

## Nimban Shadows

*Nimban  
Hutt Space*

The mirialan stumbled against his ryn companion who was doing his best to hold the lanky older man up. To Kordath Bleu the sound of his mentor's ragged breath and the patter of blood on the dirty alleyway pavement were the two loudest sounds in the galaxy. He could feel the warmth soaking into the side of his own shoulder and shirt as they struggled to move ahead. A glance back showed that they weren't going fast enough, and the blood trail left behind was incredibly noticeable. The young thief was beginning to understand their predicament.

It had been a standard setup, just a little confidence scheme where they collected orders, and credits, issued receipts for some product that would show up 'in a few days' and slinked back to the shadows. They'd barely been on the planet a week, trying to gather enough funds to hop on another transport to hopefully leave Hutt space. Nimban had never been a destination they wanted to hit up, but they'd left the last world in a hurry and short of change. How were they to know one of the people they'd scammed was highly enough placed in a cartel to track them this fast? Less than a week, usually it took a month before people realized the goods were a complete lie and that they'd been had.

"Gotta...gotta stop, Bleu," gasped Tass, clutching his stomach, blood seeping past the hand.

"We stop, boss, we gonna get blasted. Gottta keep movin'."

Tass let out a sound that was half sigh, half strangled cry of pain before collapsing against the smaller frame of his student. Kordath grunted and lowered him to the ground, propping him up against the filthy wall.

"We gots ta find somebody ta mend ya, Tass," grumbled Bleu, tearing one of the mirailian's off the man's tunic. Balling it up and shoving it against the wound he shook, blood covering his hands in moments. The pair had never been violent in their actions, they'd made a point not to screw over those that couldn't afford it.

Problem was, those that could afford it could also make their lives hell.

A shakey hand reached up and ruffled his white hair, the ashen faced man giving Kord a weak grin. "Kid, we don't know a fixer 'round here. Don't know nobody, this gut shot ain't gonna stop bleedin'. Ya gotta--argh!" a cry of pain cut off Tass as he doubled over, sucking air loudly through his teeth.

“Just gotta slow it down,” mumbled the ryn, “slow it down, find somebody who can help. Yeah.”

“Yer panicking, boyo, slow it down,” gasped out Tass. “slow it...down...calm...blast it, Bleu! We karked up, I’m bleedin’ out, yer fine, get...get...”

Kord stared up at his mentor, gray eyes wide.

“No, comeon, Tass, I’d be longdead if not for you, boss. I ain’t leavin’ ya here!”

“We had a good run, kid, five years since I pulled you off that humid tree rock, what was it called...”

“Aphran, Aphran IV, blast it Tass this ain’t how it ends, don’t make me, don’t...don’t die!”

Again the weak grin, this time a touch of blood leaked from the side of his mouth as he coughed. “You’d have been fine without me, boyo, just bored.”

Kordath couldn’t find words though his mouth tried to move before the two thieves were interrupted by sounds coming from the direction they’d fled. He felt an anger rise in him, one he’d not felt since slavers had tried to steal away his little sisters. Six years hadn’t shown him how he’d burned those men to a crisp but he felt something stirring inside. The running had started then, taken his family away. Now he was going to lose Tass as well, because of violent men. His jaw set, a fire in his eye, Kordath began to stand to face that direction, unsure of what his next move was but trusting in the sensation of impending violence that flowed through him.

That was when Tass grabbed his arm with a shaky hand, surprising the ryn with the strength remaining in the bleeding man’s grip.

“Get tha kark out o’ here, boyo. Not have me last sight be yer death, Bleu.”

“But...”

“**GO!**” bellowed the mirialan, doubling over once more as he was racked with a coughing fit.

“Get, lad, get out o’ here before they find ya, get off this hutt infested rock, and get gone. Make a life, yeah? Gave ya...tha...tools. ..go...”

“Blast it, Tass,” whispered the ryn, kneeling down and pressing his forehead against his mentor, friend and, in a fit of honesty to himself, surrogate father. “Do nae die, maybe someday...”

“Death would be better than what that lot has planned for me, boyo, now go,” spoke Tass, calmly.

Kordath ran into the darkness of the alleyway as the shouting voices got closer, leaving his mentor behind. He preferred to think Tass's last moments were brave, as he never heard a scream.