

“That’s the last of it, but are you sure it’s safe here? -not exactly a friendly neighbourhood if you know what I mean.”

The warehouse worker laughed and even the sound noted his age, “Av lived here almost uz long uz av worked ‘ere. Neva ‘ad a problum yet, friend.”

The humans regarded each other for a moment, both smiling for no apparent reason and made their goodbyes. The warehouse fell into it’s usual quiet rhythm and Warehouse Officer Claus did the same. He’d lived in the slums for all of his childhood. He’d killed, hid and stole his way through his teenage years, schemed, robbed and laundered his way through his youth. He was a barely young man with blood and sin on his hands for nothing but survival - and then a purpose came along. He didn’t know who they were or what they did, but they gave him clothes on his back, training and a comfort of wealth he had never known before. They extended his life through to his seventies and although it was a hard life - as there are not many breaks in menial work - he was very happy.

This year he was going to give back.

He’d bumped into someone at a market. A beautiful woman with braided hair and golden skin apologised and offered him something to eat. Although he was fifty years younger - and assuredly knew better - he found himself unable to say no. It turned out, as they both tucked into a meal he could only dream of affording, that she was his employer. They talked openly, her very presence easing his nerves, and she thanked him for his service. He replied honestly: *A would giv’ ya back all the ‘appiness you’ve given me, could a do it miss.* She paused a moment, a slender finger placed against her lips.

Then she smiled and took his hand, “Perhaps we can help each other to do that, Mr. Claus.”

And suddenly his warehouse became a treasure trove of gifts and neither he nor his staff could keep the smiles off their faces. The luxury, the richness - a bundle of gifts for everyone, each more different for the last. Claus was almost sure she had to be one of the celestial angels in the outer rim that he had heard so many stories about as a child. Beautiful and all-knowing.

He watched the delivery vehicles hum away before closing the doors himself. It was only him in the warehouse, he always liked to close up by himself and check things over. He walked through the gifts stacked high upon another in crates, a smile glowing on his face.

Then he noticed something strange. As he was walking, the lights in front of him seemed to be going out until soon he was in darkness. Knowing the place like the back of his hand, he took out a torch and headed to the closest control panel.

He heard it with a start. A heavy whooshing sound that started small and seemed to get closer. It seemed to spread throughout the warehouse, each whoosh followed by another louder whoosh and so and so on. He realised it was coming towards him too late, fumbling with the panel as the sound became deafening.

The lights came on and he gasped. All the presents were gone. Every single sack of gifts had disappeared. A noise startled him and he watched as a figure clad in black attached a rope to the last sack and watched it whoosh through a large opening.

The windows.

He looked about the room and noticed that each one had been removed and he gaped at the genius of it. The dark clad figure gestured a salute to the older man but he barely had time to form a question when something touched his back and the world went black.

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The House responded immediately, a direct line of communication sent from the Consul herself to initiate a fast response. Shadow Gate suited up along with the House Summit; the very presence of Celevon and Terran supporting the importance of the theft. There were of course a few heated discussions, but by order of the Shadow Lady herself, they turned their resources towards finding the culprits.

Though to be fair, it was pretty obvious from the beginning.

The Broken Blade was gone and the Battleteam with it and when the ship was hailed the signal was jammed. The anger felt at such lazy cover work seethed through the leadership and they assembled into squads and took flight in shuttles with lightning efficiency.

The Broken Blade sat atop one of the many floating asteroids that surrounded the Port. And not just any asteroid, but one within visible distance of the Port itself. It fanned the flames of treachery, and there were only grim faces upon the travelling squads.

The shuttles moved in formation towards the dark side of the asteroid, the Dajorran star illuminating the other in golden light.

The shuttles moved closer to the surface before entering the sunlit area when the Battleteam's ship came into view. The atmosphere became tense as their destination came into view, but as they got closer something reflective attracted their attention. The scans revealed it was a huge energy-dome filled with breathable air and several organic life signs.

But before they could process that, they were hailed.

*For they are jolly good fellows, for they are jolly good fellows, for they are jolly good fellows~
That nobody can deny! Hip hip, hooray! Hip hip, hooray!*

Celevon found himself blinking as he sent the order to slow the approach. The Force had remained quite quiet upon their voyage and now it revealed some truths that were kept hidden. He sighed and gestured to an attendant to patch him through.

“Shadow Lady, am I to assume that there is nothing amiss here?”

“You would be correct, Celevon. Everything is fine, we thought we’d play a bit of a trick on you all and find a special way of delivering your gifts.”

Her laugh made everyone relax, confused though they were and soon the shuttles made their way within the bounds of the dome. There was an entire field of gifts glistening under the light of the sun, each wrapped in a soft, dark cloth that left much to the imagination. The assembled squads made their way out of their shuttles and into a generously decorated party. There were whole tables of food and drink, musicians filling the air with joyous, crisp notes and the sounds of laughter as people danced to it.

They made merry for many hours and made many memories to cherish. Strangers became friends and no one could forget the man that helped it happen: The Warehouse Officer Claus, and his sack of gifts.
