

# BURIED TREASURE

Aesirus, 34 ABY

Written by Blade Ta'var

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*Blade sat in her office, reviewing the latest mission board. She had just finished her final edits to it and was reviewing it a second time before she took off for her next mission. She wasn't sure how long it would take to acquire the intelligence on the location of the Kyber crystal cave, but knew it was somewhere in the SoroSuub mining operation on Aesirus. She didn't really want to go there, but the Emperor himself had given the Clan their missions for the next month. She would be foolish to deny them at this stage of her plans.*

*Sighing, she killed her connection to the terminal, grabbed her gear, and went to snag a ride to Aesirus.*

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Aesirus was a violent planet, its ever changing landscape a mystery to most of her clan's geological experts. Patches of green gave way to violent eruptions of magma. Cold hard rock flowed seamlessly to patches of tundra. Chaos reigned on a planet constantly in flux. This had been the Quaestor's temporary home for a fortnight already, but she had finally found a way past the stubborn bureaucratic nonsense that protected SoroSuub's secret. His name was Jannis Zor and she had primed him for tonight's meeting for at least a week.

Blade looked out of the shuttle window and for once forgot about her mission, feeling as if the planet mirrored her soul. One day it was something she was proud of and then it turned into something she shrank away from on first glance. As such, she found the planet soothing and took comfort in the fact that it endured despite the stresses that raked its surface daily. The craft banked around to the left, bringing her back to reality as her view was replaced by a dull gray, squat, durasteel building that served as the only bar on the SoroSuub mining facility campus. Miners were already streaming into the establishment, caked with earth from their last shift.

*Poor beasts of burden...*

The public transport landed a short way away and the Warrior quickly joined the mass of people exiting the ship for the pub. Following the huddle of miners into the building, she quickly grabbed an open table and waited for her mark. Passing miners gave her hopeful but disapproving glares as they looked at her clean, enticing attire. She was clean and therefore automatically wealthy, but the rest of them? They were the opposite: dirty. The Arcanist disagreed with the misguided notion but she wasn't here to enlighten miners. In addition, it didn't help that she had become the foreman's newest friend. She stared around and smirked,

fully accepting the passive-aggressive anger directed towards her. Jealousy was a powerful motive.

The man named Jannis didn't disappoint and promptly took the seat across from her, his weary spirits already picking up. His dark brown hair was neatly parted off to the side and his face was relatively clean, at least compared to the miners. He wore utilitarian garb but it was noticeably unsoiled compared to the miners clothing. In short, he was handsome enough. The Zeltron smirked as bitter stares bored into them despite the general rumble of idle conversation.

"Awkward as usual. Nice to see you again." Blade wanted to say *'how was work'*, but she doubted it would have gone over well with the rest of the bar's inhabitants.

"Better now that I'm here. I'm glad SoroSuub contracted you to help us out. It's quite dull out here. Perhaps we could..." The muttering increased as several groups gathered together in bunches around them, some with ill-intent.

The Warrior smiled at their new guests and released waves of pheromones in the vicinity. "Now, now, lovelies, do you really want to waste your precious free time on us? If you want to squander your credits getting in trouble, go get yourself a drink. Or better yet, I'll take one." She smiled, watching them closely.

A few left with a laugh, but many moved closer. Her companion was already starting to panic, turning in his chair nervously. Adrenaline rushed through her as she anticipated a fight.

"Let me make this clear. If you want to wrestle, I'll beat up every single one of you, single handedly. I dare you." She threatened with a growl. They simply got closer. "Jannis, what's the policy for violence here?"

"2 weeks lost pay." The foreman replied bitterly.

"2 weeks? Is this worth 2 weeks pay? Because I may not look it, but I'll beat you all up and all you'll have to show for it are hungry stomachs. Don't be an idiot. You're smarter than this." She berated the angry crowd, staring them down. Eventually they dispersed, a few looking back resentfully. Bar stools scraped against the floor as curious stares followed their retreat.

*Everyone loves a show...*

Despite the recent stress, Jannis was oddly in a pleasant mood, a useful side effect of the fact that he was seated close by while she unleashed her pheromones. He leaned towards her, gaze unfocused. His face told her everything she wanted to know. The Zeltron cleared her throat, feeling the stares of the bar's patrons.

*Ahem.*

“Oh yes, what were you talking about?”

“We were talking about you ordering me a drink.” Blade offered with a mischievous grin.

“Oh yeah. Sure thing. Barkeep! The usual please.” Her target ordered dutifully.

Several glasses were put on the table, the bartender happily accepting the meager tip.

“You don’t like to tip do you?” The Arcanist asked with a raised brow.

“We’ve been over this. I don’t make *that* much money, darling. Despite what everyone else thinks.” The man raised his voice ever so slightly at the end, hoping the miners might hear it. There was no response. “Tough crowd...”

She breathed in and reached out to the Force, feeling the tension in the air. Jannis may have been worried about his wellbeing, but the miners wouldn’t dare risk their paychecks for a bruised and bloodied foreman. Bitter reality seeped into the aura around the bar as the workers contemplated their fate. Ironically, Jannis was just like them. His troubles were just one step above theirs, which was unforgivable in their eyes. Every once in awhile, murderous intent swirled through the room for but moments before fading away.

She reached out a hand and held his for a moment as she looked into his eyes. “Let’s drink.”

The night went on. Idle chatter turned into a raucous affair and soon enough Blade and Jannis were no longer the center of attention. The crowd’s disdain remained omnipresent but the Warrior didn’t mind and the foreman was far too engrossed in her. Softer topics gave way to more personal ones as the drinks kept coming. The Zeltron even bought a few of her own to help the poor man out.

“You know, we meet every day, yet I still haven’t seen where you work. Could you show me around?”

“You kn..know the rules, missy. Only authorized personnel. P-perhaps my own quarters would be more comfortable anyways.” The Warrior smirked and ran a finger along his neck.

“Office, please?” Blade asked in a slight pout. The foreman paused for a few heartbeats. His eyes darted back and forth before a guilty look crossed his face.

“I..I can’t.”

“If you’d rather stay here, I might as well leave.” She feigned disappointment as she withdrew her hand from his face.

“No, don’t go!”

The Zeltron started to walk away. A hand clumsily grabbed her arm. Jannis had chased after her after all. She simply arched an eyebrow.

“Ok. Ok. But let’s make it quick.” He whispered, keeping his voice down conspiratorially.

“Alright. Lead the way.” She took his hand with a thin smile, exuding a steady stream of her delicious scent.

The pair exited the bar and took another transport back to the SoroSuub Corporate Headquarters. It was just as dull as the bar but much cleaner. She followed Jannis down its many hallways, doing her best to memorize her way in as she kept up with his brisk pace. She was waved past several security guards with her newly acquired guest pass. She had conveniently forgotten to bring her contractor pass that SoroSuub had *given* her for the duration of her stay.

She followed him into a standard office, clean and symmetrical. It was a room like any other with the exception of a Kyber crystal resting on top of a stack of papers on his pristine desk. She walked around the room, touching various objects while ignoring the crystal for the time being. Transparent mental images filled her mind as she reached out to the objects with the Force. In addition, it provided her subtle clues that betrayed the ordered efficiency that the foreman tried so hard to portray. Something in the closet out of place, a drawer that was never opened, and a cabinet locked but well used.

“So, this is where all the fun happens.” She teased as she sat in his chair and twirled it around.

His hand abruptly stopped her motion and twirled her back around to face him, staring into her eyes. “Yes, my superiors are quite pleased with my performance. I might even get a promotion soon, with your help.”

“Ambitious. I like it.”

“Now, how about we pick up where we had started?”

“How about a massage first. My shoulders are killing me.” The man looked at her hungrily. Several heartbeats passed before he finally conceded defeat.

“I am at your command.” Jannis teased as he stood behind her and pressed his hands into the fleshy gap between her shoulder and neck.

*Mmmmmm.*

The Zeltron leaned forward slightly in enjoyment, eyes lazily looking over the contents of his desk. The Kyber crystal called out to her.

“Jannis, what’s that? It’s quite pretty.”

“Heh. That’s my ticket out of here. It’s a precious crystal that I can sell for a load of credits. Maybe even convince SoruSuub that I deserve the Director’s job if I deliver on my promises. It’s what the miners don’t get. If I win big on this, so do they. They get to go home then, fully paid and I’ll even give them free meals.” He explained with a bitter, condescending tone.

“Can I touch it?”

He hesitated for a moment. “Sure.”

The Arcanist grabbed the crystal, it fit neatly in her hand. Images flickered through her mind as she reached into the energy between herself and the Kyber crystal. The miners’ torment as they chipped away at the rock, the rapturous glee of Jannis as he quietly stole it aside for his office, and a dark-clad figure tossing it to the ground as the beam of a lightsaber suddenly disappeared. Her interest showed, causing the foreman to remark.

“Heh. Everyone gets that reaction. I myself love to hold it. Helps me think properly.”

Blade doubted he truly knew why, but all of a sudden she was ecstatic. She was a bit glum being sent to retrieve the location of some crystals, but now at least one of them held special worth in her eyes. She licked her lips. She would acquire this no matter what. She put it back neatly on top of the papers and dug deeper.

“You know the details of my contract. I am here to help you find more of those.”

“I know, darling. I know.”

“You never sent over the info I requested.” The Zeltron reminded him as she circled back to gaze into his eyes.

“I know. Maybe I just didn’t want you to leave so soon. And weren’t you already supposed to have that information?”

“Heh. You know those miners broke my datapad. It’s encrypted thankfully but all the same, it’s gone.”

“Bah! Dirty miners. They just don’t get we are doing this for them as well. Without us, they wouldn’t have jobs!”

“They just want to get paid more. But you’re right. No excuse for them to harass me.”

“You sure you don’t remember their numbers?” The foreman asked in a serious tone.

“No, sadly not.” Blade did her best to look crestfallen. The man sighed and then opened a drawer with several blank datapads.

“You’re lucky I like you. Otherwise, you’d have to deal with the bureaucrats and fill out a desk full of paperwork.” Jannis reminded her as he copied over the data she needed.

*Victory!!*

“I know.” The Zeltron replied as she gave him a kiss, which was returned enthusiastically in kind. The swivel chair pushed back against the wall behind the desk and Blade laughed.

“Do you really want to do this here? Let’s go.”

“You’re right. There is an inspection tomorrow.” The man unconsciously smoothed the lines on his clothes and looked over his shoulder towards his closet. “Let me tidy up quickly. Here, this datapad should work. Stand by the door and I’ll clean up.”

“Alright.” The Arcanist slid off his seat and stood by the door, watching the man meticulously reset everything. She longingly looked at the crystal, already thinking of ways to reclaim it. It was safe at least until she came back for it. Jannis would assure at least that much. In addition, she wondered what he was hiding.

*Soon, Jannis. Soon.*

“Alright. Done. Shall we?”

“Yes. Let’s. It’s getting late and your shift starts in a few hours.”

“Ugh. Don’t remind me.”

She left the office, following closely behind him. A datapad pressed against her leg reassuringly. Today had been a fruitful evening and it was just the beginning...