

## **Personal log: 35:2:4 Coruscant**

There are days when I truly ponder the decision I made to leave my homeworld. It was not an easy decision to make and I did not make it lightly yet here I am, the only Chiss warrior, the only Chiss at all, serving in the Galactic Empire much to the disgust and mistrust of those who should be working to serve with me not against my every move. I knew what I was getting myself into. I understood the risks involved but there are days when trying to work with Palpatine and his minions is an uphill, seemingly pointless battle. Never in my life have I met a man so clever and devious yet at the same time so childlike and selfish. There is no denying his immense power or that his ability to think in large terms but he allows his ego and his pride to get in the way of good sense which is very detrimental as well as deadly when one does not conform to his point of view. When I first agreed to come and work for him I had no notion that it would often be like working for a spoiled child. It is tedious.

Today I found myself especially annoyed with his inane mind games and I really do have to wonder if even he sees just how churlish and childish he is being or if this, too, is all part of a larger guise that even I cannot see. I do not doubt that he has the welfare of this galaxy, of his Empire in mind but some days one would think that all he cares about is personal power. A very wise man once told me that the only thing powerful people tend to want is more power and that often the desire to obtain more power supersedes all other concerns. He was not wrong in this statement.

I dislike all the games and the ridiculous court politics where appearances and manners have more importance than strategy and careful tactical planning. If everyone one is far too scared to give an honest opinion then nothing can be accomplished. This becomes an even larger issue when these petty, self centered concerns outweigh the wellbeing of the men and women who serve in the Imperial Forces both as ground troops and in the navy. I detest losing good people due to greed, self righteousness and the desperate lust for personal gain. These losses add up and they cost us dearly in time, training and experience. There is no excuse for such wastes or stupidity.

Today's discussion over a possible weakness in the design of the so called "Death Star" battle station left me speechless with frustration. All it will take is one accurate missile strike and the entire reactor core will blow destroying the whole space station with one shot. Prevention would be a simple matter of adding a hardened durasteel grill over the shaft's opening so that any missile strike which may by some chance hit its mark will only impact on the surface and not at the vulnerable core. One would think that this addition or correction would be self explanatory but no, according to the experts, this current design is flawless because the opening to this shaft is far too small for any targeting computer to properly calculate and it is an impossible shot for anyone doing it manually. I have learned in my time that the word impossible does not exist and improbable means that there is always a chance something could actually happen. The obtuseness of the current leadership train of thought astounds me. It's simple maths that eventually someone could very well beat the odds and

make the shot so why risk these odds at all? Isn't spending a small amount more on an addition to completely eliminate this threat worth more than perhaps losing the entire station and its personnel? Apparently not and I left the planning session today in dire need of some quiet and a good stiff drink. I know exactly where to find the former but the latter is still up for debate.

I overheard some scuttle-butt a few weeks ago that Lord Vader had actually taken on the latest victim to be parcelled out to him as a personal assistant from the HR. A little research told me that the young woman in question has quite the resume and more whispers let me know that she is force sensitive. I did some research on her but aside from the obvious there was little to learn. Luckily as Captain I don't rank high enough for such nonsense and even if I were to be offered such an assistant I would prefer to deal with the majority of most matters myself instead of trusting them to an office worker. That may change however.

There was some talk about a new rank being handed out, that of "Senior Captain" to bridge the gap between Captain and Admiral. Ridiculous really. I do not understand why they do not use the rank of Commodore and be done with it but Palpatine does have some strange ideas on the entire ranking system and as he changes this with every whim I am quite sure it will be a passing fad that comes and goes the way some of the palace courtesans do. The idea of being called senior anything is ridiculous and makes the rank in question laughable, sounding more like a placement in an award show or a home for the elderly than an actual military rank at all but I digress. The thought that Vader has actually taken an interest in someone other than himself is intriguing and after having met the young woman in question I can perhaps see why. I do hope she will manage to survive longer than her predecessor did.

When I am on Coruscant and at the Imperial Palace I tend to stay away from the more populated areas. It is easier to think when one is not the constant subject for speculation and gossip. I realise that as an alien I am a curiosity here but it does get tedious from time to time. I found, a long while ago, a quiet area in one of the older less attractive parts of the palace. This place was not part of the major, more recent renovations and has been left mostly untouched. It's considered to be unfashionable by the majority of the people who work and even live here so it is a place I enjoy coming to when I need a respite from the stupidity I face on a daily basis when I am at court. Today, however, I was unpleasantly surprised to discover I was not alone. I walked out to find a young woman perilously perched on the balcony balustrade. I didn't want to startle her for fear of her falling off but I needn't have worried.

There were two things that stood out right away. The first was her hair and the second was the fact that she did not turn around but she knew I was there. When I approached she did not even bother to look at who it was instead she handed me a glass of what has to be the worst alcoholic beverage I have ever tasted in my entire life. I learned that her father makes it and it is my opinion that he should be shot for doing so, however I kept these thoughts to myself. This, as it turns out, is Vader's new assistant and she is not at all what I had imagined.

I mentioned her hair because it is a lovely and unusual deep shade of red and in the setting sun's light it was truly beautiful. She had it done up with zenji sticks, a style I have not seen used here all that often, not that I pay much notice to such things but using zenji sticks properly is not easy so I was impressed. Amongst the rumours that have been circulating about her the one about her lack of fashion sense seems to have been the least accurate. I found her clothing to be serviceable, flattering and comfortable looking which is more than I can say for most of what the sycophants here tend to dress in. It never ceases to amaze me how much time, effort and credits go into what has to be some of the worst examples of clothing in the galaxy. People will wear anything if they are told it's fashionable.

One of the most intriguing things about meeting Vader's young assistant was her apparent lack of concern about my appearance. I stand out. I am not human although I am humanoid. My skin colour and my eyes set me apart instantly and it has been my experience that most people here follow Palpatine's rather xenophobic view on aliens which leads to great prejudice among other things. This young woman did not seem in any way shape or form bothered by the fact that my skin is blue or that my eyes are red. She gave me a casual once over and then went back to her musings. The conversation we had was even odder by palace standards.

She seemed bothered by the fact that I had information about her and that I knew who she was yet she offered to share her drink with me without even looking at who she was sharing it with, without knowing anything about me. Her manner was a strange blend of forthrightness and caution mingled with a naïveté I found strangely alluring. My time here with the Imperial court has left me somewhat jaded and mistrustful of everyone and everything around me so her blunt manner and refreshing honesty were incredibly out of place although not unwelcome.

I am unused to being spoken to in that way and I found myself in the startling position of not wishing the conversation to end, of not wanting to let her go even though I had obviously insulted her in some way. As she stormed off I made a grab for her arm, hoping to placate her or at least understand what I had said to offend instead this made matters worse. She did not take kindly to my touch and surprised me even more by threatening to kill me if I should ever touch her like that again. Here, for the most part, court women tend to fawn over just about anything or anyone who wears a uniform even me despite the fact that I am an alien, so when she went on the offensive and began to jab at my chest with her finger in anger and berate me for my brashness I was caught off guard.

*'Men like you who think they can grab a girl and have her'* she said. At the time I was too taken aback by her attack to respond but thinking on it now, I must have come off every bit as arrogant and thoughtless as many of the officers I find repulsive myself. It is troubling to recall this moment because this is not behaviour I would ever endorse. The only excuses I can find are the terrible alcohol, which is not an excuse at all, and the fact that for the first time in as long as I can recall I felt a sense

of arousal and a powerful attraction which left me, for lack of a better word, breathless and '*thinking with the wrong brain*' as an old friend of mine would say.

How is such a thing even possible? This mere chit of a girl from what has to be one of the most backward planets imaginable actually managed to strike a chord within me that I thought I had long since buried and forgotten about. Duty comes first and one never mixes business with pleasure ever. I have always prided myself on my ability to eschew all things carnal but in this moment I found myself surprised by it. It was not my intent to be boorish and rude simply to hide how I felt yet this is exactly what happened. I was relieved when she accepted my apology. Now, upon reflection, it seems surreal. Yet when I recall the flash of fire in her eyes and scent of her skin, as well as her feisty manner coupled with an ability to see through deception and a canny sense of self being I find I want more, much more.

How is it that of all the women I have met in this place the one I find myself drawn to just happens to be favoured by Vader? This cannot be coincidence and I wonder if there is not some grand design at work which pulls me in deeper just when I question my usefulness here and think about leaving to pursue other avenues by which to protect my people. This girl is a mystery I now wish to unravel and in order to do that I must remain here within the confines of the Empire working for a man I find as repugnant as I do interesting. The irony of it all does not escape me.