

[TAL + CSP] - A Collective Danger

The Price of Friendship

By: Halcyon Rokir Taldrya - Pin #43

Evant and his informant each walked their separate ways without any further comment, the package delivered. Evant slowed his steps as he sensed the presence of his contact fade away, out of earshot. A metallic cylinder suddenly seemed to appear in the palm of his hand as a distinct *snap-hiss* sounded to reveal a blood-red blade of energy.

"You can come out now," Evant said, as he stood still. From the corner of his eye he saw movement, as a hooded figure appeared from out of the shadows.

"Halcyon," Evant stated, as the man pulled back his hood to reveal the distinct green hair. "I would be happy to hear that explanation now."

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Minus 12 Hours

"Hey boss, you may want to see this."

Halcyon Rokir Taldrya, Praetor to the Regent and Proconsul of Taldryan, took two strides over to the communications panel. Tovar Daklan, the fair-haired pilot and explosives expert of their little group, was at the console, pointing at some scrolling data.

"Our comms array happened to catch an encrypted message coming over the Regent channels. The encryption itself seemed to be haphazardly done, and the codes you have actually have seem to be working on it for the most part. It's directed at Evant though."

Kavis Varik, a former First Order spy, overheard the talk and came over to join the other two. "Evant's been having a lot of side conversations recently, eh?" he said to no one in particular, but Halcyon grunted in response anyway.

"Open it up, Tovar."

"Aye aye, boss." With a few simple keystrokes the message began to un-encrypt on the display.

Stadium Meet. Twelve Hours. No Delay.

"That mean anything to you boss," Tovar asked as he spun in his seat.

"It means start prepping the *Revenant*. We're heading to Etti IV, and Varis, come fully loaded."

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VCX-100 *Revenant*
Minus 1 Hour

The VCX-100 Light Freighter came out of hyperspace with barely a shudder, as the world of Etti IV came into view.

"Any particular place you want to land, boss, or should I just try to find the closest beach?"

"Get a landing pad closest to the University of Mondder. He'll be meeting close to the grav ball stadium there."

Halcyon's tone and straight-forward answers told Tovar all he needed to know. This was all business for him, and Tovar ensured the sarcastic remarks were kept to a minimum.

"Let us know when we're landing," Halcyon said as he moved to the back of the Freighter, Kavis following in his wake.

"Why here?" Kavis asked. Halcyon had been quieter than usual, and hadn't given his team any specific details.

"Evan went here for university. He played grav ball here. There would be no other 'stadium' in his life after this one."

"Why's he keeping you in the dark on this?"

Halcyon could only shrug in response, as he checked his blaster and lightsabers before holstering everything.

"And you're sure this is the best way to confront him?"

"Yes," was the only answer given.

Kavis gave his friend a brief stare, waiting for more, but nothing else was forthcoming. Kavis sighed internally, not looking forward to what may come. He instead focused on his equipment,

seeing that all the tools of his trade were stowed. Should things go sour, he would need them all.

We have the all-clear and touch-down in 5 minutes

Tovar's voice sounded over the internal comlink, with Kavis and Halcyon getting into the harnessed seats as the freighter made its descent.

"Do you know where exactly he'll be?" Kavis asked.

Rather than answer right away, Halcyon instead closed his eyes. His breathing became shallower. It took a minute before he opened his eyes again.

"Yes."

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University of Mondder Grav-Ball Stadium Now

Kavis made himself comfortable on the roof of the short building. He had a clear view of the small alley that Halcyon had pointed out would be the location. He knew that Halcyon had made his way down to the alley, but all he could see were some shadows, and various empty crates strewn about.

He saw movement suddenly from two sides of the alley. A robed figure came into view. It wasn't the regular cloak he wore, but Kavis could tell the gait anywhere: Evant had arrived.

On the other side was another figure, also robed, but his movements were both confident and war at the same time. Kavis had seen many such figures in his time, and knew he was dealing with an information broker who was actually good at his job.

No words were passed between the two figures. They passed each other, barely brushing, but Kavis still saw the hand-off occurred. The broker never slowed, continuing forward in what anyone else seeing it would assume a leisurely pace.

Evant however began to slow, stopping completely once the broker was completely out of sight.

"Sithspit," Kavis sword under his breath as he heard the *snap-hiss* of a lightsaber and Evant saying, "You can come out now."

It was almost magical to see Halcyon walk out of the shadows; shadows that Kavis *knew* were empty previously.

“Halcyon,” Evant stated, as Halcyon pulled back his hood, “I would be happy to hear that explanation now.”

Kavis was already thumbing the trigger of his blaster when Halcyon looked directly at him and shook his head.

“Wise move, Halcyon,” Evant said. “Your team does good work, and I prefer not to have to lose them.”

Halcyon snorted out a small laugh. “We might lose a lot more here today. So are you going to stow the saber, or do we fight now and if you survive we talk this out?”

The lightsaber’s blade shut off, the hilt back on Evant’s belt. “I needed a way to show my...displeasure at all of this. And my patience is wearing thin.”

“I am your Praetor, but I am not your minion, Evant. You have been spending too much time playing games with the Dark Council. You suddenly show up as the savior of Scholae, while my own Clan was left to its own devices. Your playing the games I know very well, but you do not get to keep it all from me. I work with you, or I walk away now.”

Evant stared back for a few moments. No movements were made, before his body suddenly relaxed. Kavis let out his own sigh of relief. There wouldn’t be a fight today.

“Fair. But you played a dangerous game here, Halc. I won’t forget that either.”

Halcyon nodded in agreement.

“And you can use what I have,” Evant said, showing the small disc that he had received. “Scholae is trying to set-up their new home, but the Collective has been running hard at them. I managed to help thwart a larger play, but there is a lot of smaller ones stewing. My sources have been tracking something big. Scholae needs friends, and I know Taldryan needs some too.”

He handed the disc over to Halcyon and turned before anything else could be said. “See you back at the office, Praetor.”

Halcyon waited a few more moments, before pulling his comlink out. “Tovar, we’re coming back. And get a channel open to Rian. We have some friends to contact.”

As Halcyon turned to leave the alley, Kavis moved to follow him back to the ship. “I hate Force users,” he muttered under his breath as he jumped down off the rooftop.