

Planet Daibon, GFDate 4034:0508

"Admiral H-Higgs... come in... this is M-Mia Xen in the Alimbic C-C-Cluster... over."

The audio transmission was full of static. Anthony had been riding the technicians at Daibon for days now, trying to get some sort of signal from the devastated Alimbic Cluster, but ever since the second Vhozon assault on Federation space communication had been difficult. No one had managed to get anything in or out of the area, not since the last fleeting images of fury and fire and death. But now...

"Admiral Higgs... c-come in... this is Mia Xen in the Alimbic... please respond, over."

"Mia, this is Anthony responding from Daibon." The large man fought the urge to cruse, wishing that he could still be in the field. Taking a deep breath, he collected himself before responding.

"It's good to hear your voice, soldier. Are you reading me, over?"

"Barely, sir." There was another burst of static. "Our communication relays were destroyed. The Kriken engineers have been working to repair them – I managed to grab the first operational unit, sir. Over."

"Good to see they're respecting us. They must have warmed up to you."

"That's one way of putting it, sir."

"Give us a second – the lab boys are saying we can strengthen the signal now that we've got you, maybe get some video to go with the audio." He looked over his shoulder, saw an engineer shake her head and give the machine she was working on a quizzical look. She stood, kicked it, then turned to him and smiled.

A moment later a static-laced video signal kicked in. Mia was there, looking a little worse-for-the-wear but she was otherwise intact, aside from an odd glaze to her eyes. Given the destruction behind her, though, he could understand her lack of focus.

The dead hung floating in space, connected by droplets of blood that linked together in zero gravity, the carnage held in eternal sterility. Expressions of horror were frozen, the hulls of ships blackened and crumbled or torn to pieces on both sides. This was not the brutality of war, no, there was a casual cruelty at play here, in the cuts and the destruction, a cruelty that identified who was responsible for this.

"We were fighting the Vhozon, sir, when something came out of nowhere, something smaller than a ship," Mia whispered, following his gaze and swallowing. "The fighting had been bad but it suddenly got so much worse. I'm not sure what it was but it killed everything. I fought it but I was certain I was going to die, too, but then it turned and left..."

"You..." Anthony trailed off, his voice hitching. He knew what could cut metal like that, what heat could char the hulls of ships meant to withstand the heat of stars. He felt his heart seize, fought down the panic that sometimes crept into his night terrors and left him shrieking awake, his skin soaked with sweat.

"Sir?"

"You're luck to be alive," said Anthony, closing his eyes, counting silently until his breath was under control. "You're one of the very few to survive an attack like that."

"D-do you know what did this, sir?" Mia whispered, Anthony's panic becoming contagious.

"Yeah." Anthony swallowed again, opened his eyes, forced himself to look at the portrait of death that polluted the void of space and made it a screaming atrocity and looked away before his mind broke. "I survived one just like it, though I didn't think I would."

"What kind of ship could do this?"

"Not a ship. An abomination. Ridley."

Planet 457-23, GFDate ?????:????

"Sit. Stand. Beg. Down," Brannigan said, spacing out the words, giving Samus just enough time to respond. "Sit. Stand. Beg. Down." Three of the eye-fruits floated around him, reinforcing the Desgeega's commands, his words echoing in her soul until there was nothing else.

Sit meant to kneel, her hand clasped behind her back, her knees spread wide, her head bowed and eyes on the ground.

Sit. Stand. Beg. Down.

Stand meant on her hands and knees, her hands and knees a shoulder's width apart, her head up and eyes down, her rump up for his hands and her breasts hanging below her.

Sit. Stand. Beg. Down.

Beg put her back to kneeling on her heels, her spine straight, her hands brought up limp and parallel with her shoulders. Her face was to be exposed to him and his touches, her mouth as open as the slime allowed it to be, her knees still spread wide.

Sit. Stand. Beg. Down.

Down was the one she hated the most. Breasts pressed against her knees, shins and forehead resting on the ground, her arms limp and resting so that her hands went past her rump. Helpless. Defenseless.

Sit. Stand. Beg. Down.

Sometimes, there would be a break between one command and the next, just long enough for him to activate the things inside her or the slime grasping her abused breasts. She'd gasp when the slime suckled her, pant when it played with the sensitive nub between her netherlips, but she dared not break position.

A whip of plasma, similar to that created by her lost paralyzer, lashed out at her whenever she was less than what he wanted. He'd lash her once, twice, a third time, and then repeat the commands.

He was teaching her to obey the way sentients had domesticated wild animals since the dawn of every civilization, his demands seeping into her muscle memory. How many days had passed since he'd started doing this to her? How many more would pass? Fed by him at his whim, fed fruit flavored with spunk, she found herself entirely dependent.

Sit. Down. Stand. Beg.

He mixed up the order, sometimes, punishing her with the whip when she thought she'd found a pattern. All of her was forced to focus on his voice, his words. She grit her teeth and tried to think of anything else but she couldn't, not if she wanted to avoid the taste of the whip. All her mind and thoughts began to circle the words he spoke.

- *Sit* -

... his fingers on her shoulders, her breasts, probing the armor that softened at his touch and let him play with her as he wanted to. Her hands clasped behind her, forcing her to present her breasts to him, her open crotch a lewd invitation, her bowed head dehumanizing, dehumanizing, reducing her to the toy he treated her as...

- *Stand* -

... her increasingly heavy breasts beneath her, back arched, his hands toying her her nipples, prying open the soft pink folds behind her, laughing her and mocking her for her wetness and small gasping needs. He looking down at her, carressing her face, forcing her to look up at him as he towered over her, so much stronger, so much her better...

- *Beg* -

... who could blame him for this, for looking into her eyes as she displayed herself? No matter that he demanded this, no matter that he taught her this, no matter that it was his hands and the treat of his whip that made her behave this way. She wanted this. She needed this. The heavy dripping moisture leaking out of her and settling on the ground between her legs was proof of how far she'd fallen...

- *Down* -

... sometimes, when she went to obey his command, he'd place his hand beneath her face. She'd nuzzle his flesh, kiss it, lather the skin with her tongue – she would do whatever he demanded so long as the whip stung her skin and the slime brought her so close to ecstasy without ever letting her cross that threshold...

Sit. Stand. Beg. Down.

Prey. His new name for her. The whip when she answered to the old one. This is where she fought, where she failed. She refused to answer to it. *Prey.* She was the Hunter, she was Samus Aran. He couldn't take that away from her.

Sit. Stand. Beg. Down.

- *Prey* -

The whip came down and she seethed, denied the comfort of screaming by the slime penetrating her throat, holding her lips and tongue. The whip rose and fell again and the prey cringed to see it coming, helpless to do anything but accept the lashing.

Sit. Stand. Beg. Down.

The whip snapped, and the Prey bowed her head and hissed, closing her eyes, waiting for the next command.

Planet Daibon, GFDate 4034:0511

For the seventh time that day, Vogl sat down and cleared his mind and thought as loudly as he could. The first few times he had done this he'd felt ridiculous, but his benefactor had always answered before. She wasn't now. In fact, it had been days since he'd been expecting her hear from her and hadn't, and that had him worried – had something happened? Maybe something involving whatever had happened during the last skirmish between Kriken and Vhozon...?

Maybe... maybe it's time to cut my losses, Vogl mused, sighing as he returned to his desk. It's been a good run but I can easily distance myself from everything right now without anyone being able to attach me to anything.

A sound caught his attention, drawing his eyes to the air vents. He stared at them for a long moment, paranoia creeping in, but he'd spent a half hour checking his office for listening and recording devices – other than the ones that he himself had put there – and knew that his office was secure. Frowning, he stood as the sound came a again, a low grating slide that whispered around his chambers.

Something struck against the vent, giving off a fell green flow. He opened a drawer and pressed a button, opening a panel on his desk that revealed an illegally modified pulse pistol. He'd tested the weapon, seen it punch through three sheets of durasteel before being stopped by the fourth. Trembling fingers wrapped themselves around the pistol, lifting it out of it's compartment as the vent fell from its anchors and silently fell to the floor.

“That gun will only annoy me.”

The voice was cold and metallic, utterly devoid of intonation or hint as to the species or gender of the speaker. Two green balls of energy surrounded by purple bits of some technology Vogl was unfamiliar with crept out of the hole, the energy surging outward as the puple technology exploded in a blinding emerald flash.

Vogl whimpered, covering his eyes and dropping the gun, taking cover behind his desk. He blinked and shook his head, waiting for his sight to return before risking a look over the safety he had hidden behind.

The alien standing there was almost eight standard feet tall, an armored figure that had earned a fearsome reputation throughout the galaxy, a warrior who many whispered was equalled only by the great Samus Aran himself. The woman he worked with used this warrior, Vogl knew, sending this Hunter to act as her strong right hand.

“Vogl,” the warrior spoke. “The time has come. Where is Keaton?”

Swallowing, the Senator rose on shaking knees and walked to his terminal. He tried to say something, anything, but terror seized his throat. He pointed and the Hunter walked around the desk, studied the terminal with an utter lack of passion.

“Do not worry. No one will know I was here. Watch on your monitor and act as the Doctor has instruted you. All will go as she has predicted.”

Another blinding emerald flash surrounded the Hunter. When Vogl could see again he was alone in his chamber. The screams started a scant half hour later.

Running from his chamber, Vogl passed his secretary and went straight to security, demanding to know what was happening. He saw the slaughter on his monitor, coiled lightning shocking whatever stood in the way, the Hunter stomping into the parliament of the Galactic Federation and reducing the world to bones and ruin.

Swallowing, Vogl commanded respect, offered leadership, gathered and calmed those that were lost to panic. He sent security to care for the wounded, to protect the places that had not yet fallen to destruction. Those that had been lost found themselves in Vogl's orders, and as they followed him, Vogl's love of power overcame his fear.

But he did not look at the monitors. He had no need to, for he knew where the Hunter was going and could plan accordingly. Besides, all those sent to stop this warrior would falter and die, for where Sylux walked only destruction could follow.

See You Next Mission...