

Doran

Location: Hyperion Hub

Time: 0930, 5-15 GM, 1335 A.C.

Doran slid the panel closed and stifled a yawn. Turning over, he gave himself a small push, landing with a soft thud on the floor of the hangar, and turned to face his fighter.

She was fresh off the line. Sleek, fast, and could hit like a fighter twice her mass. The Tanos Corps. PT-5 fighter glistened softly as she sat there, and Doran felt like if he reached out to touch the fresh Arclite Falcon logo

Rolling his shoulders, the young feline walked along the length of his fighter, reaching out a hand and letting his pads rub along the smooth metal sides. He closed his eyes, letting the digits find any dings or dents he may have missed.

The technique was, of course, impractical, but that wasn't why he did it.

Doran stopped at the nose of his fighter and looked out through the hangar's field. Beyond, as far as he could see through the asteroid field, the Hyperion Hub spread.

The Hub, the central locale for the Hyperion Sector, was the only sector in Commonwealth space whose local government had taken up residence in a space station. And a sprawling space station at that. From one central, spherical station the hub had spread throughout the asteroid field. Giant bridges and docks connected and array of smaller stations, forming a huge network of living spaces, communes, shopping malls, arboretums, trading posts, and all other assorted things a city would need. The Hyperion Sector was the youngest colonized frontier in Commonwealth space, but even so her capital was home to more than four million living, breathing souls, some of whom had never set foot on a planet.

"Doran!"

Doran opened his eyes and glanced over to see a figure stepping out from behind the next fighter over. Hezdor, his squad leader. Tall Biron man, womanizer, drinker, brawler, and a mean pilot to boot.

"Getting acquainted with the place, eh?" Hezdor asked as he approached Doran.

"Yes sir," Doran answered, glancing at his fighter. "And making sure she's set."

"Good. Come on," the Biron said, turning and heading towards the hangar entrance, not even waiting to make sure Doran was following.

Doran felt his ears perk with curiosity, and he jogged after Hezdor to keep up. The man didn't walk fast, but he was easily almost a meter taller than Doran. "What's up, boss?"

"First," Hezdor said, and grunted as he ducked a bit to step out of the hangar and into the flow of foot traffic. "Do not call me boss. The boss is the boss." Doran had to jostle through people a bit to keep up. Private hangars didn't mean private hallways.

"Second," Hezdor continued as he carved a path through the crowd. "'What is up' is we have a job to do, and our squad is gonna take care of it."

"What, just us?" Doran said with a grunt as he pushed his way through the crowd.

"Well, us and the boss."

Hezdor led them to the center of their hub and through a doorway. As he passed through it Doran found himself assaulted by a wave of sound, light, and gyrating bodies. His ears instinctively flattened; He'd never been one for raves.

The place was large, easily stretching four stories in height and looking very clean in spite of the hundreds of assorted dancers, party-goers, and drinkers. Balconies and catwalks stuck out above them, the rainbow dance of light from above filtering down through the plasti-glass of the flooring and the bodies of people standing on them. Thankfully in here the actual walkways were much clearer and easier to navigate. Doran found he didn't even have to push to keep up with Hezdor anymore.

The Biron lead him up to the second floor, with Doran quite enjoying the feeling of the smooth, red velvet on his footpads. Then they were across the catwalk above the main dance floor and into a small, secluded, and thankfully sound-proofed room.

Doran stood straight as he joined Hezdor, standing next to the significantly taller man and facing the boss.

Quill stood about as tall as Doran did, but her fur was thicker and darker. Coiled muscles and her neutral expression of cold calculation made her look as if she only had a passing understanding of what relaxation meant. She didn't try to hide the empty socket where her right eye had once been, nor the claw marks she'd received during its loss. Doran had heard that her former mate had come off far worse from the encounter.

"Hezdor, Doran," Quill said simply, her mouth barely moving as she spoke almost too quietly. Doran's ears rotated to face her to make sure he caught everything. "We've been contracted by the Tanos Corporation to protect a convoy headed to a frontier planet. Your squad is on the roster to run defensive measures."

Hezdor nodded. "Yes ma'am. Should we expect much in the way of interference?"

Quill snorted. "Aside from the normal pirate interference, no. I expect my Falcons should be able to handle *that* sort." She looked at Doran, and he felt the fur on the back of his neck stand up. "Can you?"

"Of course," Doran said, feeling as though his spine wouldn't bend again for hours.

"Good," she said, and picked up a datapad. "Then we can talk about pay."