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| **Karufr Knight** -Vodo Biask Taldrya – 3729 - |

What a ship; Ordered entirely to specification direct from the manufacturer, delivered to Antei and handed over by Arx Starship Acquisitions. It replaced his aging and hard worn Sorosuub Horizon-Class Yacht: The one he’d taken off the last man to call him *slave*. This Shuttle was not the abused luxury vessel *Mare Nostrum* had been but rather was an executive-trim VIP transport shuttle with options purchased from the factory’s partnered enterprises. Vodo sat upon the bend in the wraparound couch, cushioned in supple and rich black Bantha Leather, and he examined the crystal rocks-glass in his hand.

It was a rare form quartz found only on the planet Vortex, a planet renowned for its now destroyed Cathedral of the Winds. The Rebel Admiral Ackbar had foolishly crashed his famed B-Wing there nearly twenty years earlier. The glass Vodo held in hand had been carved from salvaged remains of that ancient structure. It simultaneously reviled and titillated him; such sacrilege of something so old and precious his scholarly mind said while the dark presence that pervaded his every thought told him it was only right that the weak be made to understand their place. In the glass a sat a brown alcohol. The whiskey, liberated from the former Justicar Taigakori Ayabara, was old and delicious. It spoke of refinement and care, of deliberate action after careful preparation just like his crystal glass and his new ship.

Vodo hadn’t decided upon a name for the Upsilon-Class Shuttle as of yet. Nothing had born the proper weight a good ship’s name should have. It needed to evoke an emotion, not just in its owner, but in those who glanced upon it. It would need some more thought and he would have the proper time for that back on Karufr. There Vodo would retreat to the seclusion and comfort of his Estate, long established now as a posh and luxurious haven set far into the woods of Jordin at the base of the Vermillion Mountain Range. He’d given years to the pursuit of political power to one end: Obtain the power required to never again serve another man. It was here he’d retired to after his personal conflict with Darth Ashen upon the Dark Council.

A chime indicated reversion to Normal Space was imminent, set at his request to 2 minutes. Vodo swirled the mouthful of whiskey around the ice rocks once and then tossed it back. He made his way forward to the crew cabin and ignored the young women, humans both, as he approached the cockpit. The lights of the Hyperspace Lines filled the dark cockpit with an ethereal glow that was more than bright enough to see no-one occupying the command chairs. Vodo allowed a small, self-satisfied smirk to cross his face; there was a droid brain flying the vessel and would handle the mundane to-and-fro most flights required. He stood there, between the empty chairs as the shuttle decanted from Hyperspace and the bright blue-green marble of Karufr filled the large view panels.

He had only a moment to admire the beauty of this planet, adopted after his escape from that life of servitude and submission as his first home, before alarms went off. It wasn’t only the klaxon of the proximity warning or the lock-on warning but also his Danger Sense. The Force warned of violence and danger, filling his blood with fire and adrenaline. The shuttle swayed as the droid brain began making maneuvers to evade, the inertial compensators working at maximum capacity, as red turbolaser fire flashed by the forward view. Vodo could see they had emerged from hyperspace at the near edge of a battle in orbit.

“Lieutenant Vallor, take control of this shuttle”, one of the two women sitting behind him at the communications and navigation stations stood and slipped past into the Pilot’s chair, “the Droid Brain is not adequate to this task. Get us to relative safety”.

Without taking her eyes off the panels before her she said, “Yes my Lord”.

Vodo turned to Ensign Milena still sitting at Communications, “Get Defense local on the line, find out what is going on and where We are needed.”

Milena nodded smartly and turned to her task. Vodo walked over to the Engineering station and examined it for a moment before determining how to place the ship’s weapon systems on automated for their protection. He saw that the enhanced shield generator was online and the shuttle was fully protected so he returned to his spot between and just behind the command chairs, a hand on each.

“My Lord?” the Ensign spoke, “I’m only getting garbled signals from Defense Command but my IFF board seems to be malfunctioning.”

That caught Vodo’s attention. The Force niggled at him, urging him to investigate. He swayed in place as Vallor took the shuttle through some rigorous maneuvers, “Malfunction?”

He could see the woman, only in her early twenties, wither under the intensity of his glare and presence, “Uh—I assume it’s a malfunction Lord Taldrya. Its just that—I’m reading the ships all around us as Iron Throne Navy.”

Time stopped, Vodo’s heart stopped, and his thoughts went white for a moment, “Who are they engaged with? Who attacked?”

The woman queried her systems and sensor readings and froze. Her shoulders tensed, “Us. Those are our ships!”

Vodo’s face snapped back to the view out the front of the shuttle. Space tumbled past as Vallor continued to evade fighters and fire from ships. The bow of a large Destroyer could be seen not too far away off to port. The triangular section was broken away jaggedly a couple hundred meters or so from the tip and as its rotational momentum turned it around Vodo saw them: The twin read spears nearly coming together at the prow, the paint he’d ordered as Consul of Taldryan be added to the Clan’s flagship, its pride and joy—The Justice. His blood ran cold and the angry fire in his chest tempered into a white-hot torch. Vodo’s lip quivered in fury as he reached out with the force. He pushed tremendously, expanding his awareness aggressively to fill the entire field of battle. He hunted for something, he knew not what until he came upon it so suddenly that he nearly choked. He could feel the bright, burning presence of a man he knew well upon the Super Star Destroyer before them. Grand Master Jac Cotelin, Justicar of the Dark Brotherhood and Son of Taldryan.

“My Lord? You should hear this”, Ensign Milena activated the PA and piped a heavily filtered transmission through.

“Be advised: Iron Throne has turned on us. General Evacuation orders have been issued. Repeat: General Evacuation orders have been issued. This is not a drill. Con-Auth: Aleph, Aleph, 1er-Delta-9. Aleph, Aleph, 1er-delta-9”, the message began to replay but Milena silenced at a look from the Warlord.

“Lietenant Vallor, get us out of here. Destination is Point Besh, fleet rendezvous”, Vodo issued the order evenly, tempering his fury.

Karufr could be seen ahead, fires hundreds of miles across burning in various places as the Iron Navy’s fleet bombarded select locations mercilessly. He would have revenge for this act, he would be Karufr’s most ardent avenger and Knight. *Karufr Knight*, he decided. The ship had its name and it would, with time, come to evoke fear in the hearts of his enemies and pride in that of his Clanmates. Cotelin would answer for this crime.