

Unwanted Partnership

He woke slowly, working a sore jaw and mouth that tasted of ash with his back on a hard, metal surface. Rubbing at his face with his left hand which smelled of cigarette and stale whiskey, Kordath Bleu didn't find this unusual. With a yawn and a cursory morning scratch he slowly came to, wondering if he'd woken up early enough for a drunk tank breakfast or not. When he went to stretch he got confused, unable to move his right arm properly.

"Tha hell did I get into last night that they felt tha need ta cuff me ta tha...huh?" he opened his eyes and glanced over to his right.

Confusion set in as he took in the pale skinned, dark haired man lying next to him. How much *had* he had to drink, he wondered as he looked around the bare room. It was dark, a glow panel set in the ceiling above him was dark and the chamber itself was barely a dozen meters across. A rattle as he tried to move his right hand drew his attention to the set of shackles connecting him to the unconscious Umbaran.

"Alright, how much did I drink last night?" muttered the Ryn to himself, rubbing at his eyes and smacking himself on the cheek in an attempt to get the blood flowing. "Where tha hell was I? Nar Shaddaa?"

The Arconan laid back down on the metal floor...decking? He could feel a thrum running through the surface that suggested sublight travel. That wasn't good. Not that he was gonna be doing much moving around while latched on to the big bastard lying next to him. Working his way through his usual morning after routine as best he could, Bleu lifted his head and glanced down towards his feet and sighed with relief. It was also good after a bender to insure you still had your trousers.

Now, last night, he'd had a few drinks, he was certain of that. He smelled of smoke and booze though a faint taste of copper lingered in his mouth. A light touch to the lips showed one side of the bottom of the two to be swollen, also not an unusual thing with the Ryn's lifestyle. So. He'd had a few, got into a fight by the feel of it, and....woke up chained to an Inquisitor on a spaceship? He felt as if he were still missing some chapters in this story.

Wait. Inquisitor? Kordath looked at the man again and recognition set in. Ventus. Oh joy. Hazy memories from the night before started to surface. He'd been meeting...somebody. Another Resistance type or a go between for Arcona and Odan Urr. A simple handoff of intel that neither Clan wanted to put on the holonet, Kordath didn't ask questions. He knew better. The less you knew the better, just find the contact and had of the data card, act natural and get the kark off of the Smuggler's Moon. No big deal, usually nobody would bat an eye at the morally questionable Ryn bar hopping on Nar Shaddaa.

Apparently somebody with the Inquisitorius had thought otherwise. He had a vague recollection the much taller Umbaran walking through the doors of the pub he'd been set to meet his contact at. There'd been a scuffle. Kordath was pretty sure he hadn't won that one, despite the homefield advantage of a bar. He'd never found the contact he was looking for though he *had* met a lovely Mirialan girl who'd said he reminded her of a stuffed animal she cuddled with when she was a child. Bleu had gotten over the strangeness of that one when dealing with this hairless species of the Galaxy sometime ago, an in was an in, after all. Atra bloody Ventus had ruined all of that by dragging the Ryn out into the streets for a 'talk'.

He couldn't recall much after that. If the Arconan had to guess, or deduce from previous experiences, he'd made a few disparaging remarks about the pale man's heritage. Possibly something about his mother and a herd of Gundarks. From the way his head and face were throbbing he'd said something out of line and gotten smacked but good. Idly the Ryn wondered if he'd given any information up or if he'd managed to frustrate the Inquisitor to the point where he simply beat him unconscious. From what he knew of Ventus through hearsay, that would be a feat worth a few drinks when, if, he got back home.

With a groan he sat up, his head protesting the whole ascent and insisting that the lovely, cool metal floor was a fine place to curl up and die on. He ran a hand through his white hair and yawned again as he looked about the room for anything he could use to remove the blasted shackles keeping him here. It looked like a cleaned out crew quarter, a pair of bunks lining either wall, a door in front of them. Light played across the room slowly, a dull glow from behind him. The Ryn suspected he knew what that was and chose to wisely ignore it for now if he could. There were only two possibilities he could figure on, either a force field for what appeared to be a cell, or....no. He refused to entertain the other option. He needed a clear head, he needed to be able to think the situation out.

So, two bunks, a bucket and a footlocker at the end of each one. Crew quarters would have a communal refresher somewhere in the area, so if this place had been repurposed as a cell it made sense to leave them....something. A groan to his right suggested the Inquisitor wasn't dead, something he'd not bothered to check up on yet. Blood matted down some of the dark hair on one side of the pale man's head, a bit of it was dried in lines along the left side of his face as well. Kordath was perturbed, a head wound might kill the Loyalist goon anyways, but if he couldn't find a way out of these shackles he'd never get out. There was no feasible way for the Ryn to drag that much dead weight around.

Instead he chose to reach over with his free hand and began to poke at the Dark Jedi, jabbing a finger into the man's midsection. This eventually got him a groan in reply and a forceful hand slap to get him to stop.

"Five more minutes, for the love of the Force," he heard the man mumble.

“Wakey wakey, Ventus, we got’s us a situation!” shouted the Ryn, leaning in towards the Umbaran who clutched at his ears to shut out the noise. This resulted in Kordath being dragged almost atop the man due to the bindings. “That’d be part of it.”

“What, off, get off of me,” groaned Atra, eyes opening finally.

“Move yer bloody arm and I might be able to. Come on then.”

The Umbaran slowly rose to a sitting position, hand reaching up to touch the bloodied side of his head. This drew his attention to the shackles as Kordath’s fuzzy gray arm came along for the ride. “Ah.”

“Ah? AH? That’s all ya got ta say? What the frack is goin’ on here, mate? I mean, I’m not one ta find wakin’ up in a locked room all that odd, it ain’t exactly a weird one as mornin’s go fer me, but usually I’m not latched to another bloke.”

“Hmm, must have hit my head when the ion cannons shut down the shuttle and sent us into a spin.” The Inquisitor looked over what was his prisoner. “Of course you didn’t suffer a scratch from that. Hmm.”

“Ions? Wait what?”

“Pirates, probably tracked us from Nar Shaddaa and disabled the ship before I made it to hyperspace. If I’d been conscious when they boarded I assure you this would not have happened.”

“Imagine not, be a bit more body parts and blood about, probably,” stated the Ryn with only a touch of sarcasm.

“Cute. Now get up so we can look out the--”

“No.”

“What?”

“Ya don’t want me ta do that.”

“Do what?”

“What you’re about ta say, it’s nae a good idea.”

“Kordath, we have to know where we are if we’re to formulate a plan.”

“Why?”

“Excuse me?”

“Why is tha where important? Yer tha big bad Inquisitor type, just take tha ship over, pop in some numbers in the navcomputer, boom, on our way again.”

Atra gave him a long stare. “We have no idea how large the ship is. The shuttle I was using was attacked by a flight of fighters, this isn’t one of the ships that attacked us obviously.”

“Obviously, aye. So?”

“So,” said the Umbaran with greater patience than most people Bleu dealt with. It was irritating. “We’re aboard a larger ship. A ship of unknown size that has crew quarters this spacious.”

“So? Bigger crew, big deal, yer a tough guy,” replied the Ryn, his offhand gingerly touching his swollen lip. “They’re pirates, proof yer the big baddie and they’ll fall in line, eh? Isn’t that what you Inquisitorius guys want anyways, everybody ta toe tha bloody line?”

He saw Atra’s lips tighten into a thin line, the only emotional response he’d gotten thus far from the bigger man. Kordath found himself dragged to his feet as Ventus stood.

“That’s not the point, if the crew is too big we won’t be able to overtake them. That and they took our weapons. Not that you’re much use in a straight up fight, anyways.”

“Not gonna argue that point, mate. So ya got an actual plan?”

“I need more information. There’s a chance we can see a world from the--”

“Ya got somethin’ for a blindfold?” asked the hopeful Arconan.

“Sorry?”

“Ya do nae wanna see what happens...uhh, ya had me knocked out when ya got me on tha shuttle, I’m guessin’?”

Atra nodded slowly, his own head injury was throbbing, the strange little man’s odd mannerisims weren’t helping.

“Right, not a pretty sight, me and space.”

"I can't formulate a plan without further intel, Kordath. If there's a planet, we have options. If I can see more of the ship we might recognize the model, that gives us a tentative idea on where to go. Now come on."

"This is a terrible idea," muttered the Arconan as he dragged his feet. He was pulled along by the Praetor to the viewport opposite of the the room's door. The Ryn kept his eyes squeezed shut.

"Alright, I see a world, it's nightside luckily. Looks like scattered towns so it's civilized. If we can steal a ship we can get down there, or an escape pod. Gravity well should pull us in, but we'll have to do something about the ship's weapons or sensors to pull this off. Hmm, from the hull curvature...not familiar with this model. Kordath?"

"Aye?"

"Why...no. Just open your eyes and tell me if you recognize the ship type, it could be helpful."

"No."

"Kordath..."

"Not happenin'." The Ryn shook his head fiercely and immediately regretted it as dizziness hit him like a speeder.

"I'm not dealing with this alone, Bleu," spoke Atra with a sigh, using his free hand to reach up and force one of the Arconan's eyes open.

"Oh...oh no...", Kordath managed to get out before his vision began to glaze over. "Should nae o' done that."

"Why? Oh Sithspawn!"

-X-

Kordath blinked several times as he awoke. The sun was just rising on the horizon, peeking in through the open hatch of the escape pod. He yawned and stretched, finding his right arm still attached to a surprisingly annoyed looking Ventus.

"What'd I miss?"

"You mean after you threw up all over the both of us and passed out?"

"Told ya not ta make me look, I don't do good with space, mate."

“No kidding. I had to carry you after getting a guard to open the door and taking him out. You, over my shoulder, as I snuck to engineering and disabled the alarms and sensors before stealing an escape pod.”

“Neat trick, wish I’d been awake to see it, but hey, I’d have just gotten in tha way. Me shoulder feels funny, kinda sore.”

“I put you to good use.”

“Atra...did you beat people with me?” asked the Ryn, slowly.

The Inquisitor shrugged, just a touch of a smile on the man’s pale features. “We should find a farmer or someone who can remove these shackles for us. After that we can figure things out.”

“Don’t guess this means yer lettin’ me go when we’re done?”

“What do you think?”

Kordath gave him a weak smile, “Yes?”

Silence was the only response.