

"Boy, you look like something the tooka dragged in."

Grot growled at the human at the table, but could hardly bring himself to do more. His entire body ached, his muscles shook, and he felt like he was gonna collapse into a puddle of goop at any moment. He didn't have the strength to fight, and Moreover, it was unusual to have such a chance to talk with Johnson. He settled on the bench opposite the now chuckling Selenian and angrily tore into his food.

"She get back at you for that little stunt you pulled on Kalsunor?" Johnson asked with a knowing smile.

"Indeed. Our training was quite intense today." Grot answered with a sigh. Johnson nodded in commiseration but quickly broke out into a mischievous grin.

"Bet she rides you real hard huh?" Johnson asked, his smile growing wider.

"Indeed, we went at it for three full sessions before she called a stop." Grot stabbed into the meat on his plate, feeling his arm scream in protest. Hand-to-hand training with Decima was an experience he would not wish on his worst foe. To be made to undergo three full spars was a nightmare.

"Bet she had you shoot all over the range too," Johnson asked, barely holding in his laughter.

"That was the easy part, she did not do much more than stand there while I shot." Grot said, and finally looked up, spying the mile-wide grin on his friends face, "Oh frak off!"

Johnson finally burst out laughing, a loud roaring thing that filled the entire cafeteria and drew the eyes of the other crew members. Grot hissed at his friends crude humor but felt how infectious his laughter was. With a half-hearted scowl, he said, "Pig! Go calibrate your blaster or something."

"Best she calibrated your blaster real well!"

"Get stuck in a torpedo tube!" Grot laughed, the two of them falling into an easy chatter. He did not normally associate with the crew of the *Voidbreaker*, but Johnson had been a surprisingly fast friend. He had raised some concerns over the *Voidbreaker's* armament, and the Captain had directed him to Warrant Officer Johnson. The two of them had talked for hours about improving the *Voidbreaker's* weapons, debating the merits of blasters and slugthrower weapons together. Arguing had turned to drinking, and drinking into song, and soon they sought each other out every time that had a free moment.

"Be straight with me Scales, don't tell me you've never thought about it?" Johnson waggled his eyebrows salaciously, but Grot could see the question was half-serious.

"With Decima? She is Iktotchi..." Grot answered slightly confused.

"You got something against Iktotchis?" The human took a small sip of his coffee, raising an eyebrow.

"No, nothing, she is a strong hunter, and a fierce warrior but," Grot coughed, choking a bit as he gathered his thoughts. "She would never be able to bear my clutch!"

"Your clutch? What are you... Oooh... Grot! I never figured you for the settling down type!" Johnson gently ribbed, leaning over the table.

"It's not that I wish to settle down, it's that, it's just, we... we are simply not compatible!" Grot protested as frustration started to set in. He sat down and scowled, giving his friend a glare. The Selenian smiled good-naturedly, but sat down.

"Really? From where I'm standing the two of you seem a lot alike." Johnson continued in a serious, quiet voice, "If you want to give it a go, I'm right behind you kid"

"She is strong, yes, but I am Trandoshan, she is Iktotchi..." Grot struggled to explain.

"That ain't no problem. So what if the eggheads can't think of no way to make your bits bash, you can still have a bit of fun." Johnson leaned back a bit, a sly look forming in his eyes, "If you're not interested, I might just have to give it a go. Three times you say?"

"Quiet!" Grot shouted, drawing some attention. The human raised his hands in a placating gesture as Grot began to calm himself. "You will not. I will not. The very idea of such a thing—"

Johnson's eyes suddenly flashed, an idea forming in his mind. He leaned in close, his face grim and serious. He looked Grot dead in the eyes, and in a grave voice asked,

"Grot. Are you a virgin?"

"Quiet!"

BONUS BIO

Richard Johnson

Warrant Officer Richard Daniel Johnson is a member of the Arconan Navy currently serving as the weapons officer on board the *Voidbreaker*. A long-time veteran of the fleet, Johnson approaches his job with an almost serene calm but tends to be a bit of a workaholic. He worries constantly when not on the job and seems to be most comfortable sitting at his console or

calibrating the ship's weapons.

Richard Johnson is a 48-year-old Selenian, and already an adult by the time that Arcona came to the Dajorra system. He grew up perfectly happy on one of the islands outside of Estle City where his family ran an aquaculture farm, harvesting fish to supply the cities growing population. In his youth, he liked to hunt and fish, hiking all over the island in pursuit of some sort of excitement. This childhood tendency swiftly grew into an obsession, and he became something of an adrenaline junky and thrill-seeker by the time he reached his majority.

It was only natural, then, that when the puppet governments ran by Arcona began organizing a military, he signed up. Unlike most Selenians, he fell in love with the military almost instantly and became especially adept at gunnery training. The physical, exciting lifestyle fit him like a glove and the regimented training helped to harden and mature him. He was never quite intelligent enough for officer school, nor was he even particularly suited to command others, but his competence with a targeting computer and surprising mechanical knack saw him rise through the ranks swiftly.

Over his long career, Johnson has served on almost every ship in the Arconan navy in some capacity. He's made many friends and lost almost as many as he's made. After some time in reflection, he's grown to accept the inevitability of death. In his view, they're all soldiers, and they all signed up knowing the risks. He still grieves for the fallen, and hates to have lost so many, but knows that it does a disservice to his dead comrades to become bitter.

His last battle in the service of the regular Arconan Navy came at the battle of Nancora, where his ship was crippled and forced to retreat. Casualties were horrendous, but Johnson managed to keep the ships guns firing long enough for them to make a safe exit from the battle. For his efforts Johnson was awarded a medal and shore-leave while his ship was repaired. He was recruited by Battleteam leader Lucine Vasano while on this shore leave, in a small little dive called "The Pub" at the edge of the Sinchi ring, in Estle City.

Johnson is one of the longest-serving NCO's in the fleet, and his service has made him a hard and resilient man. His propensity towards working makes him a difficult man to get to know, but anyone who engages him about his work will find him quick to swap a drink and a war story with anyone interested. He's a straight talker, with a decidedly lower-class accent, but in that old-fashioned country way, he tries his best to be as polite and formal as possible, especially towards women. It's rare to hear him call anyone anything except "Sir" or "Ma'am", but for especially close friends he tends to develop a nickname to use in private.

For those who truly get to know him, he may even let them call him by his old childhood nickname, "Dick" Johnson.