

"It's a cold, dry evening that would have been made all the better by a downpour of rain. Of course, there was no such thing on a climate controlled, hollowed out asteroid, and it had been years since the last emergency fire system had been mistaken for rain. Nevertheless, Port Ol'val never could shake the scent of artificially created air for the more common species of the galaxy. Like the spacers accustomed to life aboard ships and vessels, you eventually got used to it. You even stopped idly wondering what would happen if the oxygen generators suddenly failed or

Moving past that, the Port Ol'val has a living energy all of its own. Business avenues of both legal, less legal, and completely illegal ventures thrived in the loose hierarchy of the original triumvirate that had established the shadowport. It didn't matter if you were a smuggler, a pirate, an undercover imperial agent, or a man in a bright blue poncho—Port Ol'val was home to any, as long as they followed the rules. Humans and aliens alike, shrouded behind the cover of their hoods and hidden weapons, cloaks and cowls, intrigue and, uh, indigestion? No, that doesn't sound right. Kist. Why is alliteration so hard?

Anyway, where was I? Oh, yes.

Between the public facing shops, the back alleys, the secret passages built into the subterranean tunnels that connected the docks, the entertainment district and the mines, it was easy to go unnoticed and avoid the heat or picked up an unwanted tail. Like, someone following you, not like you grew an actual tail. I digress. These streets of Ol'val call for a hero. A savior. One they don't deserve but need. These are dark times, after all, and the times are a' changin—"

"—Who are you talking to?" a somber monotone with a faint lilt cut in.

"What? Oh, no one," Wyndell Tyris replied, glancing sidelong to regard his brother. Well, half-brother, technically, but Wyn didn't really worry about trivialities like that. "Just thinking about how things have changed since you've been away."

Marick Tyris frowned slightly at Wyn's comment, his too-blue eyes seemingly shifting this way and that, taking in every detail of the streets and connecting alleyways. The half-Hapan wore a long coat of his own but had the hood pulled up to partially keep his face in shadow. He wore plain-looking clothes in a grayscale theme, and you'd have been hard pressed to discern any kind of weapons he might have been brandishing. Wyn knew better, of course, but was not in the least bit concerned.

Wyn, by contrast, wore his twin LL-30 blaster pistols openly on his belt. The Defender stuffed his hands into the pockets of his nerf-leather jacket and lifted the brim of the rounded scala hat he had borrowed from a private investigator they had questioned back at the docks. He studied it for a moment, shrugged, and then placed it on a table sitting outside a woodcarvers

shop. In trade, he took a fine looking tooth pick and slipped it between his teeth and let it poke out from the side of his mouth.

“So, this Geldi guy—” Wyn started.

“—Or woman,” Marick corrected.

“Or neither,” Wyn retorted. “It’s 38 ABY, get with the times, bro.”

Marick made a noncommittal grunt. Wyn grinned, and continued. “We don’t know what they look like, where they are from, or where they might be holed up. How do you suspect we go about finding them?”

The former leader of the Inquisitorius went quiet. That wasn’t exactly a unique occurrence, though. “I would not worry too much about finding them,” he replied quietly in barely a murmur.

It was then that Wyn noticed the shadows flickering and falling behind them in the reflection in a passing glass window. They were being followed. How long had Marick known, and why had he only waited until now to reveal it? Whatever the reason, Wyn knew that things were about to get dirty.



Finding Geldi



Marick had picked up their tail before they had made they had cleared the more heavily populated parts of the Besadi Entertainment District. It had been some time since he had come to *less* populated sector, but old habits die hard, and a shady alley was a shady alley.

No matter how much of a splinter cell of the Collective this Dawn Conclave was, they were still a part of the Collective. That meant that the same techniques and tactics the Inquisitorius had used for years to counter Capital Enterprises agents would most likely still be in effect. Sure enough, the rumors that Acealeus had circulated on the back channels of the holonet about Force users showing up on the Shadow Port had seemed to gain traction.

Few knew how to manipulate data like Ace. Marick trusted him implicitly, and it had paid off, judging by the seven cloaked stalkers the Tyris’ had picked up.

Wyn, for all his talk and banter, did not need to be told the situation. His blasters jumped into his hands seconds before the first set of thugs closed in on them from the flanks of the alleyway. Each of his LL-30 blaster pistols screeched as blue light cut through the dimly lit alley. The first thug grunted, and dropped into a heap, but the second managed to dodge and came in with a long length of metal that Marick quickly recognized as a stun baton.

"Eek!" Wyn screeched, as he deftly spun away from the electrified tip that tried to bludgeon into the back of his neck.

Without skipping a beat, Marick Tyris burst into motion, and filled the space where Wyn had just vacated. He stepped around the follow up strike from the stalkers baton, activated the hidden wrist blade on his left bracer, and stabbed the stiletto tip into the man's neck. Blood squirted as the stalker reeled backwards, desperately trying to stem the flow of crimson as his lifeforce leaked away.

Marick crouched, his dark coat flapping and his hood remaining up, and sprung towards the next attacker that emerged from the ambush. An obsidian Sith Dagger hidden in the folds of his jacket appeared in his hand, and he surged forward prenatal speed. The attacker, a Weequay with leather folded skin and squinty eyes, came in with an electro-knife that managed to graze the half-Hapan's shoulder.

Wyn, meanwhile, twirled his blaster pistols around his fingers in a fit of showmanship and picked off an attacker from up above with a single, well timed shot. The body of the Zabarak dropped to the floor of the alley with a meaty thump. "Thanks for dropping by," Wyn declared to no one in particular.

Meanwhile. Marick danced around the guard of the squinty-eyed Weequay. He baited his electro-dagger, then waited for the last second to dodge, feint, and then slit his throat with the edge of his Sith Dagger. Specs of blood splattered the half-Hapan's face, his too-blue eyes cold and burning beneath his silvery gray hair and shadowed visage.

The remaining thugs came in two at a time, one for each of the Tyris siblings.

Wyn backpedaled deeper into the alley, clearly wanting to keep his distance. "Bad touch!" he called out.

Marick exhaled slowly and sighed. There was little time to linger. The pair of Gamorrean dwarfed the diminutive half-Hapan, and each bore a nast looking vibro-axe. Cliche, certainly, but nothing that concerned the former Combat Master.

Tapping the Force for added alacrity, Marick slipped between the two thugs coordinated attacks. He bobbed and weaved, ducked and circled around the first guard and made a series of quick precise slashes with his dagger. Blood leaked free, but the Gamorrean didn't seem to

slow much or show signs of pain. The piggish brute grunted, but managed to slam a heavy knee into the smaller framed half-Hapan and sent him staggering backwards.

"Oi' stand still," he snorted as his partner swung a cleaving blow with his vibro-axe.

Marick was tempted to go for his concealed lightsaber, but remembered that it would just be a crutch. It would also reveal his mission on Ol'val. Fortunately, the former Quaestor of House Qel-Droma was more than capable of fighting without it.

Instead, the Elder Assassin once again willed the Force to give him strength, pushing his body beyond its typical limit, but only just so. He moved fast, impossibly fast, dagger slashing and retreating and then stabbing with his hidden blade and then retreating again. After a few dizzying moments of strike and fade, Marick finally pulled away into the center of the alley, giving the two Gamorreans a respectable space.

"Fight us!" the second thug scowled.

"I am," Marick said with a faint grin, holding his hands out to the sides.

They both charged him at the same time, but their movements were slow. Sluggish. The Gray Fang's blades had struck them each a dozen times each. The poison had taken longer than usual for their large bodies, but each strike had delivered more and more dosage directly into their bloodstream.

Marick did not need the Force for his next set of cuts. He moved with grace, like quicksilver rolling from a jar, and slashed each of their throats in a familiar fashion. Stinking, brackish blood shot out in a fountain in every direction, some splattering the half-Hapan's clothing.

When he turned to check on his brother, Marick found himself staring blankly at

"Charm person," Wyn explained, gesturing to the male Mirilan. When Marick stared at him, still blank, he sighed. "Sorry, Mind Trick. Same thing."

"What did you do to him?" Marick asked carefully as he walked towards the man.

"Hello. My friends," the Mirilan spoke mechanically, as if under some kind of spell. "I am Rowd Harding, the right hand of Mar Geldi. He is a Twi'lek male, 34 years of age. I can take you to him."

"Oh, we wouldn't want to put you out," Wyn said offhandedly.

"No. It would be my pleasure," Harding insisted.

Wyn shrugged and looked over at Marick.

“Well, I guess that’s one way of doing it,” Marick murmured. “Tell us what you know.”