed any hopes of reproducing and fell over. Kordath turned and swatted the last thug who was trying to get to his dropped knife across the back of the head.

He dropped the pipe, listening to it roll away as he looked around with both eyes and the Force to see if anyone else was intending to cause him trouble. Sensing no one else nearby, he smiled and first pulled his return ticket from his pocket and shoving it down into a boot so as not to lose it. Then he began rolling the thugs, finding credits and chrono pieces. Reaching out again with his mind, the Ryn located the nearest source of...carousing, merriment, fighting, camaraderie.

“Well lads, thanks for paying my tab off in advance,” he spoke to the unconscious thugs, flipping a credit chit. “I’ll be sure to have a round on ya.”

It was always nice to come home.