

Alive among the dead

Xantros

41 ABY, somewhere in the Unknown Space

Xantros raised his eyebrows with curiosity, when his communication computer beeped to inform him about a message on a private channel. It was not completely secret, but very few people were aware of its existence and even fewer knew its frequency. Still, according to transceiver the author of the message was a member of Clan Vizsla. And it was not just a random member of Clan Vizsla – it was Korvis, the Consul of the Clan himself. What did the Rattataki want from him? The truth turned out to be even more interesting story than he expected.

„Hello there, Xantros! It was quite hard to obtain the frequency of your private channel, but I wanted to personally deliver this message to you. Clan Vizsla is organizing a Day of the Dead to commemorate our fallen brethren. We have decided to open it to every Clan and member of the Dark Brotherhood. I know that you are no longer a member of any Clan and of the Dark Brotherhood, but I wanted to let you know that you will be more than welcome on Youanming located on our homeworld, Zsoldos. The festival will start in five days, so you will have enough time to reach the planet before it starts, if you decide to join us. I personally guarantee you safe passage to and from the planet and your safety during whole festival.”

Xantros wondered, why would Clan Vizsla invite him for their celebrations? Could the invitation be a trap? Clan Vizsla, hired guns they were. They would do a lot for proper compensation. If the Consul of the Imperial Clan paid enough they would gladly kill any target. It would be easy to lure the Duros to Zsoldos under a false pretense of him attending the festival of the dead. Soon, he would become dead himself. On the other hand, the invitation could have been a manifestation of Clan's power. If they protected him from any members of Clan Scholae Palatinae potentially present on Zsoldos during the festival, it would show their power and it would be a clear sign of the Mandalorian mercenaries becoming a dominant force in the Dark Brotherhood. Or it was just an invitation without any secret agenda behind it, even though it would be strange to make so much effort just to invite him for a party. The only way to learn the truth about the invitation was to visit Zsoldos and meet these people face to face. He did not want to be a pawn in a game of powers nor to have any ties to any Clan of the Dark Brotherhood, but it would be fun to play both sides against each other. A dangerous game, but worth taking the risk. And food...free food was also an important factor.

5 days later, Youanming, Zsoldos, Zsoldos System

Xantros looked around and grinned evilly, while watching members of Clan Vizsla and Clan Scholae Palatinae argue about his presence during the festival. Angry screams and swearwords dominated all other sounds of the festive tent. The Duros enjoyed his bucket of famous chocolate popcorn with crait red salt prepared by employees of Kat Saka's Kettle, who were hired to serve food to all participants of the Day of the Dead.

Through the Force, Xantros could sense growing tension between his former Clan mates and mercenaries from Clan Vizsla. Soon, it escalated to the point, where it became unbearable even for him. It took less than two hours of his presence to cause a tense conflict among guests of the party. Palatinaeans demanded him to be handed over to them, but members of Clan Vizsla were equally adamant in refusing to do so. They guaranteed safety of all guests for whole duration of the party until they would leave the Zsoldos system. Whole Vizsla's star system was considered a neutral area during the Day of the Dead and the leaders of Clan Vizsla would not allow anyone to break the rule established by them.

Still, once the members of the Imperial Clan were close to reaching for their lightsabers and blasters, Xantros decided it was getting a little bit too dangerous. He wanted to exact his revenge on Kam'jin Maverick for lying about him to bolster Clan Scholae Palatinae image, but he wanted to

personally kill the Emperor. While the conflict between the Empire and Clan Vizsla might be useful in achieving his goal, there was also a high risk that he would get caught in the crossfire.

The Duros allowed his hosts and other guests to continue their quarrel without him and concealed his presence both from the naked eye and from sensing his presence through the Force. Thanks to the chaos in the tent, no one noticed his disappearance. He reached the starport undisturbed by anyone as everyone was distracted by the argument between members of two Clans of the Dark Brotherhood. His Gozanti-class Imperial Freighter was already prepared for immediate set off since he had contacted the crew via his inquisitor comlink. Thanks to that they left the planet as soon as he embarked it, leaving members of the Dark Brotherhood behind.

It was definitely not the time for him to return to the ranks of the Brotherhood. They were still occupied with their petty animosities and struggles for power. They would try to use him again for their own purposes, no matter of what Clan he might decide to join. His revenge would need to wait for another opportunity.