

Word Count: 2221 Words (... Believe it or not, this was entirely unintentional. I thought I was at 1700 or so before I checked the count)

Detention Block

Unidentified Vessel

34 ABY; Time: Unknown

The Onderonian barely twitched as he regained consciousness, eyes closed as he attempted to gather information with his other senses. From what Celevon could tell, the room was fairly clean - almost sterile - and cold. Beneath the sound of faint humming from some electrical source was the telltale sign of someone else, fairly nearby, breathing softly. As the Assassin slowly opened his silver eyes, he felt a tug on his wrists.

As he sat up, Celevon saw his hands bound by shackles, a chain leading off away from him. The Arconan reached up, ignoring the sound of the chain, only to realize that his hair had been released from a braid and, with it, the bobby pin he had carried was gone. A sweeping glance also revealed that his weapons were missing. After a glance at the viewport that revealed he was aboard a vessel in space, Celevon followed the chain with his eyes. He froze in shock as he took in the figure attached by similar restraints to the other end. Despite the bruises, Celevon recognized the person almost instantly.

Malyn Eckhart had been a Mercenary who worked exclusively with the Inquisitorius, usually by gathering intelligence for or working alongside the Assassin as he had infiltrated deeper into the Order. Not long after Celevon had been elevated to the rank of Grand Inquisitor, he had been tasked with retrieving a datacard with details of members of the seven Clans who were sympathetic to the Jedi, the Resistance or both. Whilst carrying out this mission, the Onderonian noticed a hit squad enter the establishment as he pocketed the datacard. After eliminating half of the team in the bathroom of the cantina, Celevon had fled, believing his cover had been blown. Unbeknownst to the Assassin, it was his elimination of these Mercenaries that had blown his cover, as they had been sent to assist him in the mission - their intel that the datacard had been successfully delivered to the Jedi only cemented this fact.

Pale green orbs snapped open beneath messy blonde hair as the Arconan had physically recoiled at the sight of his old ally, jerking the chain connecting them. Eckhart sneered, both hatred and disgust clear as he recognized Celevon. "Traitor," the Mercenary spat as she pushed himself to his feet, reaching out as though he were going to wrap his hands around the Onderonian's throat before he caught sight of the shackles.

Abruptly, Malyn halted his actions as he began to twist his muscular arms in an attempt to break either the chain that bound the two together or the smaller one that connected the restraints.

“You’re wasting your time, Malyn. The chains are-”

“You don’t get to use my name, Edraven!” The dark-skinned Human hissed acerbically, lip curling as he met the Assassin’s eyes. “Because of you, I’ve been imprisoned for longer than I can tell, beaten and interrogated for details every other day... The Inquisitors believed that I assisted you in your treasonous acts and all attempts to convince them otherwise have been ignored!”

Celevon took a step back at the furious diatribe, as the Mercenary’s hissed retort had elevated to a shout with every word. The heavy breaths, tightly clenched fists and bared teeth told the Assassin that Eckhart would have happily pummeled his face in were he not bound.

As the Onderonian watched, Malyn closed his eyes and visibly took deep breaths to calm himself. After several minutes, his eyes opened and, though the hatred was still visible, the Mercenary was no longer consumed by it. “Right... Since it seems like we’re stuck together and either of us dragging a corpse would slow us down, we’ll work together. Once we’ve escaped, we’ll go our separate ways. You can consider that repayment for saving my life once Edraven, however... make no mistake: should I see you again if we make it out of this mess, I *will* kill you.”

“Understandable. Here’s what we’re going to do-”

After several minutes where the pair discussed a rough plan, Malyn started banging on the metal bars of their cell as he yelled for the guard.

As soon as the guard got close enough, the Mercenary decided to give up the ruse, grabbing the guard by the front of his uniform and yanked him roughly against the bars. After the guard’s head smacked against the bars the second time, Celevon reached through the bars, pulled out the keys and unlocked the door. The pair worked quickly once the door was open as they dragged the guard into the cell. Whilst unconscious, the Onderonian unlatched the larger chain from the Mercenary’s restraints, then found the right key to release the shackles themselves from one another.

The guard was propped up against the far wall and slapped harshly across the face by Malyn. The moment the guard realized his situation, Celevon stretched part of the chain between his hands and pushed against the guard's throat.

Working together, the duo forced the guard to reveal the location of their gear and a rough description of the layout, as well as the forces aboard the vessel. After getting the answers they were after, Celevon pressed the chain against the guard's throat until he lost consciousness.

As the guard slipped to the side, head stopping against the metal of the frame of one of the two beds in the cell, Eckhart lashed out with a vicious kick. The angle of the guard's head told them that his neck had snapped.

Before the Onderonian could say anything, the Mercenary shook his head. "You don't get to tell me off. That bastard took delight in trying to break me... That kind of torment is something I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy." Eckhart shuddered, eyes clenched shut. "Let's get moving. The sooner we have our gear and make our way off of this death trap, the happier I'll be. You planning to get that chain off of you?"

Celevon glanced down at the larger part of chain, still attached to the restraint around his left wrist and slowly shook his head. "I'll keep this. It's much thicker than piano wire, but I can make it work. You take his baton."

Malyn shrugged, grabbing the blunt weapon before they opened the cell and walked out after checking both directions for another guard. As the duo made their way down the hall, the Onderonian wrapped most of the chain around the prosthetic forearm. The foot-long length that remained dangled loosely at his side.

Not a word was spoken between them as both Humans made their way toward where the guard said their gear was located. The closer they got to the room, the more cautious the pair became.

Eckhart swore quietly as they were yards from the junction to the room where their personal effects were located, mirroring Celevon's actions as they pressed themselves against the wall. He waited patiently as the Assassin peeked around the corner. Cold mercurial depths met his own gaze as Celevon gestured without words, through which the Arconan indicated that there were three enemies in a triangular position. Another quick series and the Mercenary nodded in understanding.

Only one of them was armed with a blaster rifle; the other two of what appeared to be lower ranked soldiers bore similar batons to the one in Malyn's grasp.

The Mercenary watched as the Onderonian around the corner, the metallic sound of the chain against the durasteel floor drawing the attention of the other three. It took a moment as Eckhart realized that the noise had come from the chain being rapidly uncoiled from around Celevon's arm.

With a wide, sweeping motion, the Arconan swung the chain in an arc towards the one holding the rifle. As soon as it wrapped around the blaster, Celevon yanked, sending the weapon skidding further down the hall behind them. The moment he saw the blaster, the Mercenary revealed himself, rushing around the corner to meet one of their captors whilst the previously armed enemy ran to sound the alarm.

A snap of the Assassin's wrist sent the chain flying, which wrapped itself around the neck of the fleeing guard. Before the uniformed guard could stop, Celevon turned his entire body, harshly jerking the chain in a durasteel grip. The sudden reversal of momentum audibly snapped the neck of the guard as the metal tightened.

The Onderonian stumbled despite his efforts to remain on his feet, turning to aid the Mercenary, only to purposely collapse to the ground. Even as he dodged the vicious strike of the guard's baton, a glancing blow was scored against his shoulder.

The guard moved to bring the baton straight down on Celevon's head. Silver eyes widened as he rolled-

Or tried to do so, his movement halted with a jerk as the chain stretched taut, grunting in pain as his shoulder was pulled from its socket.

Malyn tackled the guard to the ground before the blow could land, knocking the baton free with a metallic clatter. Where, at first, Eckhart had the advantage, the guard turned the tables on the Mercenary. The blonde saw furious brown eyes locked with his own before he raised his arms, blocking his head from the fists that struck down upon him repeatedly.

Eckhart was stunned as one punch made it past his defenses, head bouncing off of the floor. The lack of a follow-up and a shout of agony confused him momentarily. It took him a moment to place what he heard as the sound of choking. As his vision cleared and the Mercenary pushed himself to a sitting position, he blinked at the sight before him.

The Onderonian's left arm dangled uselessly as he straddled the guard, the chain clearly tight around the captor's neck. The guard attempted to loosen the metal before the final breath rattled

out of his body. Celevon grunted as he released his grip, fumbling at his side for the keys to release the chain.

The Mercenary watched as the Assassin removed the chain, stood, then proceeded to slam his shoulder against the wall to knock it back into socket.

As the silver gaze of his temporary ally fell upon him, Malyn failed to restrain the thought that tumbled from his lips.

“I suppose you’re regretting not detaching the chain earlier, eh?” The Mercenary gave a snort of laughter as Celevon glared.

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An Hour Later

Celevon and Malyn stumbled out of the Escape Pod. If they had looked, they would have seen where the vessel had ripped through the jungle canopy.

The Mercenary groaned as he leaned against a downed tree, blearily taking in the near lack of visibility due to how much sun was blocked out by the trees above them. “I suppose this is where we go our separate ways, Edraven. Do you have any idea where we are?”

The Assassin nodded slowly, eyes taking in their surroundings. “I recognized the planets on our entry. This is Dxun.”

Eckhart groaned, patting his pockets for the packet of cigarettes he recalled getting before he had been captured. “Good thing I keep a signalling device to alert my crew or we’d be screwed.”

“‘We?’” Celevon raised an eyebrow as he glanced at the Mercenary, taking several careful steps away. “As I recall, you said helping each other escape would make us even for me saving your life months ago. You also threatened to kill me. How do I know you won’t take that shot when my back is turned?”

“What? You don’t trust me?” Eckhart questioned harshly, pushing himself off of the dead tree.

“The number of people I trust could be counted on one hand. You can signal your crew to come pick you up. I’ll make my own way to civilization.” Even as the Assassin spoke, he maneuvered

himself further away. “Now, I’ll give you a free warning in return. Come after me for your petty revenge and it will be the last thing you ever do.”

In the Mercenary’s moment of stunned silence, Celevon turned and ran into the thick jungle.

Malyn swiftly drew the gleaming blaster pistol at his hip and fired several green bolts after the Onderonian before giving chase. Growling under his breath, Eckhart ran, smacking limbs of tall foliage away from his face for a good fifteen minutes. Every so often, the Mercenary thought he had caught sight of the Arconan and unleashed a flurry of emerald blaster bolts, only to find nothing but shadows where his blasts had struck.

From an unknown distance away, he heard the loud, mocking laughter of the Assassin. Despite his anger, Eckhart was confused by the fact that it seemed to echo throughout the jungle.

The Mercenary gave a roar of fury as he heard the last words of the Onderonian.

“Good luck finding your way out of here. Oh... thanks for the cigarettes! I can get some decent credits from this shiny casing.”

After almost emptying his blaster pistol’s charge, Malyn started to backtrack to the Escape Pod. One thing was certain in his mind: The Inquisitorius would get every bit of information he had gathered. Especially the fact that the snarky bastard was apparently a kleptomanic pickpocket.

He’d willingly give up any pay to be the one to kill the Arconan.

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