

Personal log: 36:02:28, Hjal

It is late and I am angry. I sit alone in this apartment trying to contain my anger but I am not doing a very good job of it. Usually I find solace in solitude but not tonight. Here in this apartment I am warm, safe while outside the weather rages echoing my own inner turmoil. This is one of the worst storms I have seen in a long time and under normal circumstances I would enjoy such weather but not tonight.

Perhaps I lack the imagination to drive me to extreme behaviour and certainly I cannot imagine what it must feel like to have been so betrayed by a person I once cared for, trusted or even loved. I think this is because there are so few people in this galaxy I give my trust to that such a betrayal is highly improbable. I can count on one hand the number of people I trust and even fewer that I would call friend, or confidant so I am certain I would at the very least suspect something was wrong before any situation escalated out of hand.

I used to believe growing up that Thrass was the more emotional of the two of us, that I was far more cool headed and logical than my stubborn older brother but now, looking back I see this was not the case. While outwardly Thrass appeared to be less rational more emotionally driven than myself it was and still is the other way around. I see that now. I excel at tactical, analytical thinking and I maintain the appearance of cool and calm as I was taught to do but within it is driven by passion. Slowly, I begin, after all these years to understand that in order to excel at anything one must also, to a certain degree, be passionate about it as well. No matter who we are, our need to excel, the drive to move forward comes from some sort of emotional base. My brother was driven by ambition and pride though mostly, I think, pride and I see now that my drive comes from a different base, one that is harder to control and has darker consequences. This passion, which I believe I keep tightly under control, has managed to get the better of me and tonight it rages against my need to remain calm in the face of both fear and anger.

As a young man left to a fate of solitude on a planet devoid of sentient beings I learned all I ever wished to know about being alone with myself. I learned that I could live through anything should I wish to put my mind to it and I applauded myself for my ingenuity and my ability to survive any situation by using my intellect. Yet here I sit in solitude knowing no peace at all and I wonder why that is.

I pride myself in my ability to predict the actions of others, I excel at this in fact so much so that the leader of this Galactic Empire saw in me something he could use, something of value and has put my talents to use in ways my people would never have dreamed of yet I cannot predict the actions of one girl and I do not understand how that can be. Of course in this I am not alone in my inability to unravel her twisted way of dealing with pain.

Thrass would not approve of this situation I now find myself in, emotionally involved to the point of distraction, angry enough to lose control and objectivity. When did I become a man who loses his clarity over the life of one woman? I have asked myself this question far too many times in the last twelve hours and still I have no answers. I am baffled by my very visceral response to what she has done. She walked out of the enclave unseen, unnoticed into a raging blizzard, into certain death and the only things I can think about are how worried I am and how angry I am. I am furious at her for this incredible act of selfishness, for her emotional response to her

pain which on first glance seems irrational but upon closer examination is so very human. Escape from the pain and after what she has been through I have no doubt that her pain is overwhelming.

On the journey here I listened to her screaming and crying in her sleep, such as it was, and I could do nothing to ease her suffering. She may have escaped Andando's prison physically but in her head she is still there. According to the medical report I received from Vader there were signs of physical and mental torture and perhaps sexual abuse although the report was vague on that. She will not speak of what happened to her, shutting me out, hating me for intruding and I wish with every fibre of my being this had not happened to her but wishing is a futile exercise. I took leave time to bring her here to Hjal. This is the one place I truly believe she can find peace but I did not expect her to go looking for it in the form of death.

I am also angry at Jyrki Andando, the man solely responsible for this current situation. There are no words with which to describe how I feel about him and try as I might to be logical and clear headed I find where Merlyn is concerned I cannot. Were I ever to come face to face with this man I would kill him and not think twice about the consequences. He may have been at the center of her world once but not any longer. He has stolen innocence and light from her usually bright spirit and I cannot forgive him for this. Primarily though, I am angry with myself because I should have seen this coming.

I am a master tactician, it is my job, my talent to see and read people's moves long before they ever decide to step out on to the battle field but not this time. I expected to find her asleep, safe, warm and perhaps at ease instead she was gone. Kirja'navaar'inkjerii let me know on no uncertain terms that I am not infallible and that he too missed the signs, that in retrospect he should have at least had some suspicion into her plans and perhaps this is true but it is too late to dwell on it. She is gone, wandered off on a planet she doesn't know into weather she is utterly unprepared for. I do not believe she really wants to die but rather that she wishes to step back in time so that this bewildering black hole of anguish she is now experiencing does not exist but there are some things which cannot be undone and the only way to get past the pain is to step forward not backwards.

If she dies out there in this terrible blizzard my guilt will be great and added to the weight of my brother's death. This is a burden I truly do not want to carry. I want her back in safety. I want her whole and alive not frozen to death alone on a cold world that is not hers. The only saving grace in all of this is that Kirja'navaar'inkjerii thinks of her as a child and placed a tracking chip in the mask which luckily for all concerned she has with her. He left to find her and as he is faster on his own I remain here, waiting knowing an anxiety that is unfamiliar to me.

She does not know exactly what I have done to make certain that she will always have the protection and help of the Dantassi people and while I am certain it did not escape her notice that the unmasking ceremony was more unusual than it should have been I am hoping to keep the exact nature of my part a secret until she will not see it as interference. I have my reasons for doing this, most of which can be explained rationally but part of me understands that underneath these rationalizations lies irrational emotion and I fear what I am becoming as far as this young woman is concerned could very well destroy all that I have worked so hard to achieve.

In this moment while I await news of her fate I find I do not care.

