

Collective Prison Installation 001
Deep Space Platform
0900 Hours

The girl yelped and huddled against the back of her cell at the sounds of combat outside, shivering. She had been hearing violence for the past twenty minutes, though it was only as it came closer that she could identify the sounds of blaster fire and muted explosions. Violet had long ago deduced that they were being held on a station in space, not planetside. The lack of any hyperspace transitions had ruled a ship out months ago. Whatever was coming had managed to board, and from the sound of it, the lack of high explosive ordnance to avoid accidental depressurization was hindering the Collective's response.

Something hit the security door that lead to the cellblock Violet D'slan and the other clan representatives were incarcerated in. Another bang followed, and the door went concave. A hollow boom followed, and the door fell inwards with a loud clang. The archivist stood and hesitantly moved to her cell door, getting on her toes to peek out into the security corridor. An armored figure appeared, ducking to get through the broken open portal, covered in shining chrome and carrying a massive, lit up power hammer.

The helmeted head, intimidating and brightly reflective in the harsh light of the glowbulbs above, swept the corridor. It seemed to lock on to the slight movement of her gasping and ducking, as the figure approached her door.

"Pardon me, do you know where I may find Master Evant?" came a booming, but polite voice.

"What?" she managed, her eyes widening. Violet pressed her face against the bars of the small window again, certain the voice was familiar. "M..m..mister Garmis?" she squeaked.

"Yes! I am here! Do you know where to find Master Evant, young miss?"

"D...down the end of the hall," she pointed lamely at the opposite end of the hall from the broken metal door Strong had stepped over to enter. "B..b..but are you going to get me out too?"

The man was already stomping down the hall, and from outside there were sounds of prison guards and crew regrouping.

"...go one then, you've got the riot gear on."

"Frag that, you saw what he did to Johansson! That guy was in full kit and he's paste across cellblock A and B!"

"Well I'm not going first!"

“Master Evant! I have come to free you from this prison!” came a shout from the large, armored Chiss. This was followed by a resounding series of booms, as he slammed his hammer against the cell door. **“Please do stand away from the door, I do not wish to crush you when I have dislodged it!”**

Another clang was heard, allegedly the door giving way, though Violet strained to see that far down the hall. Movement out of the corner of her eye showed a group of riot gear clad guards stepping in, weapons raised in shaking hands.

“S..stand down!” shrieked the first one, his voice cracking. Violet turned to look at them, just in time for the removed security door from the Deputy Grandmaster’s cell come flying down the hall, crashing into the guards. They lay, twitching but otherwise unmoving. She heard boots receding from outside the cellblock, others fleeing the armored behemoth.

Or going to get reinforcements she thought grimly, hands tightening on the bars of her little cell.

“Master Evant! An honor to meet you in person. My name is Stres’trong’armis, I have been sent to liberate you. Come with me if you wish to live, sir!”

“I see, very well, Mister Garmis,” came a calm response.

“Ah, you understand Chiss naming conventions I see, a pleasure to be escorting an intellectual for once! The Shadow Lady herself has sent me to retrieve you back to Selen.”

“Well you have to know these things when you’re the Deputy Gr— Selen? Not Arx? Wait, I thought Kordath Bleu was the Shadow Lord, did something change?”

“Master Bleu has retired, I am afraid, but his longstanding promise of a ‘beach vacation for that nice Evant bloke’ is a promise Lady Vasano wished to honor. Surely it would be a welcome change from the tedium of this place, and an opportunity to recover yourself before returning to the politics of Arx!”

“You...are not wrong, Mister Garmis. What about the others?” asked the Deputy, bring an upswing of warmth through Violet. She was getting out of here!

“I am afraid my orders were to rescue you and you alone, Master Taelyan. Perhaps another team will be sent for them. This way, sir.”

“Wait, S.s.strong!” cried Violet from her cell, watching the man start to march past.

“Even that one, Mister Garmis? Miss D’slan is one of your own, is she not?”

The helmeted face turned and looked at her, the Chiss's face hidden behind gleaming metal.

“Violet D’Isan was declared killed in action and given full burial rites, with honors, on Selen. It was believed that all parties aside from yourself would have been killed or executed, as a way to minimize the chance that you would escape Collective custody. Without our Intelligence agency confirming that this *is*, in fact, young Violet, I cannot bring her along to jeopardize the mission, Master Taelyan. Again, perhaps another team has been dispatched.”

The big man turned and stomped away, the Deputy giving the corridor a last look before shaking his head and following.

“No,” whimpered Violet, sliding down the door into a heap of sobbing.