

**Personal log: 35:7:24 ISD *Vengeance*, Chommell sector**

I find myself thinking about Thrass. It is not often I indulge myself with thoughts about my older brother, the memory is still painful. He is still listed in the Chiss Military Archives as Missing in Action but I feel, I know he is dead and he has been for a very long time. This passage of time, however, has done nothing to alleviate the sensation of loss and I miss him as much now as I did when we still held out hope for his safe return. His death has left a large hole in my life I never imagined possible. He was my brother but he was also a Merit-Adopt for the Mitth family, the same ruling family as I and even though it annoyed me to no end he looked out for me, as brothers, as family should. As I sit here awaiting the arrival of Merlyn so that we can hopefully unravel a mystery about a planet called Myrkr I wonder what he would think about my interests in this young woman. I wonder what he would think of her.

He was less open to trusting strangers especially people who were of an alien race, who were not Chiss. He was less than progressive in his thinking, more observant of the rules and regulations by which the Chiss, particularly Chiss military lived their lives, a stickler for protocol. I am certain he would be very unimpressed by my foray into romance by having a relationship with a human girl half my age. I can almost hear his voice calling it *a ridiculous infatuation, little brother*. And I do have to wonder if he would have been right as he was about so many things. As a young man of twenty I found him to be rigid and already set in his ways although upon reflection I see now that he was being cautious and protective with me. He was being my older brother at every turn, doing what brothers do and now I find myself missing his steadfast nature and honest practicality more than I can ever put into words. I do also wonder sometimes if he had lived would I have made the same choices, would I have come here in the same manner? Or even at all? My exile would have horrified him and most likely shamed him greatly and for this reason alone I am glad he is not around to see it. He would not have understood and sometimes, were I to be absolutely honest with myself, neither do I. I tell myself that I am doing this for the good of my people but there are days when I do have to question this thought process especially when I see such blatant waste and cruelty in this so called peaceful Empire.

Yesterday morning I taught Merlyn how to swim. I must admit I had been surprised by her admission of not knowing this skill but of course, as is usually the way, the simplest explanation is also the least obvious. Who is in need of such a skill when one's entire home world is comprised of sand and rocks? On such a world one learns how to treasure water not frolic in it.

The lesson would have been delightful had it not been for Vader's handiwork. She was black and blue from a supposed combat training session with him. What was he trying to teach her by almost beating her senseless? By the look of the bruise on her arm he damn near broke it. Her reaction to my obvious anger was also puzzling. She was awkward and embarrassed about the bruises she sported but she was also defiant and defensive about how she came to have them. I am truly curious about what strange bond ties her to that foul tempered man that she would defend his actions and their painful looking consequences. I know she was hurting and I was, am livid as well as powerless to do anything about it. As much as I desire to intervene, to protect her I have learnt better. Theirs is a relationship I do not and probably will not ever understand and while lack of loyalty is not one of her faults how does one justify being beaten so badly all in the name of a combat lesson? She is just a girl and he is a bully with enhanced strengths. He should know better. Still if she survives his training lessons in sparring these skills will be of great use for what is to come.

Myrkr, if I am right, holds the key to somehow dealing with the Force and possibly controlling a Jedi's power. I will never be held in thrall like that again as I was by that Jedi master C'Boath and sooner or later Palpatine will feel the need to 'put me in my place' with his powers. I will not let this happen however irony, it seems, likes to play games and in order to find what I need to I must have the use of someone who is Force sensitive and that I can trust. These two attributes in a single person are in very short supply especially the latter and Merlyn is the only one I know who has both. I hope that I am not mistaken about her loyalty because, as lovely as she is and in spite of my feelings towards her, I also need her trust and that is something which goes far deeper and is much more valuable than stolen kisses by the lake. Thrass would call this a foolish endeavour that I am wasting my time on a myth but so much depends on this, so much depends on me being right. I am willing to take this chance.

I cannot fulfil my oath to serve and protect my people if I am dead and if I have no defence against those who wield the Force as a weapon those who can kill just by bending a thought to their will then I am forever at their mercy and whim. This is not a tolerable situation. I do not like being in situations where I cannot control the outcome to some degree or another.

Thrass would have indeed had some very choice words about what I hope to accomplish on Myrkr and about how I intend to use Merlyn's unique talents, for that matter, I think she will also have some very choice words but I hope she will play her part never the less, almost everything depends on it.