

Celevon Edraven Erinos (Loyalist) / Styx, HQD of Clan Arcona

PIN: 12004

Kordath Bleu d'Tana (Gray Jedi) / RM / Shadow Gate, HQD of Clan Arcona

PIN: 13593

Word Count(s):

1,452 Words

1,259 Words

Courtyard, Arcona Citadel, Estle City

Selen, Dajorra System

34 ABY; 1321 Hours (Local Time)

The Onderonian rolled a cigarette, back against the wall as he relaxed in the shade. The season was far more humid than was normal for the area. Just hours before, he had returned from an off-the-books assignment to disrupt the activities of the Inquisitorius Order - one of the many Celevon had undertaken within the months since his departure from the Arconan Summit.

After pulling the excess tobacco free, the Assassin pulled out a chrome lighter, flicked off the lid and lit the cylinder. His shoulders visibly lost tension as Celevon took a long drag, exhaling the smoke from both his lips and nostrils.

If one could ignore the heat and blinding sunlight, the courtyard itself was quiet and serene, a perfect place for reflection and relaxation.

Silver eyes glanced down to the mechanical fingers of the replacement for his left arm, carefully flicking a bit of ash off of the end of his cigarette. The first several months of growing accustomed to the prosthetic had been riddled with accidents, destroyed cigarettes and broken glasses. Celevon was drawn abruptly from his musings by a familiar voice.

“Oi, Cel, mate, do ya never do nothin’ but sit about bein’ all broody like? How ‘bout some fun, eh?”

A wry grin crossed the Onderonian’s lips as he slipped his own cigarette between the ring finger and pinky of the prosthetic, rolling one for the Rollmaster. “Only if neither of us does any piloting... I still get dirty looks when I try to go to a certain pub in Estle.”

“Yeah, cause I like flyin’ as is,” replied the Ryn, the accompanying snort a series of whistles from his chitinous nose. “Know a place down near tha spaceport, I do. Just so happens her Shadowness just gave me a wee bit o’ a job and an expense account for it.”

“Wasting the Clan’s funds on a good time?” asked the Erinos, a serious look on his face. His silver eyes were narrowed though, as though he was looking for a hint of guilt on his compatriots visage.

Kord tugged at the collar of his shirt, suddenly aware of just how miserable it was outside. Air conditioning and a cold pint would be welcome soon. “Is, eh, a good will sorta thing, ya see. Meant to meet up with somebody down there, have a few drinks, show ‘em a good time, eh?”

The look Celevon gave him now was one of incredulity, “Atyiru is using you to entertain a dignitary?”

“Sure,” the Rollmaster responded with a shrug, “look mate, it’s bleedin’ nasty out here. Least it is fer me, got a bit more hair ta me than you do, can we find a ride down there?”

He followed these words up by moving towards an archway set in one of the walls lining the courtyard. Bleu looked back at the Onderonian with a grin, and gestured forward. The sense of curiosity from the taller man was very nearly morbid as he moved to follow the Ryn. A diplomatic speeder hovered outside of the arch, with Kordath already climbing into the back. The door was left open in wait.

The Assassin twitched, eyebrow raising for a moment before he stepped into the speeder and took a seat next to the Ryn.

“Destination?” The driver questioned, looking over his shoulder.

“Giletta Spaceport,” Celevon replied, tapping his thumb against his leg.

“Do you two mind helping out a bit? I’m not the best at maneuvering with so little space and these two asshats wedged me in.”

The Onderonian and Kord shared a look before both gave a shrug, turning in their seats.

“Go ‘head, mate.”

“Huh?”

“Go ‘head and back up,” the Rollmaster clarified.

“Beg your pardon?” the driver turned to look at Kordath.

“Back up.”

“Back up,” the driver agreed.

“Go ahead,” Celevon sighed, turning to look as the driver shot a confused look at the passengers.

“What do you want me to do? Go ahead or back up?”

Celevon and Kordath exchanged a glance before the Human gave the driver a look that wondered at his intelligence. “I’ll tell you when.”

“You just told me I had to back up.”

“Yes. Back up.”

The driver nodded, putting the vehicle in gear. “I’m going to back up.”

Celevon turned to look behind him, taking a deep breath, praying silently for patience. “Go ahead.”

Abruptly, the speeder was taken out of gear. “I can’t do both at once. I either have to go ahead or back up. Which do you want me to do? Back up or go ahead.”

“Look-”

“Why are you saying ‘go ahead’ ‘back up’?” the driver grumbled. “Pick one and stick with it.”

The Onderonian slowly turned to stare at the driver, silver eyes narrowed. “Kord.”

“Aye, Cel?” The Ryn had been trying to suppress sniggers for the last minute or so.

“How do you think Atyiru would feel if we gave this young lad a day off and took the speeder ourselves?”

“You suggestin’ he get lost?” Kordath asked in return, wondering if the Assassin meant to literally give the kid the day off or ‘get lost’ and never see the sun rise again.

“Frack’s sake! Do you want me to back up or-”

The question was never finished as the Onderonian threw all of his weight behind a punch, knocking the driver unconscious.

The Ryn blinked. Glanced at the driver. Blinked again. “I don’ see Blinky liking that.”

Celevon growled under his breath as he pushed the driver into the passenger seat and took the wheel. “It was either that or stabbing him.” With that said, the Assassin put the speeder in gear and they flew off, quickly hitting the vehicle’s top speed as he simply went over the other vehicles that had wedged them in.

“Do we has ta go so, urp, fast?”

“We’re not flying, I didn’t think this would bother you.”

Kordath Bleu looked a bit pale in the rear view mirror, swaying slightly whenever the speeder curved gently towards the traffic lanes. His eyes were squeezed shut, his jaw was clenched, and he was certain the Onderonian was enjoying himself.

“So, down towards Giletta Port, where are we going? Kord? Focus, Kord, come on.”

“Thank the gods it’s a rental,” muttered the Ryn as he scrabbled at the controls set in driver side door. The window inched down slowly and torturously, finally it opened enough for Bleu to work his head out into the whipping air. Rushing wind caused the already disarray of hair lash out, and dried the sweat from his face. It was refreshing, right up until he twisted his head down and back and heaved.

The sounds of screaming pedestrians was lost to the sound of the speeder’s engine, but Bleu made a mental note to check the reports later. He collapsed back into the seat with a groan, his eyes set on the dark upholstery that covered the inside of the craft.

“Right, uhh, we’re headed ta the Palladium Curtain, t’ain’t far from tha port,” Kord pulled a pack of smokes from inside his coat, shook one out and lit it. The blown out smoke streamed out the open window. “Lovely lil place, it is. Doorman be expectin’ us.”

“Palladium Curtain,” mouthed Celevon, brows furrowed in thought. “Why does that sound familiar?”

“Place ya take only tha most trusted of dignitaries and tha like, mate, heh. Lovely, lovely place. Lovely ladies.”

“Kord...”

“Aye?”

“Are we going to a strip club?”

“Exotic Dancing Establishment and Bar.”

“Alright, I must admit that this is much more relaxing than I thought it would be,” Celevon muttered to the Ryn as they approached the bar. “Though your definition of ‘classy’ is quite different from my own.”

“This *is* classy. Compared ta some of the bars around here, at least,” Kordath shrugged. “Oi, barman. We’ll ‘ave a whiskey.”

“The system here is to set up a tab. You pay up when you’re ready to go. Name?”

The Rollmaster glanced down as he pulled the identification of the driver out of his pocket. “Johan Erickson.”

The bartender nodded as he scribbled down the name. “Any particular brand?”

“... Whiskey is whiskey, eh?”

The Onderonian quickly caught onto what Kordath had planned and spoke up. “We’ll each have a glass of your top shelf whiskey on the rocks. After that, we’ll be splitting a bottle or two of Corellian.”

“Of course. Pick a table by whichever dancer catches your fancy. I’ll have your drinks brought out shortly. Your friend here can hold his liquor better than the pale-haired blind girl, I trust?” the bartender questioned abruptly as he recognized Kordath.

“P...pale haired...” started the Ryn, before following the bartender’s gesture. A wall next to the bar showed holo stills of celebrities and the like hanging out with dancing girls. Or the occasional ‘guest’ who’d managed to get on the pole. Kordath ran a hand down his face as he took in the image of his Consul, legs splayed and a goofy, drunken smile on her face while hanging from the pole. He turned his head sideways, wondering how many Arconan service men had seen this image. It wasn’t like she’d stripped, just gotten on the pole while drunk, but the skirts didn’t leave a lot to the imagination.

Gods knew he’d been, eh, subjected to that view enough times when she felt a need to step on his face. He glanced over at the bartender, who was busy pouring drinks for a waitress. Casually he reached out and plucked the holo from its place on the wall and shoved it into his coat.

“Kord, table?” asked Edraven, holding a pair of glasses and gesturing towards the common area. Little islands of light, tables with glow rods underneath them, could be seen in the darkness. Scantly clad women sauntered around between them, some with drinks, others finding laps to settle in and likely credits to take. Twi’leks, Zeltrons, Mirialan, Humans and various other species were represented by the dancers.

“Anythin’ but the Zeltron tables, eh?” spoke the Ryn, eyeing the red skinned beauties with suspicion. His experiences had put him off, no matter how they looked. He followed the Onderonian to a table, and found that the two of them were beset by a pair of women moments after sitting. Kordath gave him companion a wry smile and lifted his glass in a toasting motion, “To Erickson, eh?”

Celevon lifted his glass in return and took a sip, eyes focused on one of the women dancing in front of him. “We’re most definitely avoiding the Zeltron table. I don’t like losing control of myself... especially not when they can control you through pheromones. Might be kind of Erickson to fund our little escapade.”

Shortly after the pair had finished off the expensive glasses, the bartender brought out the two bottles they requested. Celevon and Kordath moved to another table before popping open the first. Near the end of the second bottle, the pair started into a conversation on a hypothetical holoball team.

“Strange as it may seem, ball players these days choose very odd names,” the Onderonian explained, a slight slur to his words as the bartender brought out a third bottle.

“Odd how?” the Ryn questioned curiously, finishing off his glass before fishing a cigarette out of his pack.

“Nicknames, Kord, nicknames. Now, on the Eldar team: Who is on first, what’s on second and I Don’t Know is on third-”

“That’s what I want to find out. I want ye to tell me the names of the lads on the Eldar team,” Kord interrupted, watching as the former Quaestor lit his own cigarette and refilled their glasses. Absently, he noticed that some of the dancers had stopped and were paying attention to their conversation.

“I’m telling you: Who’s on first, What’s on second, I Don’t Know is on third-”

“You know their names?” the Rollmaster interrupted again, starting to narrow his eyes at his companion. Silver eyes glared right back at him through a cloud of smoke.

“Yes.”

“Well, then, who’s playing first?”

“Yes,” Celevon nodded.

“I mean the lad playin’ first base.”

“Who.”

“The lad playin’ first base.”

“Who.”

“The lad on first.”

“Who is on first,” Celevon repeated through clenched teeth.

The Ryn paused to swallow his mouthful of whiskey. “Well, what’re you askin’ me for?”

“I’m not asking you, I’m telling you: Who is on first.”

“I’m asking *you* who’s on first.”

Steadily, their voices raised as the dancers stifled their giggles.

“That’s the man’s name.”

“That’s who’s name?”

“Yes,” the Onderonian retorted shortly, taking a long drag off of his cigarette.

Kordath closed his eyes, taking a deep breath to relax himself before trying a different angle.

“When you pay off the first baseman, who gets the credits?”

“Every dollar of it.” At the Ryn’s glare, Celevon glared back, not noticing how fast they were going through the whiskey. “Why not? The man’s entitled to it.”

“Who is?”

“Yes.”

“So, who gets it?”

“Why shouldn’t he? Sometimes his wife comes down and collects the payment.”

“Who’s wife?”

“Yes. After all, the man earned it.”

“Who does?”

“Absolutely.”

The Ryn growled. “Look, all I’m trying to find out is what’s the guy’s name on first base.”

“Oh, no, no. What is on second base,” Celevon corrected, putting out his cigarette in the ashtray.

“I’m not asking you who’s on second.”

“Who’s on first!”

“I don’t know!”

“He’s on third! We’re not talking about him.”

At this point, the dancers within earshot had to run to the back room before they burst into laughter. The argument continued for quite a while before the bartender had to tell the Arconans that they had clearly had enough and should pay up.

“Enuff? Yah, probably, eh, Cel..Cel..yeah. Oi!” he shouted at a passing dancer as he dug into a pocket. She stared at him in apprehension, uncertain what the drunken Ryn was going for, until he pulled out a few credit notes. After one or two attempts he managed to place them in her hand, giving her a huge smile as he did so. “You’re pretty cute, ya know? Right! Uhh, call me mate and I a cab, eh? Do nae think we’ll be, uhh, drivin’, hah!”

“Right away, Sir,” she replied, pulling her hand free of his after a moment, leaving the Rollmaster to admire her as she walked away.

“Wait, aren’t we forgetting something?” asked the Erinos, looking at his regrettably empty glass. “You were meant to meet someone here, weren’t you?”

“Uhh,” Kord stared at him for a moment, having to blink to get the afterimage of the dancer from his mind. “Weeeeell, I uhh, mighta stretched tha truth a bit there, ya know how Blinky can get all gleefully manipulative from time ta time, yeah?”

“Right,” replied Celevon, his tone neutral.

“She was worried you was feelin’ a bit too uptight, not sure how, that creepy bleedin’ chair of her’s probably. Told me ta take ya out, show ya a good time, even gave me some...credits...oh,

we ought ta leave a tip, eh? Anyways, yeah, mission accomplished, I'd say," stated Bleu, beaming proudly.

The Onderonian let out a bark of a laugh, "Yeah, I suppose. We should get out of here before, uhh, Erick...the driver, comes around. Not sure about you, but I'm in no state for a fight."

"Bah, best time for a wee brawl, won't feel it till later!" Still the Ryn rose to stand with his companion, weaving through tables, swaying as they walked towards the door. The doorman waved them towards a taxi speeder that had pulled up to the curb, and gave them a nod as Kord shoved a few more credits from the expense account into the big man's paw. "Cya next time, friend, hah!"

From a bit further back on the road they heard someone yelling their names; Celevon leaned forward and told the driver to take them to the Citadel.

"What about your friend running down the sidewalk?"

"He's fine, go ahead."

"Ahead? But I have to turn around to get to the Citadel."

"We are not doin' this again! Just go!"