

Love, unconventionally.

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Author's Note: The rank's used in this article are from the Canadian military, except for the Commander rank on which I made a mistake, so it represents the rank of Lt Col.

I haven't gotten any feedback on this story so far. I could use some, please. I have started a Yahoo! Group where it may be easier to provide that feedback.

<http://ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/phoenix-writing>

From Chapter Nine

Jason kept looking at the device quizzically. It didn't look like anything Imperial Intelligence had in their inventory. He had just seen 99% of their inventory on his first day. Of course it didn't help that he didn't speak, read, write, or telepathically communicate in rigellian, the dominant language of the Empire. Only 1% of species in the Empire could communicate telepathically, and luckily for him, Keith's species wasn't one of them.

Frustrated with not understanding the device, he just randomly pointed his finger at a spot, and pressed.

"Welcome to the Tal'Shiar."

Chapter Ten

Ivana looked over at Jason a little, watching the man quietly. She was the regional director for Imperial Intelligence on Earth. Jason was under her command. Well... sort of.

"So how was your first day yesterday, Mr. Bezner?" Ivana asked casually of her newest employee. Ivana was also human, but wasn't originally from Earth. When the Empire established an Embassy on Earth, it had established a few other offices as well, Imperial Intelligence was one of the first.

"It was... long. And as I was leaving, some whacko shoved this" Jason showed her the electronic reader, "into my hand. I have no idea how it works, but when I randomly poked it, it said 'Welcome to the Tal'Shiar'. I think it might be broken."

Ivana's face immediately started to show that she had just seen a ghost. Jason noticed the expression.

"Is everything alright, sir?" Jason asked of Ivana.

"Close the door, Bezner. We need to have a chat."

Jason got up quietly, and closed the door.

Keith was watching his TV-like device quietly, when his sister Lizley came into the room. He paid her no attention, letting his brain rot while watching the device. His sister just quietly sat down beside him.

"Keith..." Lizley started to say, feeling bad.

"What!" Keith snapped, looking at his sister. It had been a while since he had seen Jason, and it was getting to him.

"I'm sorry." Lizley replied simply.

"For what?" Keith sighed a little, wondering what his sister did now.

"For not thinking Jason was good enough for my little brother." Lizley replied.

Keith just gave a sigh, "I got him a better job, and he's still not here with me."

"Give it some time. He's just started into his new job, and while I know you two want to be together, he's not going to come running just because you ask him too. This is easier for you than it is him, whom before 5 years ago never even knew what our species was, let alone having met an alien." his sister replied.

Keith just sighed, knowing what she said was true. He just missed his fiance something fierce.

"Why are you here?" Lizley asked her brother.

"I live here, where else would I be?" Keith asked, snarkily.

"There is a member of the royal family on Earth, whom I very much doubt knows what that means. While as the Crown Prince you certainly have duties, nothing says they have to be performed here. I know that you wanted Jason to just jump and follow you blindly, but he's not a dog. So go back, and stay a while. Maybe try to blend in locally a little. Find out more about his planet." Lizley replied, smiling a little.

Keith gave a little hmm as he considered his sister's words.

"Plus, you have to tell him about the Tal'Shiar." Lizley reminded her brother.

Keith's face just fell, realizing he had forgotten to tell Jason something important. Something that had to be said in person.

“Coming out of hyperspace, your Highness.” Commander Dowell announced to the Crown Prince.

“We're a day too early to be at Earth, Commander.” Keith replied a little incensed at the timing.

“Sorry sir, but we got an emergency call, it's urgent. General orders state...” Commander Dowell started to say.

“Yes, I'm aware. Carry on.” Keith just sat in his seat in operations, wanting to be at Earth already.

“There are rumors, Jason.” Ivana started. “None substantiated. Nothing more than whispers in the wind. The Tal'Shiar is not just a secret organization, but it's 100% more secret than Hezbollah and that's if the Tal'Shiar even exists.”

Jason watched his boss a little, wondering what she was saying.

“Legends, rumors, the wind all say that the Tal'Shiar doesn't exist. But if they did, they'd be dedicated to the royal family, and only to the royal family. How you wound up with a name, Jason, is beyond my comprehension.” Ivana said.

A chirp came over the intercom.

“Sir, I have a priority 1 transmission for you. It's from Rigel Prime.” The Secretary said.

“Put it through.” Ivana said simply. Both her and Jason turned to face the small monitor sized viewscreen on her desk.

His Majesty the Pharaoh appeared on screen.

“Your Majesty, to what do we owe the honour?” Ivana started to ask.

“Ivana, Jason... the RSS Aeon was last seen in the gamma plantonic system, headed to Earth. The Imperial Guard is searching, but... she hasn't been seen in several hours...” The Pharaoh started to quietly say.

“Why was the RSS Aeon headed to Earth, your Majesty?” Jason quietly asked, not wanting to know the answer.

“Keith was coming to see you, Jason.”

Ivana sat there a little shocked. She hadn't been told of Jason's involvement with Keith, and all she knew at that point, was that the Crown Prince was coming to see Jason.

Jason remained silent, tears starting to form in his eyes.

The Pharaoh quietly said, "The RSS Halifax is a newly built war cruiser. It is set to go on its shakedown cruise. I want the two of you aboard ASAP. While you cannot directly help with the search, it may help your sanity to be aboard... and the director has experience with this sort of case. If the Aeon isn't found..." the next part was said sadly, "it will bring you back to Rigel Prime for.... well... let's hope it doesn't come to that. Royal Palace out."

The screen went blank. Jason just broke down in tears.