

## Hairy Shenanigans

The Ryn was on the run aboard his own ship.

He'd known for months this day would come, the day the crew would finally turn on him. Just when the light at the end of the tunnel had started to fully manifest with his transfer orders to Selen, they'd sprung the trap. Oooh, but the Ryn was too clever by far to be caught by the likes of them! As it's been said, he'd suspected for months, and you didn't survive this long amongst the Sith and the questionably moral brethren of Arcona without being quick on your feet. Even now he could sense them scattered across the ship trying to sniff him out.

-X-

"What the frak just happened?" asked the Commandant, confusion evident upon his face. To his side, still holding the bottle of bubbly that was foaming out on to the floor was his Fade, Lily. Her expression matched her master's.

"I knew the little rodent was quick but that was strangely impressive," remarked Rulvak, shaking his head.

Leaning against a bulkhead was the ship's Interrogator, inspecting one of her nails and sporting an extremely rare smile. "Did I not tell you this was a poor idea? My former apprentice is paranoid at the best of times. You really thought turning the lights on and screaming 'surprise' at the top of your lungs was wise?"

"I expected him to faint," muttered Ernordeth, the Sith now eyeballing the cake set up on the table with the message '*Good luck!*' scrawled across the icing.

"If it had been me you tried this on, several of you would be dead," growled the Iridonian woman. "We should try and recover him before the shuttle departs without him."

"He haz slipped into the ventilation system, I believe. He should not be hard to track."

"Fanfrickentastic. Zakath, take Nath and try to track him. Mako, organize your men to cover any ventilation access points. Error," the Sephi didn't even turn to look at the man, "don't touch the cake."

The Sith made a rude gesture and pulled a face as the soon to be Captain turned on his heel to march into the hangar bay.

-X-

Kordath scrambled fervently through the duct. He felt his uniform snagging and tearing here and there as it got caught on the edge of access panels or fasteners that held the shaft together. That was a problem for future Bleu, decided the Ryn. Right now, he just needed to keep moving to his supply drop that he'd set up months beforehand.

Having rights over the maintenance and cleaning droids of the ship had allowed him to program them to not clear out his stashes. There, he could find some of what he needed, what he would need to get away from the big lizard man and the pointy-eared sleemo who wanted to kill him and take the ship.

-x-

"You seem lost, old man. Why can't you track him?"

"He waz your apprentice, little one, you did always say he waz a clever one."

"True, but with his drinking and unique species, at least aboard the *Nighthawk*, I would assume you could track him easily. If by smell if nothing else."

The Barabel sniffed at the air and flicked his tongue out to taste it as well. "He has spent much time aboard thiz vessel, Nath. It'z permeated with hiz scent. Something else iz off about it, though."

"I seem to be having trouble tracking him through the Force as well. His thoughts are disjointed and rife with paranoia. I told Qurroc that a going away party was a bad idea."

"Az you keep saying, yez."

-x-

The Ryn crouched in the ventilation junction above the parcels he'd sequestered in the slightly larger space. Carefully opening one, he pulled out the wads of paper he'd used to cushion the items within before retrieving the half dozen vials of fluid that lay in the box. Beneath those was a small remote with a single button and a rebreather mask which the Ryn put over his face. Slowing his breathing as much as he could, he looked at the various directions leading out of the junction, five in total. He hit the button on the remote and started tossing vials down every duct as the air circulation kicked on. The sixth vial he stuck in a pocket. Carefully avoiding the broken glass and fragrant puddles, the Ryn scampered down a shaft towards the engineering bay.

-x-

“Sir, the air system just kicked on.”

“So?”

“I...I think I smell something. Do you think there's a malfunction? Maybe the air scrubbers are out of alignment or something?”

“Not the problem right now. Ghe Captain — sorry, former Captain — is having one of his fits and...and...by the gods what is that *smell*?”

“It's coming from the ducts, Sir! Do you think it's some kind of chemical attack?!”

“Evacuate the area! Everyone out! Grab your breathing gear and get out!”

-X-

“What is that stench?”

“Bleu iz covering his trackz. Devious, some would call thiz a criminal act. Tracking him is going to be even more difficult, I'm afraid.”

“He's using this to cover his scent then?”

“It *iz* hiz scent.”

“Wait, do you mean this is...oh...oh no.”

-X-

“What the kark is going on!?” shouted the Sephi, trying to be heard over the alarms and announcements of ‘chemical contamination detected’ the intercom was spewing out.

“Commander Qurroc, Sir! Something is leaking out of the air system — it's coming up as an unknown but possibly toxic substance. The whole ship is going into an automatic lockdown!”

“Blast, alright, get all non-essential personnel on to the shuttles and seal them up! This day just keeps getting worse.”

-X-

The ventilation access grate settled gently onto the deck of the engineering bay, a white-haired and rebreather-covered face poking out to look about. Kordath was still nervous, even though his plans that he'd put into place for this eventuality months beforehand were so far working

perfectly. The bay was deserted and the alarms still blared as he scampered across to a maintenance tube opening and popped the hatch. As the Ryn slid inside, he caught movement out of the corner of his eye, spotting the Barabel and Iridonian coming through the blast doors. Cursing as Zakath's head swiveled and locked on him, Bleu reached into his pocket.

"Kordath, come along before the shuttle leaves you here!"

"Not gonna get me, Big Teeth!"

"Bleu! Get over here this moment!"

Nath and Zakath advanced as the Ryn sat halfway inside the hatch, warring with his personal insecurities. On the one hand, he was certain the crew was out to kill him. On the other, his Master was doing her scary voice. Paranoia and fear won out as he pulled the remaining vial from his pocket and flung it at the Barabel before dropping through the hatch. A roar of annoyance and disgust followed him.

Kordath dropped down the shaft, again having issues with his uniform catching on things and slowing him down. When he hit the bottom he looked up and, not seeing either of his traitorous crew members following him yet, began to tear off his clothing. Wadding the offending uniform up and leaving it in a ball, the Ryn headed off through another access hatch.

-X-

"He threw his own pizz at uz!"

"I'm done. I'm taking a shower and I'm done."

"To hellz with it, the Ryn can rot down there. Idiot."

-X-

*Three Months Later*

"Food stores are still showing irregularities, and the maintenance droids still won't accept all the programming we've been trying to code into them," the Captain finished saying. The rest of the senior crew was in the briefing room as well.

"Bloody droids, if Command didn't say they couldn't afford to replace them I'd airlock the lot of them," growled Mako.

Nath Voth sat in a chair with her eyes fixed on the bulkhead, her head cocked to the side with a look of quiet amusement. At least, those who knew her well would recognize the small quirk of the lips.

“Something to add, Miss Voth?”

“Hmm? No, nothing. Are we done?”

“Umm, yes, sure.”

The Interrogator stood and left, wondering if anyone else had heard the light scraping and scratching sounds behind the walls that suggested something was moving about.

-x-

Down in an enclosed portion of the cargo bay, with bulkheads that had been built up around it and plastered with ‘Stay out, danger!’ stickers suggesting an agonizing death for those who trespassed, the Ryn hunched over his machine. A small access panel popped open along one wall, allowing a mouse droid to scurry in with a sack riding atop it. Kordath snatched the item up and pulled the sandwich out of it, pleased that the galley droids had stuck to their programming. Master access across the board, a set of codes he’d not turned over to the ‘new’ Captain of *HIS* vessel had kept the droids loyal, at least.

Munching on his meal, the Ryn made a few more adjustments and settled back as the compressor rattled to life. Curling up on the blanket in the corner of the small room, he smiled to himself, pleased that the still seemed to be working. Hopefully the noise didn’t draw too much attention, but the only person who was ever near this area was Nath, and he was pretty sure she already knew he was here. More than likely, she found the whole situation amusing and hadn’t reported him.

That was okay. At some point he’d have the chance to take back his ship.

He just had to wait.