

A Pirate's Life

Fiction for Operation Antiquity Week II

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The pirate horde of planet Reliquary celebrated around the bonfire, their hunting party had returned with a prize hog. The beast would feed the small village for days, luckily all members of the hunting party had returned unscathed. Members of the horde gave thanks by dancing through old rituals in front of the fire. Children laughed, women danced, and men talked of plunder and looting of past adventures.

One solemn man, a pirate raider named Caiden Du'kri kept his distance from the festivities. Caiden, like a few other selected males of the horde, was a member of the hunting party. He knelt in front of his own fire, in front of his dwelling, far from the horde's activities. Caiden began scrubbing semi-fresh blood from his tunic. Caiden had been the one to stalk the beast and threw himself into a life or death battle with the creature. Caiden won.

Caiden kept his distance for a reason, he had been warning his horde for weeks now that he and others had been seeing strange activity in the vicinity of their horde. Unknown new ships seem to be ever more present, they came at all hours of the day, searching...but for what? Caiden had told this to the elders, which the inquisition was brushed off rather quickly. The elders of this horde seemed to believe that these strange new ships were nothing more than different factions of pirate raiders purchasing new equipment.

As for this pirate horde, they had been making a lucrative living from hijacking supply and arms manufacturing vessels. Unbeknownst to most, as this horde may live in somewhat privative dwellings, they are indeed a bit more evolved than most factions of piracy. They had clung to the lineage of theft and espionage, inserting a few of their rogue agents in positions amongst the "civilized" community. These agents did nothing but feed their horde with intel on "certain" supply transports passing through their home planets system. This system fed their greed for many years, amassing a fortune, keeping the very best of their stolen merchandise for themselves. Then selling the rest on the black market or back door deals throughout the galaxy.

For Caiden, his life since the birth of his son has taken on new meaning for the hardened pirate. All these years of piracy have placed a substantial moral dilemma on the middle aged man. Caiden human by birth, never gave in to the fact that this was the life to live. Since the birth of his son, his moral compass searched for more meaning. Caiden knew that this life, his past would eventually catch up to him. He was weary from continually being on the run, hiding and looking over his shoulders. Now for a long time, this was the life for Caiden, he embraced this life. He once relished for battle, thievery and all out scoundrelous. Now, it was more of returning back safe to his lovely Chiss bride and son.

This planet had been a proper sanctuary for this pirate horde, though Caiden has had that undaunting feeling that this planet would soon be discovered and his family would be in grave danger. The horde had no limits to who they plundered, this faction of pirates made no grievances as to the who or what, as long as it brought many coins to their pockets.

Sorvina watched her husband as the weight of his burdens grew larger as they both scrubbed blood from Caiden's clothes. "You know, it will do you know good to bottle your anguish, please Caiden tell me what is bothering you..." she said ever so politely.

Caiden brushed off his wife's comments and continued with his task. She placed a hand on his shoulder, "Tell me Caiden..." her voice more direct.

The pirate stopped his menial task and stared fiercely into the Chiss's piercing red eyes. He sighed deeply, rubbed his hands through his snowy white hair. "It's time my love..." Caiden said softly. The Chiss could not believe how much those four words had taken her back. A river of feelings flowed through her at that moment. "No, no it is not, there are no signs to support your conclusion Caiden!" she said firmly.

Caiden pulled his wife in to him tightly, "My love, I wish this was not the time, but the cold hard truth of the matter is simple, we have our plan, you must take the boy and go" his voice stern. She felt the seriousness in her husband's eyes. Without question, Sorvina felt his convictions, and the revelation of acknowledgement washed entirely over her. The plan had been laid out since the day her son was born. Caiden had gone over it detail by detail, for months on end. There was a method to the madness, both her and the boy could recite their parts verbatim.

Hidden deep within the forest, Caiden had "acquired" during his heavy pirating days, a shiny new Sienar Fleet Systems designed Lambda-class T-4a shuttle equipped with hyperdrive of course. Pirating does have its perks from time to time. Today was indeed that time, Caiden made sure he and his family were prepared for just such a time. His wife and child would take the shuttle and head to her home planet of Csilla in the Unknown Regions of the galaxy. There she would start a new life, blend in, and wait for her betrothed. With the small fortune amassed by Caiden over the years, she could live quite comfortably, for some time, though that is not what she wanted.

This life came with consequences, consequences of actions, choices and all out greed. Caiden knew this, hence his moral dilemma, an inner turmoil he wrestled with daily...daily for years. Years ago, a transport shipment highjacking, a couple of well placed bombs, a shipment of fifty new shuttles just became a shipment of forty six, thanks to a leaky fuel canister. Although, one of those shuttles was very much intact and fully operational. Caiden being the savvy pirate he was, pulled that distraction off without a hitch, stashing the shuttle here on Reliquary. Waiting for this very day, though Caiden had hoped it would be later rather than sooner.

Caiden still looking into his wife's eyes, he spoke again "Those are not ordinary ships that are coming and going, those ships belong to a dark force. I have seen those ships before, they bring nothing but death. Gather yours and Grayson's things, we must make our way to the ship right now!" Sorvina now consumed by fear did not question her husband, she left to fulfill her husband's request.

The pirate marauder continued on his task of cleaning his tunic. There are always wondering eyes within the camp. Caiden knew too much attention on him and his bride would skew his plan, that could not happen. Too many sightings over the last few weeks, Caiden along with other members of the hunting parties had seen these new ships at various points of interest on the planet. Caiden himself witnessed one of those ships land and a dark lurky figure along with a half a dozen well armed Rangers exit the vessel. The new strangers were searching for something, but for what? Regardless, the many years Caiden had spent pirating and raiding, he had come across those types of ships before, especially the most recent sighting, this latest ship bore the mark of the Brotherhood. Caiden knew that his time was up, it was time to get his family to safety.

Now, the pirate was sending his wife and son into the vastness of space, to escape the inevitable, death was lurking in the shadows to blanket this planet. Caiden kept a close eye on

the pirate horde's activities, they were all too consumed by drink and festivities to pay any attention to the scuffle he and his wife may have had. Sorvina cracked the door of their living chambers, she merely nodded to her husband and Caiden responded in same.

Caiden got up and walk to his dwelling, maintaining a close eye on the festivities and the people. No one noticed as he slipped in for the night, more importantly, no one saw them leaving out the back and head deep into the woods. This trek they were on had been practiced many, many times before, both day and night. Caiden and Sorvina knew this trek religiously, they had orchestrated this route down to the very step, though tonight would be the night they would set a record on time. Caiden had slung his son over his shoulders and told him to hang on tight. The pirate and the Chiss made little work of their journey.

Both Caiden and Sorvina over the years had set deterrents along the way to their destination, Setting very debilitating traps to slow anyone who may be following. As the sun began to peek over the mountains, they had arrived at their location. Both exhausted from the trek, out of breath, cuts and scrapes adorned their arms from the branches and rocks along the way.

Caiden exhausted, pulled his son off his shoulders and handed him to his wife. "Get inside and start your takeoff sequence, double check the coordinates and make sure they are in the NAV computer." The pirate said still gasping to catch his breath.

Sorvina grabbed her son, and Caiden began to pull thick evergreen ferns and netting that they made from thin twigs off of the shuttle. The shuttle had been expertly concealed, the two had years to disguise it as part of the terrain. Caiden worked hastily and managed to pull off all the camouflage in under a minute. Sorvina had already made the last inputs to the NAV computer and the shuttle's engines began to spool up. The Chiss made it outside to her husband, a trail of tears ran down her face.

"No need for tears my love, we will be reunited soon, we know our parts in this scenario, we cannot deviate from our plan..." Caiden said gracefully.

Sorvina simply nodded, embraced her husband in what could potentially be their last encounter. The two shared their moment and then entered the shuttle. Caiden went over and kissed his already sleeping son on the forehead. Sorvina strapped herself into the pilot's seat, Caiden came up behind her, leaned over and kissed her forehead as well. Reluctantly Caiden exited the shuttle closing the door on his way out. The shuttle engines spooled up and began to lift off the ground. Sorvina spun the shuttle around so she could see her husband one last time. Her eyes widened right before she hammered the throttles launching the shuttle into the light dawn. Just like that the pirate's family was gone, a sigh of relief washed over him for just a moment.

Just as soon as the shuttle was gone and into the lightspeed highways, the hair on the back of the pirate's neck stood erect. Only one thing could do that to the hardened pirate, the distinct sound of a saber igniting was present directly behind him.

"Hello old friend, I had a feeling it would be you..."

