

[Project Phoenix - Recovery]
On Wounded Seraph's Wings



Entry by: Mune Cinteroph
Dossier#3607

[Adoniram Tower - Caelestis City - 0100 Hours]
[18 Hours After Disembarkment]

Darkness lay thick over the city of Caelestis. The sea of buildings marked in the dark by spots of light reminiscent of the stars above them. Spots of harsh luminescence against the shadows. Mune's fur was a bright scar in the dark, rustled by a soft wind that blew across the roof of the towering building that was Adoniram Tower. It raised goosebumps even through his thick fur. His ears lay back, his eyes watching but unseeing what lay below, his ears deaf to the sound of approaching footsteps. Mune frowned, lost in thoughts of the devastation they had suffered in service to the Brotherhood.

"Credit for your thoughts," came the familiar voice of Caleb. "You know how I feel about you perching on that ledge."

The Shistavanen's ears came up part-way. He blinked, and the city filled his vision, dots of light sparkling in his ruby eyes. He drew in a deep breath before exhaling and bringing himself back to the immediate present.

"Wait... were you casting forward while dangling your paws hundreds of feet from the ground?" Caleb gave his mate a stern look, his tone reprimanding.

"It is fine. I am fine. You are worrying over nothing," Mune huffed.

The Shistavanen turned and set his paw pads down upon the cool duracrete of the roof. His ears refused to come up fully, so lost did he remain in the memories of battle and loss. He felt the Togorian close the distance between them so that a foot's worth of space remained between them. Mune refused to lift his head; to meet the vivid blue eyes that gazed down at the top of his head. His thoughts were in turmoil, a roiling cavalcade of uncertainty and despair.

"You did what you could, you know," Caleb offered.

"Would you stop with the consoling tone! I don't want it!" Mune spat the words out, anger, scalding in its heat, finally bringing his ruby eyes to meet those of the other furred face. "Things are falling apart, Caleb! Don't you get it?!"

Caleb looked into those eyes patiently. He knew the mood would slip by as quick as it had risen, he knew Mune too well to believe otherwise. He understood the Shistavanen's mercurial moods better than anyone. The only other person to read Mune nearly so well was gone. He watched the vulpine ears slowly come up as the anger seeped away. He refused to fight, and if he was unwilling to fight, he knew Mune's rage would drain away. The Togorian leaned in and pressed his broad nose against the other male's then touched lips delicately. The intimate touch chased the last of that flitting anger from Mune's eyes, shiny with unshed tears.

"I cannot help but wonder if things would have been different if..."

"Perhaps, if she were still alive, but she is not." Caleb saw Mune's muzzle dipping to look down again. He forced the Shistavanen's muzzle back up so their eyes could meet again. "Stop dwelling. You are the one always talking about moving forward and trudging onwards."

"What if the ash and debris are too deep?" his voice sounded small, even in his big ears.

"Then you'll use some of your neat Force tricks to clear a path. I know you, Mune." Caleb brushed his fingers through his mate's hair. Mune's ears had nearly gone back again but sprung up at the familiar touch.

A sigh shivered from the Shistavanen's lips. He collapsed against the other man, all his weight caught against the tall feline's sturdy frame. His hands clenched tight in the loose linen tunic the Togorian wore. The scent of his mate filled his nose and eased the tears from his eyes. He felt as if he failed somehow. It was not the material loss of ships and arms, but the loss of the lives behind them. He was no Sith or Dark Jedi by any means. Every life mattered more than he could admit out loud to his Dark Jedi comrades. He felt Caleb's hand rest on his back to hold him. The closeness calmed him bit by slow bit. Every deep breath through his long nose filled it with the scent of his mate, his haven, his anchor. The tears matted the fur around his muzzle, but within minutes, he felt better than he had since returning to the Caperion system.

"What is your plan, Mune?" Caleb's voice had gone gentle again; idly, he stroked down the smaller male's back.

"What makes you think I have one?" the canine whispered into the fur and fabric.

Caleb, grinning, raised the Force-user's chin so that their eyes may meet again. His cold blue eyes were warm with adoration for the smaller Shistavanen. He let that warmth fill his gaze until he saw it reflected in the shimmering ruby of Mune's own eyes.

"I know you have one because it is you. You couldn't stop thinking if you wanted to."

"I do."

"See?" Caleb laughed.

"Can we just..."

"Watch the stars for a little while? Of course, my love," Caleb spoke warmly.

The Togorian guided them to a bench. Eyes upturned, they sat in companionable silence. He could not begin to guess at the thoughts that played through his mate's mind. He stroked idle fingers through Mune's head fur, offering what comfort he could in that tender touch. Caleb sighed pleasantly. He felt the canine finally begin to relax against him. He knew it would be some time before Mune let the loss go. He also knew the Shistavanen would be driven to better himself and those around him so that they would not be so devastated by the fight next time around. There was always the next time. Caleb wondered if there would ever be a time when the fighting would be done, and he did not have to worry about his lover's safety. He reflected on all they had already been through together.

"Four years," Caleb whispered against Mune's ears.

"Hmm?" Mune shifted against the larger frame.

"Nothing. Just reminiscing," Caleb answered.

"I love you," Mune said softly.

"And I, you," came the Togorian's response.

They stayed there well into the earliest hours of the morning. Only then did they leave their perch to return through Adoniram Tower and Caelestis City to their home. Only the coming weeks would reveal those paths before them. For the time being, they would rest while they could. Already, plans were coming together in Mune's mind, and he was not one to sit idle long. Perhaps he'd have to see just what the new proconsul was made of.

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