

A New Doom, Part XIII

A Star Wars/Invader Zim crossover by Andrew Erickson

Pain.

Searing, cutting, all-encompassing pain was all he felt for the 0.3 seconds of his existence, which was just long enough for him to manage to gasp “What the-”

The world vanished in a burst of light, replaced by a dark void that he assumed meant he was dead. Then, just as suddenly, he was alive again.

“Who are-”

His body was pulled in every direction simultaneously by an unseen force. Tendons and bones snapped and his organs ruptured as his body was reduced to a red mist. Dead.

Darkness.

Alive again.

“- you?”

Dead.

Alive again.

“Why are-”

Dead.

Wash, rinse, repeat.

After what seemed an eternity, his tormentor eased back to simply throttling him half to death long enough for him to get his bearings. He was in a dark, empty chamber. Facing him was a patch of deeper darkness that shifted as it moved closer to him.

“Do you feel anger?” an ancient voice said so quietly that he had to strain to hear it.

“Not really... I’m annoyed that you keep killing me, though. That got old after about the third time. By the way, how did you revive me each time?”

“The Dark Side is a path to many abilities some consider to be... unnatural,” the shadow answered.

“OK... and what’s the Dark Side?”

The only answer he received was a bout of psychotic cackling.

That's probably not a good sign.

Stormtroopers #1 and #2 were starting to have second thoughts about Tarkin's plan. They had already mulled over the "suicide mission" aspect of it, but there had been other complications. For example, they weren't sure they could actually convince the rebels that they were deserters.

Thus, they had no idea whether they would be executed on sight or given a free pass when they found themselves before a Mon Calamari officer who stared at them a long moment before speaking.

"I understand that you are claiming asylum and, if possible, a commission in our ranks," the Mon Cal said neutrally.

"Yes," Stormtrooper #1 said. "We don't like the Empire. At all."

Stormtrooper #2 nodded in agreement. "Yeah. That recycled air is too dry and they won't index our pay to the inflation rate. It's like they don't even care about us!"

"That and this cheap equipment," #1 added. "Just look at this stuff! It's like they got the geniuses responsible for the B1 battle droid's AI to do quality control."

"And Tarkin smells like an old man!"

"That too!" #1 interjected.

The rebel officer stood and proffered a webbed hand. "That's all we need to hear. Welcome aboard!"

Han Solo looked around the seedy Hapan bar with a mixture of relief and trepidation. On the one hand, he enjoyed bars. On the other hand, Crimson Jack had come here in order to meet a contact who, hopefully, would allow the in the Consortium. There were any number of ways this could go wrong, even if they did manage to make it past the border patrol/sensor network. After all, Imperial cruisers weren't exactly easy to miss, particularly when they were trying to steal the crown jewels right out of Ta'a Chume'Dan.

Their contact swaggered into the room, wearing what Han swore was a cardboard replica of Boba Fett's distinctive Mandalorian armor. "What..."

"Arr, I must've forgotten to tell ye," Crimson Jack said, setting down the latest in a long line of bottles of rum to meet its demise at his hands. "Our accomplice be a bit cornobbled, y'arr. He be convinced that he's the famous scallywag Boba Fett."

The man pulled out a chair and sat down opposite Jack. "I'm surprised you had the courage to meet the galaxy's number one bounty hunter in person, pirate. You know, there's quite the bounty on your head," he said in a voice that was a remarkably good imitation of Fett's. "Go ahead and give me one reason why I shouldn't turn you in."

"Yarr, because I plan t'steal the Hapan royal family's jewels. They'll fetch a pretty penny, and I'll give ye a portion o' the spoils," Crimson Jack said.

The Fett impersonator considered the offer for a moment. "Let's say I offer my services to you on a more long-term basis – say, one year. In exchange, I want ten percent of the haul from this little expedition."

"I don't be thinkin' so, ye greedy landlubber," Crimson Jack shot back. "One percent. Tops."

"That's not good enough. I want twenty thousand creds now, and no less than eight percent of the money you make from the jewels afterward. And if you try to cheat me out of my share, I'll hunt you down."

The pirate captain's comlink beeped, and the voice of his first mate could be heard on the other end. "Cap'n, the Hapans have located the ship and are sending a battle dragon to intercept us!"

Crimson Jack nodded to Han, the gesture exaggerated by his inebriated state. Han drew a blaster, causing the Fett impersonator to laugh heartily. "You think peashooter can damage my fearsome Mandalorian armor! Ha! Patheti-"

He was silenced when a blaster bolt punched through his "armor," sending him sprawling onto the floor. Despite the smoking hole in his chest, he managed to prop himself up on his forearms and shake his fist at Han. "Curse you, Solo! How did you get past my invulnerable bes'kar armor?"

Han slowly shook his head and holstered his blaster, then helped Crimson Jack stagger out of the bar while the Fett imitator continued shouting at him. "Come back here and face me like a man! I've killed more Jedi than anyone! Come back and fight me, you coward! This is an insult to my Mando'a honor!"

"I'll get you, Solo- ooh, a peanut!"

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