Humble Beginnings

Raziel

11584

Tython Squadron

House Sunrider

Clan Odan-Urr

Coruscant

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Smoke and the sickly sweet smell of spilled alcohol filled the nightclub as surely as its patrons, and filled it was. Packed to the brim with some of the Galaxy’s youthful elite, the popup dancehall was as much a place to be seen as it was an entertainment venue.

Of course, places like this, especially considering the clientele, needed security. That was where Raziel filled in. Elbow to elbow with bodyguards, he stood observing the crowd. More importantly however, he was also observing the door. Such a thing was pretty easy given his existence as a Miraluka. His Force Sight afforded him the ability to track so much more than his impromptu colleagues.

“You a Mando?” A Weequay asked, leaning in so he didn’t have to shout over the electronic music. “You look like a Mandalorian.”

Raziel shook his head. “No, but if I had a cred,” he said, and let it hang. He’d long ago given up taking that particular question too seriously.

“You could buy a ship, amirite?”

To that, Raziel nodded. “And not just any ship, a big Corellian one,”

The Weequay offered his hand in response. “Kex, by the way,”

“Raziel,” he replied, took Kex’s hand, and shook. “You working for a guest or for the organizers?”

“Guest,” Kex answered, vaguely gesturing. “Daughter of a senator from Ryloth. They’ve taken big strides in breaking the sexualization of their women, but she’s putting them a few steps back.”

Raziel shrugged, but he still clocked the Twi’lek girl. “Kids need a chance to blow steam, I wouldn’t worry about it. When I was a kid, well, let’s just say if the Empire had caught me, I wouldn’t be here today.”

“That bad?”

“Worse,”

“Wish I coulda seen it. Now I gotta live vicariously through these kids, and to be honest, anymore I’m kinda glad I’m not one,”

Raziel snickered at that. “Kex, you and me both. I wouldn’t be caught dead dancing like that.”

“My legs would give out before I’d get around to the dancing proper,” Kex quipped, and then shifted conversational gears. “You getting good cred from the organizers? My company is always looking for talent,”

Raziel shrugged noncommittally. “It’s good enough to get me to the next planet, that’s all I’m worried about,”

“Suit yourself. Oooh, check out what just came in the door!” Kex’s volume was controlled, but it was clear his excitement wasn’t.

Shifting his focus that direction, Raziel immediately saw what Kex had pointed out. While he couldn’t see her the same way those with light based vision could, he could still see something. What he saw was enough to give him a good long pause.

A bright, vibrant aura surrounded a woman, leaving her shining brightly in the sea of stars that was the nightclub. More than that, it was the way she moved. There was a swing in her hips to her delicate steps, but her stride was so very confident. Whoever she was, she was already owning the room.

“Straighten up, she’s coming our way,” Kex said excitedly. “Zeltron by the looks of her,”

This mystery woman wasted absolutely no time, coming directly up to the two men and then sizing Raziel up. “I’m looking for you I think,”

Her words were as honey sweet as her walk, and that’s all it took to catch Raziel’s full attention. “I think you are. Let me buy you a drink and we can talk about it,”

Sadly, it became clear in an instant that she wasn’t there for the reason Raz had hoped she was. “Oh, no. I’m happily married. No, I’m here for business. I *will* take that drink if you’re still offering.”

“Yeah, sure,” Raz replied, disappointed. “What’ll you have?”

“Same thing you’re having. I’m Zeltron so it doesn’t much matter how strong it is,” She answered, but paused halfway to the drink droid. “Oh, where are my manners? I’m Aura.”

“Raziel,”

“Raziel, what are you doing with your life?” It wasn’t a question in the traditional sense. She sounded more like an exasperated parent than anything else.

“Making enough cred to see the galaxy. I’ve got a ship to maintain and I enjoy eating a few times a week,” he answered wryly.

Aura took a drink from the droid, sipped at it, and then fully regarded Raziel again. Her eyes traveled up and down, and by the feel of her gaze, she was busy staring into his soul. “You’re a Force User,”

“Yeah, I’m Miraluka, we all are,” he deflected.

“No, a real one. Not just using it to see. You can touch it, not just sense it. You’ve been doing it a while too,”

“Okay lady, listen,” Raz began, not liking where things were going. “If you keep up this line of conversation, we’re going to get more attention than I’d like. So, if you’re here to pitch me something then you’re gonna have to cover my night’s wages or else you’re gonna have to wait.”

“Fair enough,” Aura replied. “Let’s get out of here,”

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It was almost an hour later, and only a block from the spaceport where Raz stashed his ship. The pair sat on a bench eating Nerf and noodles from flimsiplast boxes, and washing it down with a Corellian beer. “You’re meant for more than working as a bouncer, Raz,”

Raz slurped his bite of noodles. “A bit grandiose don’t you think? I’m just another schmoe.”

“In the grand scheme of things, we all are.”

“Okay, you’re a Jedi,” Raz said with confidence. Such philosophical Nerf droppings weren’t in the Sith dictionary.

Aura paused to let a speeder whiz past them overhead. “I’m perhaps more transparent than I would’ve liked, but yes. I assume you’ve been courted by them before?”

“You could say that. Jedi see a Sith. Sith see a Jedi. Me? I’m something both in-between and neither.”

“Now who’s being philosophical?”

“Touché,”

It was Aura’s turn to slurp some noodles before speaking. “Raz, can I call you Raz? I ask because, let’s face it, you’re not getting any younger and this galaxy isn’t getting any bigger. You’re one more star in the field, sure, but the Force guides all of us to a singularity, and I’d rather have you with us than against us.”

“Bold of you to assume I’m picking a side at all,”

“I don’t have to assume. I’ve got evidence. I’ve been tracking you since Ord Mantell, and every place you go, there are stories. You’ve got a hate-on for slavers, don’t you?”

Raz sipped at his beer and took a shot pause before answering. “Yeah, that’s one way to put it. Gonna lecture me on releasing the hatred in my heart before it drags me down a dark path? The last person I talked to said my hatred was an asset,”

“So you’ve been courted by others I see,”

“If you can call it that. I tried turning him down too, but he didn’t wanna take no for an answer. Now, he’s not taking anything for an answer ever again.”

“See, you’re already being drawn into conflict. Raz, it’s coming for you whether you want it to or not, and burying your head in your helmet isn’t going to help anyone. Given your past few stops, it seems like that’s what you want to be doing, I spoke to a lovely family who claim they owe you everything,”

“*Those* kids, sure. I was just in the right place at the right time,”

“It was the Force, guiding you, and you well know it. The hidden truth doesn’t obfuscate the living Force’s will.”

“You’re giving a better argument than that Chiss punk, I’ll give you. Did it ever occur to you, though, that maybe I only act when *I* want to. I’m not so keen on having a Jedi council tell me where to squat and lean.”

Aura tossed her empty noodle carton in the waste receptacle and nipped at her beer. “You prefer your autonomy, I can’t blame you. I do too, so how about I meet you in the middle? Come contract for us. We’ll offer jobs, not orders. Take what you want, when you want, and we’ll compensate you for it. I can guarantee no docking fees at the Praxeum at the least, and we’ll cover your fuel.”

Raz took a long pause as he chewed his last piece of grilled Nerf thoughtfully. “It’s a good offer, but I *don’t* do things the Jedi way. I choose to act, not contemplate. I choose to be proactive, not reactive.”

Aura turned to more fully face him, an act wasted when conversing with an eyeless species. Still, it was a thoughtful gesture. “I came to recruit a Jensaarai Defender, not a Jedi Knight. Our way isn’t how you were likely taught either. Some of us choose to contemplate the deeper mysteries of the Force through silent meditation, but I promise you, that number is small in comparison.”

“I’ll give it a chance,” Raz answered after another moment’s consideration. “To keep things clean, I’ll live on my ship. It’s pretty comfortable.”

“Good, I need a ride back home.” Aura said, coming to her feet with a bounce.

“You came here fully prepared to recruit or hitchhike didn’t you?”

“I trusted the Force to guide me, and it did.”

“Stangin’ Jedi,” Raziel muttered. “Let’s go, I’ll do preflight while they finish refueling me. On *your* cred, by the way.”