

“It may have been built on a lie, but I do not believe you can sit here today and tell me that truth did not come out of it—”

“...Irian, please.”

“Kobign, I will not, allow me to continue...You do not feel anything but love for them boys, the kids and their families. That you would leave Mrs Bleu or abandoned L’ara, or any comrade in harms way. I know how much you love, care and give, and you are allowed to have this family, to see it thrive...”

To see it thrive...

...“There,” a metal hand smoothed a silky tie embroidered with selenian avians and floral designs. Kobign Settgre stepped back to take in the young man before him, dark blonde hair neatly combed over, a blue suit picked out months ago that was a little tight in the shoulders since the last fitting but it looked...perfect.

The young Selenian clasped his shoulder, wrinkling the white officer uniform, neither of which caring. His ruddy brown eyes met his with a wide smile. “Thank you.”

“Of course, couldn’t let you step out with a karked up tie, Lanric,” He chuckled, reaching up and returning the arm squeeze with his own, silver flash of a ring on his organic left hand. “Your mother would fret—”

“I mean, for everything, Kobign. For being there, when our father couldn’t,” The cadet’s sighed, the memories of the lad’s late father, of Grethe came to mind.

A man you never met, who should be here instead of you— the older soldier’s breath hitched, mentally feeling gut punched between Lanric’s gratefulness and his own mind reminding him of his deceit, pretending to be an old squadmate of his father’s. He couldn’t stomach knowing the conflict he joined had left the families of his enemies in grief.

Imposter or not, he's trusted by them and Jax? Jax was right. Looking at Lanric waiting for the knotted silence to fall, he knew that high water or not, he'd would fight to keep him safe and alive as if he was his own nephew.

Kobign nodded and squeezed back, feeling the moisture wick his eyes, "It's...I am honored... to step up and be beside you today. If he could see, the man you've become, he'd be proud."

Pulling him into and embrace, he patted his back, noting a tall figure leaning against the far doorway, waiting with ears back and brow softened. Irian. Kobign released Lanric and gave him one last smile. "We better get going. Wouldn't want to be late to your own wedding. Right behind you."

And he watched as the lad shook himself, smoothing out last minute jitters before leaving. He turned and looked back to those sharp blue eyes, the taller hybrid —his husband moving to meet him. He opened his mouth to speak, —

—*SKRRRRRRREEECHK!!!!*

Kobign snapped awake as the LAAT/i careened up and to the port side. Air ripped through the ship, light pouring in pulling his gaze to a gash in the metal hull. What the kark happened? Did they collide with another ship? He shook his head, a heavy haze wavering, drawing him back to what was it? Thoughts of a wedding, his own? Lanric's?

Lanric.

Twisting in his harness, his boot knocked against something soft and a yip sounded. "Canchi, I'm sorry, boy," he apologized to the sleek red cythraul and finally got a good look to his left, catching the jagged pale stripes and blond hair so familiar.

"Lanric, hey! Gotta wake up, come'on, kid." the half-Selenian reached out and tried to shake the sleeping cadet to no avail. He gave up and pulled away, only to pause as his he caught sight of his own scarf wadded up and around the lad's neck like a cushion.

What the hell? He didn't remember doing that, just when and why? He shook his head again, thoughts wandering before he snapped his focus again, hands fumbling to release the clasps of the straps tying him down. He had to get to the pilots. Freeing the last belt, he stumbled fell onto the ridged floor, Canchi scrabbling to the side with a quiet bark, the movement tugging on the short lead keeping the pair tethered together at the belt.

Grabbing the handle on the canine's vest, Kobign pulled his way up towards the cockpit, both half leading dragging the other as the LAAT/i tilted up and down, still freely flying. He stumbled on a couple fellow soldiers and gave them a good shake, hoping any of them would stir past dreamy mumbles...

... "Listen, I promised you a surprise and I'm a man of my word," Kobign grinned, cutting the engine of the speeder as they reached the far grounds of Fort Blindshot. He slid off and waited for the green Twi'lek to do the same.

"And what *is* the surprise? Tickets to a space punk band? A podracer? A basket of explosives— Oh it is, isn't it?!" L'ara's pout switched to a broad cheery grin as he caught the pause in his expression.

"You, are not very patient. Thought that be one thing Jax tuaght a fledgling of his," he chuckled.

"He's really not that patient, I don't think, not when it comes to something he's eager about. Books, languages, you—"

Kobign chocked, coughing lightly to cover it up and rubbing at his neck. He shifted the topic back to why he dragged her out here, holding a control fobble out to her. "Yes it's explosives. Fort got a bunch of counterfeit explosives they need safely detonated. Jax mentioned your even more moony for it than he. So, want to do the honors?"

L'ara's cry of joy caused him to wince, but couldn't help smile still as she took it from him with a resounding "YES!!!"...

...The green lekku twitched fervently as the twi'lek's brow furrowed, trapped in whatever mind haze still trying to pull him back to. He pressed his forehead to her hand before jerking himself

back to his feet. Reaching the front of the ship and slamming his fist against the door panel, man and dog all but collapsed into the cockpit. Panting, he swallowed and wiped the sweat beading and seeping into his eyes away, then reached for one of the pilot's shoulders, "Come on—"

And his eyes widened as dark blue rose closer and closer till water blanketed the windows just as the wind left his lungs as he was thrown forward. A flash of red and then that pale haze fell, washed in to fill the void of his consciousness...

... White sterile walls greeted him as his eyes opened. It took him a moment to process, staring at the space around him, a medical center surely, and the man who had asked to lead him with his eyes closed.

Then it clicked.

Kobign ran his hands over his heavily stubbled face in disbelief, hope, struggling for the words "Irian. *Irian*, no. She's? She's here, born? Kark what do you call it in this case? I—"

"—yes. She's here, we can *hold her*, Kobign," Jax's voice broke, his eyes welling, no he was full on crying as he motioned for him to turn around.

A large glass spanned the wall and stepping up to it tentatively, he stared inside. Several rows of small bins on carts were lined inside with tiny monitor wires running into them and each labeled with a name. Right in the middle of it all?

MArrien Moon

He turned and pulled Jax into him, drawing that one large hand and kissing the knuckles. "We can hold her?"

"Yes."

Time seemed to skip, blink before his eyes as a nurse brought out a tiny bundle and offered her to them. A little button nose, striped cheeks like his, and blue eyes as vibrant as her father's

cracked open at him. Tiny brown ears twitching, the only hairy thing on that sparse pink head. She was *tiny!* She was *theirs*.

How he wished Marrien, his sister, could have met her, to be here and see her grow up and meet Jax and the rest of his stumbled on family. A family he could allow himself to have, to cherish...

...“Kobign—”

He blinked, shielding his eyes as the overhead lights seemed to grow brighter, their buzz dimming, becoming muddled.

“*Kobign! Kobign wake up!!!*”

Water splashed against his face and the half-selenian sputtered. He forced his groogy eyes awake, that peaceful warm feeling sinking and fading behind. An arm wrapped around his chest from behind as legs kicked against him and propelled them against and through the waves.

“Hey,” the voice coughed in his ear, “Kobign, we got you.”

“Lanric?”

“Karkin’ hell, you’re awake, heh,” the lad huffed. He pushed them forward a couple more feet before speaking again. “I’m glad to hear your voice. Maybe, heh, could help get yourself to shore? Not be such a dead weight, kick man.”

Kobign blinked, stuck on the ‘we got you’ part and finally noting the firm pointed grip on his left hand dragging him. He tilted his head to catch soaked red fur, his cythraul trying to pull him to shore. What gods sent this loyal hound to him?

“...yeah, thanks,” he answered and started kicking too, sharply wincing in pain.

Whatever the mindfuckery just happened, digging into things he could only hope and dream for, he had a hunch the answer laid farther on this island.

But for now?

We keep ourselves from karking drowning...