

Duty Bound

SAV Kordath Bleu

Kordath Bleu was having a rare good night. The drinks were good, the responsibilities were nonexistent, and the company was fantastic. One of his best mates was sitting across the small, round table that was littered with shot glasses and mugs of a thick ale. Neither the Ryn nor his Human companion were totally clear on what kind of brew they were drinking as they'd chosen to simply trust the barkeep of the Topsy Rancor. Besides the haze of alcohol and laughter that permeated the pair was the *other* company they'd managed to find while imbibing.

Across the small table sat his friend Uji, who'd come looking for him some time ago. An hour? Two? Kordath wasn't sure anymore, he'd been content to sit and drink while working on one of his serial novels. But the newly minted Captain of the *Nighthawk* had insisted on bothering him. They'd never gotten to the point of conversation where the Captain actually told Bleu what he wanted as Kordath had forced the dour man into sharing drinks with a freighter crew that he thought looked lonely. Thus, Uji had leaning up against him a dusky, orange-hued Twi'lek in a dark pilot's jumpsuit. He'd protested talking to the woman, but now with one of her lekku draped over his opposite shoulder and the way she pressed against him as she giggled seemed to have eroded his resistance.

"...that's when Nobby, ya know, Nobilus, we mentioned him, right? He turned 'round and grabbed Bleu by his shirt and started telling us how dangerous he was. Whole time Kordath is trying not to bust out laughing and shaking his head at me to keep me from hitting the little twerp from behind. Half an hour later we found a still one of the troops had setup, because *everybody* wants a drink before going into a fight, and well, uhhh..." the Human trailed off.

"We got tanked we did, absolutely trashed out! Nobby went wanderin' off to find a bush or somethin', when he comes back we're gone. He never did believe us when we told him we didn't abandon him, hah."

"What happened? Why'd you leave him?" came the sweet, sweet voice to Kordath's right. The Ryn grinned as he wrapped his arm around the Miraluka woman. She'd come in with the pilot, sporting a mechanic's overalls and a pair of goggles to cover her empty eyes. So far she'd laughed at most of what had come tumbling out of the Ryn's mouth, and seemed to think he was 'soft and cuddly' which Kordath always viewed as a 'good thing'.

"Turned out the Odan folks had a scoutin' platoon in the area. They'd hired on mercs that didn't mind Korriban's environment. So there's me and Uji, right? Sauced up on moonshine and tryin' not to go blind when we hears a noise. Then a lotta noises. Suddenly the bleedin' tent we're in gets torn open and all these bloody lights be shinin' at our faces and we're

hearin' gibberish. A dozen armed Jawas rush us while somebody behind them yells at us to surrender!"

"Jawas!?" shouted the pilot, laughing and falling further into Uji, who seemed to be accepting his fate. Kordath grinned at him even as he felt the Miraluka rub her leg up against his own, sending a twitch through the Ryn down to the tip of his tail.

"Uhh, yeah, uhh, Jawas, mercenaries they'd brought in, hah. So, uhh, what about you ladies, any good stories? Feel like Uji and me been doin' all the talkin'," Bleu said, losing track of his words as he heard a low, husky laugh come from the mechanic.

"Well, Veras and I don't have a lot of adventures, we're just couriers afterall. Sometimes you get a client who doesn't want to pay, or, ummm..." the Twi'lek trailed off, blushing.

"Or tries to snatch your pilot for their personal harem!" piped up Veras, grinning. "We learned to bundle Key'la up after that first Hutt, make her less appealing."

"Ugh, so gross. Slimey and smelly," the pilot, Key'la, said with a shudder. Uji hugged her to him, causing her look of disgust to shift into a grin before turning to whisper something in his ear. The Captain looked surprised for a moment, his face turning a light shade of red before a smile broke across his face.

"I don't think they'll be here long, this isn't something we normally do, Fluffy," whispered Veras to Bleu.

"Wot? You two don't go about flirtin' with the locals for free drinks at every port?"

"Not *every* port," she whispered maliciously, her hand playing with his hair. Kordath licked his lips, uncertain of himself suddenly. Normally things didn't go this well when he was out for a pint. "You, umm, got a place near here? I'd say 'come back and look at my ship' but it's really, really small. Cramped. I like space when I can have it, hmm?"

"Uhhh, yeah, not far at all, luv, what about your lady friend and...oh," Kordath blinked as a datapad was held in front of his face. Uji was holding it and practically bouncing on his feet.

"Read it, sign it, show up in the morning, Bleu, come on, I'm, uhhh, gonna go show Key'la the *Nighthawk*."

Kordath glanced blearily at the datapad, shrugged, signed and put his thumbprint on it and tossed it back. "Have fun, mate."

"What did you just sign?"

"No idea, luv, now me place is only a couple o' blocks away..."

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The sun, the blasted, evil sun was shining through the windows of Kordath's Estle City apartment. He groaned as he shut his eyes and rolled back over, feeling a warmth in his bed snuggle up closer to him. His eyes snapped back open as the night before came crashing back into his mind. Hangover or not, the Ryn suddenly felt better about life and enveloped the woman in his arms with a happy sigh.

"Mmm, Bleu? Mmmhungry."

"Right, course, promised to make ya a breakfast didn't I?" groaned the Arconan, trying to avoid looking out the windows as he got out of bed.

"Mmmhmm, breakfast, caf, and then....," she trailed off playfully, causing Kordath to stumbled to find some form of pants before leaving his bedroom. Starting up the caf machine and digging through the fridge, he sighed.

"Veras? Luv? Gotta run downstairs to the market and pick some stuff up, bit light on the food right now, sorry."

"Well hurry up!" came a shouted reply, "If you're quick enough you can find me in the shower still."

Kordath blinked a few times as he tried to work out what that meant before cursing and grabbing a jacket to throw over his bare upper half. Shoes? Nah, shoes weren't important, he decided, grabbing up his wallet and throwing open the front door. He dashed out and hit what felt like a duracrete wall which knocked him on his tail.

"Wha?"

"Mister Bleu?" came a deep voice from above. Kordath looked up to find two very tall, very broad shouldered men in uniform.

"I don't got no warrants, what?"

"Sir? No sir, we're...we're not local law enforcement. We're here to collect you, are you ready to depart?"

"Depart? Where the hells do you think I'm goin'?"

One of them held out a datapad, displaying a service contract. "Is this your signature, Mister Bleu?"

Squinting at it for a few moments, the Ryn nodded, "Aye, looks about like it, after about six or so shots of hard stuff, why?"

"You agreed to a tour of no less than six months aboard the *Nighthawk*, sir. Please come along, the ship leaves within the hour."

"Uhhh, now wait a second mates..."

"Sir, if you refuse to do this, you'll be considered AWOL and put in confinement and court martial. Desertion is punished with death in the Arconan Navy."

"You gotta be karkin' kiddin' me. Fine, fine, right. Can I go in and get some boots? Got a lass in there as well I need to say goodbye to, and tell her sorry for not cookin' breakfast because I got bloody pressganged!"

"Sorry, Mister Bleu, we've been given strict instructions not to allow you out of our sight after acquiring you. You've been listed as a possible runner, come along, boots will be issued with your new uniform."

"Wait!" shouted the hungover Arconan as the two men grabbed him by the arms and bodily lifted him up. With a sigh of resignation, the Ryn slumped down in their grip and simply felt sorry for himself.

A few minutes later Veras, wrapped in a bathrobe and still dripping wet, a scene Kordath would have died happy to see, came to the door and looked around. The Ryn should have been back by now. With a shrug she turned back to the inside to get a cup of caf. The weather was nice, it was going to be a good day for her, she figured.