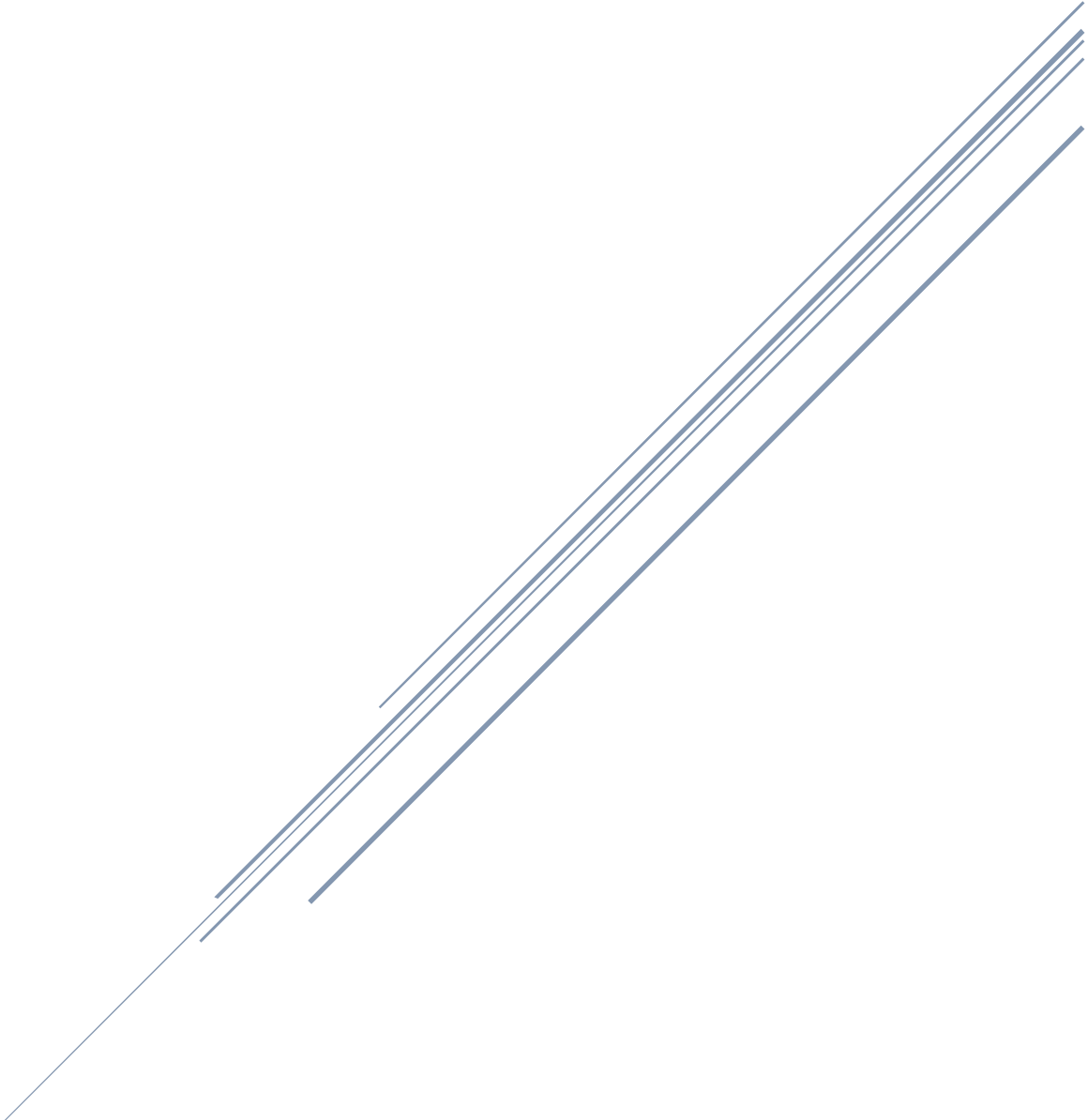


# AN UNEASY ALLIANCE



Pollus Paratus  
12436

## **Abhean**

Pollus was running through the forest, having completed his mission to rig the Abhean defense grid to overload and burn out. It was a contract from a shady associate to Plagueis, a favor called in for help Pollus had needed four months earlier.

Like any mercenary worth his salt, Pollus hadn't asked why the grid needed to be crippled. He just needed the information to penetrate and disable the grid. Planning his mission, he had left his ship in the spaceport and made his way to the grid's vulnerable spot, planted the explosives, and set the detonators to explode at nine that night, giving him plenty of time to get off world before the Abheanans realized they've been sabotaged.

Suddenly, Pollus tripped and his world was upside down. He blinked, confused, then realized that he was in trouble. A second later, a Trandoshan appeared in his view. Not any Trandoshan, but the bounty hunter he had come to blows with on a few previous missions.

Pollus shouted, "Viktor!"

The Trandoshan grinned at Pollus, looking at the little Aleena from head to toe like a butcher looks at a nerf he's about to slaughter, "Ah, look at what I've found. You'll be tasty in my soup, Aleena."

Pollus, the back of his hair standing up, started to argue with the creepy Trandoshan, "Viktor, you crazy kriffer, you don't know what you're dealing with!"

But the Trandoshan wasn't having any of it and shook his finger in Pollus's face, "Shut up Aleena and allow me to salivate on my victory."

Pollus frantically swung at the Trandoshan, jerking and swaying on the rope, "Viktor, let me down now! This is not a good time!"

Viktor crossed his arms and looked Pollus in the eye, "Aleena, what makes you think I'm going to let you down?"

A group of men in green law enforcement armor emerge from the underbrush, their carbines pointed at Pollus and the now dumbstruck Trandoshan. A man in slightly nicer armor, the only one wearing a sidearm in a waist holster, moved towards the front and spoke through the comm in his helmet, "Move and we will shoot to kill."

Viktor protested, "Gentlemen, I have a warrant to take this Aleena dead or alive signed by Governor Andros Fearsy. You are interfering on legitimate business. Now if you would let me pull out the warrant, we can get this all cleared up and I'll be on my way."

The leader responded, "Trandoshan, I have warrants for your arrest for suspected criminal arms dealing and slavery. As for you, Aleena, you're wanted for wonton destruction of property."

### **An Hour Later**

Viktor was pressed up against the iron bars of the primitive cells that he was sharing with the Aleena, professing his innocence of the charges and demanding to see the magistrate or the governor. Pollus was sitting on the floor with his arms across his chest, shaking his head, "Viktor, you dumbass, you were set up. You're the scapegoat for the Governor."

Viktor turned to Pollus, shaking his head, "What? He offered me a 75k credit bounty on your head, told me where you were, and said I could keep your corpse after I registered you."

"Did you hear what my warrant is. Wonton destruction of property. A little nudge from the Dread Lord and I'll be out of here. You, on other hand, are up on capital charges."

Viktor stared at the Aleena, confused and angry, "What!"

Pollus signed and rolled his eyes, "Do you not read? Is that something all Trandoshan lack the ability to do? On Abhean, criminal arms dealing and enslaving people carry death penalties. So, are you good with the Scorekeeper?"

Viktor growled and pointed his finger at Pollus, "Don't treat me like an underling. I caught you, didn't I? And don't speak of the Scorekeeper!"

Pollus smirked, "Why, because you lost all your jagganath points in this cell or because you'll die a disgraced Trandoshan?"

Viktor roared with fury and charged towards Pollus, who was ready and bounced out of the reach of the Trandoshan's claws. The commotion had brought three security officers to the cell, with the first fumbling for the retinal scan into the cell as Viktor teared up the tiny room trying to get his hands on the athletic Aleena. Any other Aleena and it would have been comical.

As soon as the door was opened, Pollus hurled himself at the guard, gouging his eyes and grabbing the now blind guards stun baton

which he used on the second and third guard. The angry Viktor reached for Pollus, who promptly stunned him, dropping the Trandoshan to the ground in midflight.

“Viktor, listen to me for a second. If I close the cell, you will die. But I’ll consider this diversion paid in full for your shenanigans earlier if we go our separate and merry ways. What do you say?”

“Aleena...”

Pollus sighed, “Viktor, there will be other hunts in the future. Don’t make me close this cell on you.”

Viktor was silent for a second, then looked down, “You win Aleena.”

Pollus smiled, “Thanks Viktor. Lead the way.”

The Trandoshan staggered to his knees, then got up and started heading towards the direction that the guards came from with Pollus running behind him.

### **Thirty Minutes Later**

After thirty minutes of mauling and killing guards throughout the jail, the two mercenaries made their way out of the entrance. Viktor, beat up from the wounds that the guards had inflicted in their last moments, shook his head and smelled the fresh air. Looking at Pollus, he grinned, “Little Aleena, I underestimated your tenacity.”

Pollus nodded and looked around, “Viktor, I would love to stay around and chat, but I have places to be. And big guy, don’t be a stranger.”

Viktor laughed, then winced as his broken ribs moved, “I have places to be too. Tell me Aleena, since you know about jagganath points, how much do you think a governor warrants?”

Pollus thought for a second, “Given that he set you up, I’m certain that the scorekeeper will award you the points you lost and then some for his pelt.”

Viktor grinned, “Then that is where I’ll go.”

Pollus started walking towards the direction of the spaceport, “Good luck, Viktor!”

The Trandoshan waved, “Until next time Aleena!”

Pollus stopped for a second and turn around, "Viktor, you need to leave before nine local tonight."

Viktor shook his head, then inquired, "Why Aleena?"

Pollus smirked, "Wonton destruction is an understatement for the mission I was sent here to do when I ran into you. All the pieces are put together and ready to go. Since the Abheanans think you're my associate, the alternative would be tragic for you...."

Viktor blinked, then nodded, "Aleena, if anything happens, I want you to have my pelt."