

[ARC] Sins of the Past - Episode IV: Team Rhycine

The Medical Facility Proximity

By: Lucine Vasano & Rhylance

Captain Benjamin Pierce stared at the boxes that sat atop the break room table. There were three in total. The first contained surgery supplies, best portable equipment money could buy. The second crate contained bandages and food, while the third was nearly overflowing with vital medications. For the first time in his career as a surgeon, he was dismayed at the sight of fresh supplies.

"We can't accept this," he said at last as he ran a hand through his greying black hair.

"Have you gone insane, man?" Frank Linville snapped. The man was a reasonably decent surgeon, but was also a professional contrarian. If Pierce said the sky was blue, then he would have said it was green just to prove Pierce wrong. "Or are you simply drunk? We haven't seen a supply shipment in over a month! Have you forgotten how low on supplies we are?"

Pierce did not bother to respond to his colleague. Instead, he turned his bloodshot grey eyes on the redhead who reclined in the folding chair across from them, with a decidedly smug expression on her face. "Who'd you steal these from?" he demanded.

"Nobody who needed them, darling," Lucine replied with a wave of her hand. When Pierce responded only with a glare, she sighed. "Oh, very well. I have a friend who works in the First Order supply chain. He owed me a favor, and sent me these supplies to settle part of his debt."

"How very convenient," Pierce said dryly. "And what's the catch?"

"Catch?" Lucine repeated, her eyes wide with innocence.

"Lady, I know how you operate. What are you gonna want in return?"

The Sith remained silent as she studied him carefully. "No catch, darling. Sometimes it is to my benefit to simply do things out of the goodness of my heart. This is one of those times," she said at last. "It is a win-win situation. You get the supplies you so **desperately** need, and I get the warm fuzzy feeling one gets when they do a good deed."

"There now, you see?" Frank put in. "Nobody got hurt and no strings attached. So, **Major** would you kindly stop looking this particular gift horse in the mouth?"

"We're not in the 4077 anymore, Frank. Not that trying to pull rank on me worked even then," Pierce snapped. "But fine. We'll take 'em."

Gleefully, Frank grabbed one of the boxes and left to log the contents, leaving the surgeon and the Sith alone in the break room.

"You seem exhausted," Lucine observed. "I cannot help but to notice that you seem unusually short tempered. What happened to your usual sarcastic, devil-may-care attitude?"

"Tell ya what, sweet cheeks, you spend a few months doing meatball surgery in a warzone with minimal supplies and see how sunny your personality is," Pierce replied shortly.

"Charming," Lucine replied dryly. "Yet I cannot help but to think this has something to do with how we parted ways last time."

Yeah, maybe," Pierce said. The silence that fell between them was thick and awkward, as the Major weighed his next words. "It's just—"

Whatever the surgeon was going to say next was interrupted as a wiry, well-dressed Chiss darted into the room. "Forgive my interruption, my lady, you might wish to see this."

Lucine could not help but to raise her eyebrows at her butler's abrupt entrance. It was very unlike him to behave so rudely. "Tabriss? What is it?"

"It appears there is a very large and angry-looking crowd assembling on the street outside," Tabriss said.

Hurriedly, Pierce crossed the room to peer out the window. Sure enough, approximately two dozen people were milling about outside, despite the heavy gray clouds that hung overhead. Some carried light sources, others carried weapons. All looked angry. He rounded on the redhead. "Did *you* do this?" he demanded.

"Of course not! Believe it or not, I am not solely responsible for every terrible thing that happens in this city!" Lucine murmured as she peered at the crowd over his shoulder. "Oh dear, it appears their number is growing by the minute."

Pierce scrubbed his hand over his face. "What could they possibly want?"

"The way Estle City has been lately? Who knows? But it cannot be good," the Sith said with a shrug of her shoulders. "There is a heavy blanket of anger and fear covering this city. Something terrible is about to happen, and it appears we are right in the middle of it."

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****Observation Log: 115-Estle-5MF:****

****A serious case of mass hysteria seems to have broken out in several locations around Selen's Estle City. The cause of these "riots" seems to be a growing sense of injustice and discontent amongst the civilian populace. This was brought to a head by the brash actions of Grot, one of Arcona's own. They have centered their gatherings in key locations of the city, and I am fortunate enough to bear witness to one such locale. This medical facility is known to hold a special place in the heart of my cohort, Lucine Vasasno, which leads me to wonder if she is aware of what's happening. Patient Zero, aka the centrifuge of this mass hysteria event, shall return to my observations and log once more in a short time period.****

Rhylance stood across the street from the massing mob in front of the medical clinic. He had decided to come down and offer his services as a doctor to the facility in return for access to certain medical files they may have had available on a shared friend. Afterwards he had a meeting with his red-headed Aedile to discuss the recent upgrowth of gang activity on Ol'val. Unfortunately his plans seemed to have been laid to rest. The Chiss had a unique opportunity on his hands, and he planned to take advantage of it.

As Rhylance continued to make his observations, the crowd continued to gather. The mood on the street was terse as the people milled about, conferring amongst one another. It seemed that those gathered were waiting for some sort of signal.

After a few minutes, a short man with pointed features and a white lab coat emerged from the front door. He began arguing with people in the crowd. From where he was standing, Rhylance could not hear what the man was saying, but it was apparent from his gestures that he was trying to get the mob to disperse. It was also apparent that his efforts were only making the sullen people even more angry.

It was at that moment that Rhylance's comm pinged. He took a step back into a narrow alley, which still afforded him a good view of the street, before fishing the device out of his pocket. "Yes?"

"Rhylance, darling!" Lucine's voice issued from the communicator. "I am so dreadfully sorry, but I am afraid I am not going to be able to make it to our meeting this afternoon."

"Is that so?" Rhylance replied, though he was only half paying attention. Whatever the weasel-faced man had said had caused people in the mob to start shouting. The Chiss medic raised his eyebrows and tapped a few notes into his datapad.

“Oh... oh dear. I am sorry, but I am afraid I am going to have to call you back,” Lucine said abruptly. The transmission ended abruptly.

A few moments later, the front door of the clinic opened again and a familiar redhead emerged from the clinic. She strode forward and grabbed the weasel-faced man by his collar and began bodily dragging him back toward the clinic. The physician continued trying to argue with the crowd, until Lucine said something briefly to him. He abruptly fell silent, and disappeared back into the clinic.

Lucine paused in front of the door, and for a moment, she looked like she was going to say something to the assembled group of people. However, before she could speak, a bottle was lobbed by someone in the mob. She ducked out of the way before it could strike her, before disappearing back into the building.

A moment later, Rhyllance’s comm chimed. “I am so sorry, darling. Dr. Linville was trying desperately to commit suicide by rabid mob. Which, incidentally, is why I am not going to be able to make the meeting.”

“This really must be a coincidence, dearie, because I just so happen to be outside the very same medical facility you are trapped inside. This angry mob really is quite rebellious, would not you say?”

Rhyllance didn’t wait for a response. Lucine was in a state of less than safe, and the Chiss didn’t like that idea. As fascinating as he found this situation, he knew he needed to end it in a safe and unchallengeable way. He really didn’t need the Arconan higher ups getting on his case about some dead civilians, rioters or not.

Observing the crowd, he looked for any signs that would be telling of the originator of the mob. There was always a “patient zero” in any group circumstance such as this. But who was the ringleader? It would be someone towards the middle. They wouldn’t want to stick out, but they also would want the protection of the group. They would be somewhat quiet as to not draw attention to themselves, and they would be egging on the rioters around them. This particular case would probably have an individual who was acting below their means, someone with a fair amount of wealth but presenting themselves as a lower class citizen to stir up trouble.

The Chiss scoured the crowd looking for anyone who fit that description, but at first he had no success. Whomever this perpetrator was had hidden their footprints quite well. However the steady trained eyes of a surgeon won out. It was all in a touch. A man, probably in his late twenties, grabbed hold of another rioters shoulder. After whispering in the rioters ear he quickly turned and made his way through the crowd with a smile on his face. He thought he was home free from the situation he created, but a sharp prick in his left arm froze him in place. Looking down his arm was bleeding with a slight open cut but when he looked around he didn’t notice anyone strange.

The bleeding wound began to spread as a rash enveloped his arm. The rash bore a striking resemblance to the recent outbreak that had plagued Estle City. Around him a panic set in as members of the crowd recognized his apparent ailment. As quickly as the rioting started, a circle formed around him, his symptoms increasing as he felt himself heaving, keeling over as his body attempted to evacuate the contents of his stomach.

Rhylance watched with fascination at the scene unfolding. The way these “people” so easily turned on one another was a remarkable evolutionary flaw and the Chiss wanted to study the social effects of this more closely. Unfortunately time was not on his side, and he had to continue his work. Activating his comlink he hailed his Aedile.

“Lucine, I have a present for us outside. The rioting has ceased. Please have our ill friend brought to a quarantine room and I will be coming in through the rear entrance to offer my services as a doctor to these fine folks of this medical base. I will be requesting your assistance, so you’d best be ready, my dear.”

“A present?” Lucine repeated blankly. She risked a look outside, and was surprised to see the crowd rapidly dispersing. The only person who remained was a single man who lay twitching in the middle of the street. “Ill friend’? Rhylance, what did you do?”

His only response was a dry chuckle. Lucine sighed in annoyance and cut the connection, to focus on getting the medical team together.

A few minutes later, Tabriss and a dour-looking green Twi’lek everged, carrying a stretcher, with Lucine following closely behind. But as the trio approached theman, the Twi’lek pulled up short, her eyes widening at the obvious signs of the plague that had so ravaged Estle City a short time ago.

Lucine stared at the writhing form, before fixing Rhylance with a glare. “You gave him the plague? Are you **insane**?! If this spreads, we’ll be right back to square one!”

“As fascinating as it would have been to observe the spread of such an intriguing illness firsthand, I opted not to do that,” Rhylance replied as he pushed his glasses higher on his face. “This man is merely suffering from the effects of a poison designed to mimic the plague's effects”

“There’s a poison that actually does that?!” the Twi’lek said skeptically.

“There is now,” the Chiss replied with a smirk. “Not a bad piece of work, if I do say so myself. However,” he turned his crimson gaze on Lucine. “I would advise you to hurry if you want to question him. There is a 93% probability that he will suffer a catastrophic stroke within an hour.”

“And you’re certain her’s not infectious?” the nurse clarified.

“Quite certain,” Rhy lance said.

The groaning, writhing man was carried into the building and set up in one of the exam rooms at Lucine’s insistence. As Rhy lance set himself to the task of helping with the patients who were still at the clinic, she slipped into the exam room and shut the door behind her.

“I am told that you are the one responsible for whipping that mob into a frenzy,” she told the afflicted man. But he was so deep into his misery that he did not seem to hear her.

The redhead tsked in annoyance. “Well, you are not going to be answering my questions in this state, are you?” She extended a hand a lightly brushed the sweat-soaked black hair from his forehead. “And you are burning up. I think I remember reading somewhere that too high of a fever can melt the brain. Oh well, it appears I do not have time for formalities.”

She reached out with her senses, drawing in the fear and the hatred all around her. She could feel the darkness, like a great seething beast that hungered to be fed. She drew upon that power, and manifested it into shadowy tendrils that slipped into the man’s mind.

The fever muddled his thoughts, but she could see enough to put pieces together. A shadowy man who had recruited him for his ability to whisper in the right ears and provoke just the right reactions from people. A boy, no more than sixteen, speaking at rallies with words designed to stir up the populace. The recruiting of like minded individuals, all of whom had a grudge against the Citadel. And in the center of it, sitting like a spider at the center of his web, a man with distinctive grey skin, and piercing pale blue eyes.

“A conspiracy,” Lucine murmured as the images flashed before her eyes. “My my, someone has been naughty”

The man groaned, his eyes rolling back in his head. There was not much time now. Lucine pressed harder, tearing the shadowy tendrils through his mind as quickly as she could, trying to find anything of interest before the death throes removed any evidence. The man managed to gurgle a scream as she ravaged his mind.

A few minutes later, it was done.

After the man's body had been quietly disposed of, Rhy lance walked into a small meeting room where Lucine had been patiently waiting. The Chiss was still dressed in a medical attire as he had been offering his assistance with the clinic. Though trained as a medic, and a damn good one to boot, Rhy lance had found dealing with the clientele to be an unpleasant experience. Treating all of these *people* who were less than wamprats in the *good doctors* mind was a trying time, but it had to be done.

“Lucine, my dear, what were you able to find out?” he asked quick and straight to the point.

“It would have been much easier, darling, if you’d let the man live longer than he managed. Your poison was almost too effective. I had to settle for less desirable means of information gathering.” she answered with a slight look of displeasure.

“Oh, dearie, you and I both know you enjoyed perusing his mind. Your tactics are dreadfully dark and I appreciate their effectiveness and ferocity in so many ways.” the Chiss’s assessment had Lucine blushing slightly. She looked hard at the blue-skinned Quaestor and continued on.

“He didn’t know a lot. Obviously he was only so smart, and trusted very little. That being said I saw a few concerning thing. I saw a boy, a young boy, who was shouting indignations about the controlling party of the Citadel. I saw a man, someone I’ve never heard from or seen before. He kept to the shadows and wouldn’t let his face be seen. The only recognizable features were his skin and eyes. A greyish color coated his hands and his eyes were a deeply piercing blue.”

Rhylance waited and listened. In his mind he tried to put the pieces of this mystery together, but something was missing. It dug at the back of his psyche.

“Anything else you can remember?”

“These individuals are part of a group. They are spreading disent across Estle City. It’s some kind of conspiracy. They are all against the Citadel specifically.” Lucine spoke with a calm elegance that had always been somewhat captivating to the Chiss. He needed to focus on the matter though.

“There is something missing.” Rhylance paced as he tried to deduce what he could. He looked out the nearby window to see where the mob had formed. A thought occurred in his head and he looked to the red-head with determination. “Weren’t there other targets for these mobs? I thought a report said that several areas across the City were targeted.”

“Yes,” Lucine pulled out her datapad and brought up a quick map of Estle city and its surrounding areas. Activating a holo projection, she highlighted the affected areas.

“Ok, so here we are,” Rhylance said pointing to the 40th street medical clinic, “And the other reported areas are?”

“The Citadel, the Estle City Desalination plant, Foundry 5, Foundry 3, the Sinchi Logistics Hub 12, and the Arconan Military Parade grounds.” Every point on the map became highlighted and the Quaestors eyes widened.

“Arconas presence is supposed to be a closely guarded secret on Selen, isn’t it?”

“Yes, why do you ask darling?”

“Then why go after the parade grounds? There's no discernible reason. It should be seen as just another Selen military installation. Unless...”

“Unless whoever is coordinating these mobs knows about Arcona...” Lucine finished her eyes also widening with the realization.

The room was silent for a minute while the two colleagues assessed the situation.

“Whoever this is, they know of us. They are targeting us and they are turning this city against itself for the sole purpose of disrupting Arcona's hold on Selen. The secret is out Lucine. Arcona is no longer safe in Estle city, and in time Selen itself will become a dangerous area for the clan if this continues.”

Lucine looked to her friend and Quaestor. She had not known him to be unnerved but at this point in time he seemed somewhat concerned.

“We should probably tell this information to the Consul.”

“No, dearie. Kordath and Terran...with Satsi in their corner, they will never believe the two of us. There's a reason we've been placed together as leaders of Qel Droma. We are constantly being watched and observed. We are a threat to them. They will see this as a point of insurrection, as us planning against them by having their resources spread too thinly to protect themselves. We do not yet have the proof we need.”

Lucine nodded in agreement and understanding. A smirk crossed her face in the end.

“Then we use this information to our advantage. Our standing will increase if we root out this threat. As you so eloquently have said to me in the past, *‘Knowledge is power’*, well we have knowledge the rest of the Clan does not. There was one more thing I found in his mind, I thought it was just a mindless rambling of a decaying brain.”

“And what was that, dearie?”

“The one in control of this conspiracy against Arcona, I think he is called by his followers *Mr. Blue*”

“Then, *Mr. Blue*, Lucine and I are coming for you, whoever you are.” Rhyllance crimson eyes blazed in excitement.