

Freedom for masses

Xantros

41 ABY, Collective's prison, unknown location

Xantros woke up and slowly opened his eyes. He tried to turn his neck and look around, but his body did not obey his will. He did not know where he was or how did he get into a dark room. Who did bring him there? What did they want from him? The last thing the Duros could remember was eating a lunch with one of his operatives in a shady restaurant on Nal Hutta. Then, he blacked out and awoke in the room. What he suspected was that he was betrayed by his operative and sold to one of many of his enemies. Many wanted his head and they would anything to kill or to capture him. He still was too weak to move, when the door opened. A ray of artificial light forced him to close his eyes again.

„Hello, Xantros,” spoke a male Kiffar. „I am Halfol Tuyascara and I would like to warmly welcome you to the most advanced research facility in the Galaxy. It will be my pleasure to interrogate you before and during experiments that my fellow scientists will conduct on you.”

The Force Adept blinked several times. His mind was working slowly too, but he was sure that he could recognize the name of the Kiffar. Halfol Tuyascara...Halfol Tuyascara...It was a top interrogator of the Mindbreakers, the elite scientists of Technocratic Guild, who conducted experiments on Force users. They probably intimidated or bribed his operative to poison him with sedatives so that they could capture and interrogate him to make him reveal secrets of the Dark Brotherhood. They did not know that he was no longer a member of the Brotherhood and he did not have access to any of its current secrets, not even to current data on its armies.

„I am sorry, doctor, I do not think that I can help you or any other member of the Collective,” replied Xantros indistinctly as even his lips and vocal cords did not want to cooperate. „I no longer work for the Dark Brotherhood and I do not know what their plans are.”

„Do not worry about it,” said the Kiffar and smiled cruelly. „You will learn that we have many uses for prisoners like you. Even if you do not hold any information that might be valuable for us, we still can experiment on you. Trust me, we have a lot of things that we might test on you to see how they will affect you.”

Xantros did not say anything. None words could change his situation, only actions, but he did not know what to do at that moment. He needed time to figure out how to escape from the Collective prison. The only thing he was sure of was that he did not have much time before the interrogation and experiments would start.

„I know what you are thinking about. There is no way you could run away from this place. Many people tried and all of them failed. Those who survived and are still here have understood their mistake. They will not make it again,” explained Halfol Tuyascara. „We will let you rest some time so that you can regain your full abilities. No worries, we have means to defend ourselves so you will not be a threat to us.”

With these words, the Kiffar left Duros' cell and did not come back for few days. Xantros used the time he was given well. He was well-fed taking the prison conditions under consideration, so he quickly came back to full health and full power as the effects of sedatives and other drugs wore off within twenty four hours from the moment he woke up. With time, he could sense other beings coming from various species being imprisoned in other cells. As far as he could tell, their spirits were broken. So many experiments, so many interrogation sessions and so much pain was inflicted

to them that they were no longer capable of thinking or acting independently without receiving an order. They had to be encouraged to be useful, but no words could get through the conditioning enforced by tortures and experiments.

On the second day of his imprisonment, Xantros was taken for a walk by one of very few guards that were present in the facility. The Human showed the new prisoner all other cells. It turned out that all cells were open and the prisoners could freely walk around the block of cells, but they were simply too fatigued to try any attempt to save themselves. The Technocratic Guild was so much focused on their quest to experiment on the Force users that its members were blind on true potential of their victims. Xantros knew the reason behind such limited views on the Force. The Technocratic Guild members were not Force-sensitive themselves. In the contrary to the Force users, they could not unite with the Force and feel its true power. However, Xantros was a powerful Force user himself and relied on the Force-related powers for most of his life. He was one with the Force and the Force was one with him. Their limited view would be their own undoing.

The Duros did not know how much time was left before the Mindbreakers would start experimenting on him, so he decided to act as soon as he regained full strength. He spent almost whole time in his own cell, reaching out to lethargic minds of other prisoners. He implanted memories of a secret conspiracy to break free in minds of each prisoners. He hoped that the suggestions would be strong enough for them to attack the guards on a specific command. It was extremely tiring to influence over twenty people and Xantros' mind was clouded with fatigue. Luckily for him, the Kiffar paid him a visit on the third day, so he had just enough time to rest.

„Are you ready for your first interrogation?“ asked Halfo Tuyascara.

„Of course, this is the price of my *freedom*,“ answered Xantros, stressing the last word.

It was the sign he implanted in others prisoners' minds. They immediately left their cells and attacked the only three guards present in the cell block. Though they had no weapons, they were not unarmed. As the Force users they had the most powerful weapon at their disposal. They were much faster and stronger than the guards had ever expected them to be, so within couple of minutes, the Kiffar and the guards were overpowered by their captives. Xantros took the security pass of Tuyascara and used it to open the door of the prison. Fortunately, it turned out to be a very small facility with a small landing zone for freighters right outside of the complex. Though it was heavily guarded, even the Technocratic Guild elite troopers could not stop twenty one powerful Force users, who loathed their oppressors. Only three of the prisoners were killed during the escape before they reached a freighter parked on the landing zone just outside the building.

The Adept thanked the Force that the Technocratic Guild relied on automated defense system for anti-aircraft defense and the freighter the prisoners used to escape from the facility was designated as a friendly vessel. It caused the anti-aircraft blaster turrets ignore the target, so the freighter left the planet safely. As soon as it jumped into the hyperspace Xantros sighed with relief. Since there were skills pilots among the temporary crew, he could rest. They agreed to take him to a place, where he could contact one of his operatives and travel back to his headquarters safely, before they would disappear in the darkness of the Galaxy.