

Carbonated Chaos

Terran Koul slammed a fist into his desk as he leaned forward, getting closer to the holo image being displayed upon it. He'd been steadily recruiting from across the system, those who believed in the word of Soda. A sizable force had been assembled, of natives from Selen and Eldar. To be honest his people had used the age old, time tested method of promising credits, women, and glory to swell their ranks. Along with the mercenaries and pirates of Ol'val that he'd managed to sway to his side with promises of loot in Estle City, he was confident that he had the numbers to overwhelm the delusional tart on Selen.

The problem was armaments. As soon as the philosophical differences had become apparent, the bloody Admiral had locked down the armories and depots.

"If you don't release weaponry to my soldiers, I can't fight properly, Cortel. Let me resolve this, you're next in line for the Serpentine Throne as it is. Just give me the guns I need." He stated this plainly, and in the weary tone of a man who's told a woman the same thing a dozen times.

"I've told you already, Terran. I will not allow Arcona's military to become involved in this petty, idiotic struggle you've decided to embroil yourself in. We shall stand vigilant for any outside threats that would take advantage of this conflict. Do not call on me for this again," she said coldly, signaling for the channel to be closed before he could speak again.

"Ice hearted bitch," sighed the Aedile, sitting back in his chair, tapping his chin as he tried to think up another solution.

"So that's tha deal, Blinky. What do ya say?"

Atyiru's brow furrowed over her blindfold, hands steepled before her as she sat upon the Throne that marked her office.

"Where did you even find these weapons, Kordath?"

The Ryn picked at the fabric of his pants and fidgeted, "Well, ya see, when them Perdition folks was messing with our Scepter lads I was still Captaining the *Nighthawk*. We got tasked with uhh, heh, collecting munitions and materials as the bases closed down. Seems stuff fell off some of the speeder trucks, who knew?"

"You stole military supplies? Arcia is going to have you shot, Bleu!"

“Nah, you go check them armories, after the Admiral opens ‘em back up anyways. Everything on the lists is there.”

“Did you change the lists?” asked the Miraluka, sounding surprisingly patient.

Kordath sighed, “You want the bloody weapons or not? I promise, Koul is gettin’ together every pirate and merc in the system to fight ya. The Melon Lady ain’t givin’ up any weapons to ya, I know, otherwise we wouldn’t be havin’ this talk. So. Guns, or no?”

The sound and sightless glare this elicited told the Ryn everything he needed to know, leading to a knowing grin.

“Pleasure doin’ business with ya, Blinky.”

The dropships had been streaming in all day, saboteurs having shut down the anti air defenses around the spaceport. Pro-Pop forces had begun digging in around the port since morning, after the initial Soda assault forced them out of the terminal. Casualties had been surprisingly low thus far, mostly superficial wounds and close quarters injuries.

Terran Koul stood on the roof of the primary terminal building, magnoculars in hand as he surveyed the forces arrayed against his own.

“I’ll admit, Atyiru fortified better than I expected. They look nearly as well armed as our own, she must have drafted half the civilians of Estle City for this crazy fight. Odd that I don’t see much of security forces. Or Army. Huh, easier for us, to be honest.”

The Kiffar glanced upwards as the rumble of another shuttle descending drew his attention. In low orbit sat the *Invicta*, her dagger like hull clear against the afternoon sky. With the fleet standing watch rather than assisting the Consul, his troops stood a chance.

“Alright, prepare to charge, right down the center! We break that and hit their command post, then we can end this in one strike,” growled the bounty hunter.

Down on the streets Atyiru was directing her troops as well. Those who’d followed her and the word of Pop stood ready. Barricades had been built, entire storefronts gutted so that the shelves and counters could be piled up for cover. The streets of Estle were strangely silent, if the Consul pushed out with her Senses she found the city to be very nearly empty. Those who’d chosen to fight were here, everyone else had left.

“That’s for the best,” she whispered to herself. Too many would die this day, all because that idiot Terran couldn’t compromise with her. She was being perfectly rational. And logical. An explosion from the front broke her train of thought. “Here they come! Put the infidels down!”

Battle was met, blaster bolts flying from both directions as the forces of Soda used what they could for cover, pushing towards the lines of the defenders. Minutes went by as red and blue beams of energy shot back and forth across the lines, people screaming out as they were hit. Then those people got back up in confusion, patting at their singed clothing and looking at their comrades in bewilderment.

After a while of ineffectual combat, people simply stopped firing and starting shouting insults back and forth. The officers went up and down the lines, checking weapons and trying to convince soldiers to fight on.

As the sounds of battle died off and the fervor of war cooled, the troops on both sides began milling about. Conversations were cut short as a high pitched tone played throughout the city, coming from the emergency systems used to alert the populace of danger. A flicker came from the massive holoboard on the front of the port terminal, the image of departure times being replaced with the somber face of a Ryn.

“Hello there, mates! By the look from the surveillance cams about the area, you lot have about given up on the fight. Good for you. Glad both sides enjoyed my product so much, customer satisfaction is a goal with Bleu Incorporated.”

“What the frak,” muttered the Kiffar, staring at the screen. A pressure in the Force to his left suggested Atyiru had pushed her way forward, the two enemies both coming to glare at the image of Kordath. “He sold to both sides, really?”

“I shouldn’t be surprised, but I am,” replied the Consul with a sigh.

“If you check said weapons, you’ll find them hardwired into ‘trainin’ mode, eh? Didn’t want you lot to kill one another off to quick, had to let whoever was left down there get clear. Thanks for that, by the way! Your purchases of Bleu Incorporated weaponry and munitions financed the evacuation of Estle City. Wouldn’t want the good people to get wasted because you idiots are fightin’ over somethin’ stupid, eh?”

“I’m going to skin him. I’m going to make boots from his hide,” snarled the Miraluka. Terran nodded in silent agreement, anger rising within him.

“So yeah, we got everybody out that wanted out, let you lot fight it out for a bit. Now the Admiral and I,” Kordath paused at this, backing up slightly so the viewers could get a look at the bridge of the *Invicta*. “We agreed this was a good course of action, yeah? Get all the folks that would cause Arcona to tear itself apart into one spot. Sadly that includes you, Blinky, sorry.”

Koul looked up as he heard thunder once more, expecting to see dropships filled with Arconan military coming down to clean up the mess. Instead he saw green flashes coming down from the sky.

“This is a house cleanin’, it is. Nothin’ personal, friends, just Arcona’s better off without this sort of thing. The Admiral will rebuild, probably from the Throne, so now it’s just a mop up. Thanks for not fightin’ at the citadel itself, that’d been a pain to rebuild.”

Turbolaser blasts rained down around the perimeter of the fight, marching steadily inwards as the gunnery crews of the Destroyer narrowed the area of effect. People screamed and panicked, while the leaders of the two factions stood in quiet awe, amazed the Ryn had actually taken part in leading them to a slaughter. He leaned into the mic again and spoke, just loudly enough to be heard over the explosions.

“Besides, it’s Coke, ya bloody heathens.”