

# What Ails Me?

## By: Ben (Rhy lance).

With the sound of whirring machinery, the durasteel doors to the *Braga's* medical bay slid open. Ricard Haverthorn walked into the white-lighted room, his left arm covered in a red rash that itched and burned like crazy. The rash descended into his clothing covering much of his body.

*I knew I shouldn't have stopped at the hole in the wall bar. Street workers are never a safe bet,* he thought to himself as he approached the attending physician. Ricard wasn't positive what he had picked up on his last "shore leave" on Ryloth, but he suspected he had royally fraked up. *That Zeltron harpy, I knew she was gonna be a mistake.*

The green-skinned Twi'Lek stopped and sat down on the metal table slab located in one of the small inlets in the med bay. He looked around to see the room was mostly empty. There were no other patients at this time.

"Just my luck," he said under his breath.

"What was that you said?" The physician approached the seated patient, his face covered with a protective mask that the medics typically wore. Ricard let out a sigh of relief as he realized his medic wasn't a female. He had suffered enough humiliation about his current predicament.

"Oh...uh...nothing. Nothing important."

"What seems to be the issue, Lieutenant?" The bespeckled medic asked as he examined the Twi'Lek.

"I, uh, have a rather distressing series of rashes along my body. They itch something fierce and burn. In some places it feels like it's eating my skin,," Ricard averted his eyes under the medic's gaze, shame apparent on his face.

As the doctor examined the rash, he made a series of interested sounds. He grabbed a nearby datapad and seemed to be recording his findings. As Ricard sat there, he began to grow impatient with the doctor. He scanned the room again and noticed that two of the other inlets were cut off from sight by curtains. He brushed it off, as that was a normal occurrence.

"So? What is it? What's wrong with me?" the Lieutenant asked, clearly displeased by how long this was taking. "I *do* need to get back to my post."

The doctor turned his attention back to Ricard and set down his datapad. He made eye contact with the frustrated Twi'Lek, his red piercing gaze meeting Ricard's gray eyes. The Lieutenant for the first time noticed the blue hued skin and black slicked back hair the the medic possessed. Strange thing was, he didn't remember any Chiss doctors around here before. In the end he brushed it off as nothing to be concerned about.

"Your symptoms resemble that of Hapes," the doctor told him with no sympathy in his voice. He seemed intrigued more than anything.

"Hapes?" Ricard asked, his fears ratified. Hapes was not good news.

"Yes, the deadly disease spurred from the planet of the same name. Acquired from sexual intercourse with an afflicted source, resulting in itchy rash, burning skin, and if left untreated, death. The disease is treatable, but not curable, meaning you will live with it for the rest of your life," the medic walked over to his desk while speaking, and picked up a vaccine injector filled with a green liquid.

"So...so I have Hapes," Ricard said with a forlorn look plastered on his face. "I guess it could be worse?"

"You are correct that there are worse diseases than Hapes," the medic replied as he walked back to the Lieutenant, grabbing the affected arm and putting the applicator next to it.

"So, you're positive I have Hapes? There is no other option? And you can treat it with this vaccine?" Ricard fired off the questions as he watched the applicator touch his skin.

"I said your symptoms were identical to Hapes," The doctor pushed the button on the applicator triggering the needle to puncture the Twi'leks skin, injecting the green fluid into his body. "I never said you *had* Hapes."

The fluid began to spread into the Lieutenant's veins, he lost feeling in his arm. As his body began to numb, the words of the medic finally clicked. Ricard stood up from the table, pushing the doctor backwards.

"What did you just do to me? What...what is going on here?" He yelled out in fear and anger.

"Lieutenant Haverthorn of the *Braga*, one of the vessels security clearance officers. One of the few who are in possession of the codes that grant access to the ships docking bays. A young, but loyal Twi'lek under the employ of The Collective, and a frequent visitor of brothels and other unsavory exploits when on "*shore leave*". Has an infatuation for Zeltron beauty. Such an exploitable weakness," the doctor said as he stood back up, his face seeming to stay frozen, devoid of emotion.

"I don't... what?"

"You really should take care whom you roll around on a bed with, Lieutenant. It was not hard to pay that woman to inject you with one of my toxins during your highest moment. I am truly surprised how well my toxin worked though. To perfectly replicate the symptoms of Hapes to such a degree... I scare myself sometimes," the Chiss said with a slight chuckle.

Ricard was losing feeling in his body, fast. Paralysis was starting to take him. He hobbled over to the exit, but the door was sealed shut. He started pounding on the durasteel door, trying to get anyone's attention. Trying to get someone to help him.

"That is the funny thing about medical bays. No one wants to hear the screaming of an injured worker. These walls are soundproof, and the door won't open. Infectious diseases must be separated from the rest of the ship after all."

Ricard realized the peril he was in. His legs began to lock up, and as they numbed they lost the ability to hold the Twi'lek up. Crumbling to the ground, he looked at the doctor. The Chiss removed the mask, revealing a face all officers of The Collective have studied. He was one of the seven Consuls of the Dark Brotherhood.

"If you're gonna kill me, just do it already. I'm not gonna talk."

"I am not here to make you talk. I am here to make you scream," Rhyllance reached into his stolen Collective Medical Corps uniform and pulled out a small metal box. Opening the box he grabbed a vial filled with metallic blue fluid and rolled it around his hand for a moment. "What are you most afraid of? That is the question I wish to discover the answer to. Let's walk the path of discovery together, Lieutenant."

He dropped the vial on the ground next to the downed Twi'lek's face. The glass shattered, and the fluid erupted in flames, lightly burning Ricard's left cheek. Gas filled the room as Rhyllance watched with focused intrigue. He had already made himself immune to his own poisons, so he was in no danger.

Outside the room, no one could hear the agonizing cries that spilled out of Ricard's mouth. No one could witness his terror, or hear his gut wrenching wails. In the hallway, red light blinked above the med bay door, indicating that the room was under quarantine, prompting those who passed to shy away. No one even questioned what they saw.

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Three hours later,

Rhylance typed away on his datapad, searching for the hidden frequency that Taldryan had begun using after the destruction of Karufr. Once the connection was made, the face of Vodo Biask came into focus.

“Lord Commander, it’s about time you contacted us.”

“I told you Vodo, perfection takes time.”

“I trust you were at least successful in your plan?” the Twi’lek Sith asked in annoyance.

“Affirmative. I am sending you the required codes as we speak. The *Braga* is open to you and your strike force,” Rylance responded, caring little for Vodo’s impatience.

“Finally, now we can take out some of these Non Force User wastes of space. Good work, Rhylance. I guess you’re not completely useless after all. We’ll see you on the *Braga*, Lord Commander,” Vodo announced as he cut the connection.

“Oh, I look forward to it, Vodo,” the Consul said with a wicked grin. He turned to the twitching form of Lieutenant Haverthorn and walked over, brandishing his dagger and thrusting it into the Twi’lek’s chest with a loud squelch. “Now for the real fun to begin.”