

Nanowrimo Document

Day 1

“The universe is under no obligation to explain itself. Unfortunately, it expects you to figure all its shit out yourself” – Ancient Human Proverb

To be honest though, not even the universe knows itself that well. That’s why there’s a lot of pain and suffering in the world. But enough with philosophy. You’re reading this because you want an interesting story full action and nuance, sex and thoughtfulness; a story that teaches you a lesson about what ever is going on in your universe today. Well, you’re in luck. We’ve got some of those. So, strap yourself in.

Commander Lilianna Belle was sweltering under the twin suns of Isothorpe. Of all the world’s the Independent Trader’s Union had to make the current Homequarters it had to be a desert planet. Commander Belle dusted off her desert fatigues for the umpteenth time and was trying to politely spit out the sand from her mouth. The light sandstorm in the area made that an impossibility.

“Ugh,” she groaned. She was going to be here for who knows how long.

“Please Commander, this way,” her tour guide directed.

He looked as miserable as she felt, which made her feel a lot better.

“Thank you, Captain Dirk. I mean Billiam. Attache Billiam.” She beamed at him, as much as one could with sand flinging in their eye.

The former Captain didn’t appear phased by the comment, but she knew from past experiences that it must be eating inside him.

“Good,” she thought.

She stepped inside the humble looking desert dwelling; a light brown hemisphere modelled after the desert planet itself. Inside, however was anything but humble. The room had a classy silver, blue and marble motif; the colours and theme of the Planetary Collective.

“Club 39, Commander.” Billiam wasn’t in the mood to sell it. It was like every other PC approved establishments, clean, efficient and orderly, but lacking in any flavour. Not his usual drinking hole, but he didn’t want to get into trouble with what was left of his career hanging by a thread.

“It’s quaint. I’m surprised to see a bar like this in the ITU.”

“Well, the PC have small but influential presence here. And most people from the PC prefer a place more to their liking.”

“I assume it’s safe?” she queried.

Billiam sighed. “Yes, Commander Belle. It’s quite safe. When you entered the building you were scanned for any potential weapons.”

“Well, I’ll look around to be sure, but I’d say this will be okay for the rest of the crew and negotiating staff.”

“You don’t seemed to enthused, Lilly.”

She glared at him.

“I’m sorry.” However, he was not sorry. “I meant to say, Commander Belle.”

She continued to glare at him. This wasn’t the first time he had referred to her as Lily. She hated the name and he knew it. She wasn’t going to let him get under her skin. Not this time. Not when the tables have finally turned.

“Well, I was hoping for something a little more, local. Something a little less ...”

“Gentrified?”

“Yeah! I’m sure a connoisseur of alcoholic beverages like yourself knows a couple of fun places.”

Billiam wasn't the only person who could get under people's skin.

"Very good, Commander. However, I was ordered to bring you here and I wouldn't want to go behind my superior's back." The venom in his voice was thick.

"Well, maybe one day you'll be in a position to give orders instead of following them." That had sounded less childish in her head. "Moving on, this will be fine for now. You can go find the rest of my team and tell them to meet me here. I'm going to have a look around.

If looks were energy weapons, Billiam's face would be set to kill. "As you wish, Commander Lily."

Before Commander Belle could react he left the club.

Despite their differences, she knew they agreed on one thing. PC approved social establishments were as fun as eating medically approved nutrition bars. However, she had to make sure, so she started scanning. The noise didn't seem to startle anyone, unlike the other facilities she'd been to earlier that day. Most had felt offended that their place wasn't trustworthy, however, when the President of the Planetary Collective was a factor, you weren't going to take any chances.

By the time she had finished her audit, more people had entered, including some of her team who starting their own scans of the place. She applauded their thoroughness as their was a lot at stake, but to be honest the members of her team would have done it even if the fate of this arm of the galaxy wasn't at stake. Ms Franay, a Catiri by birth and part of the President's staff, approached her.

"I assume you've made an initial survey of this establishment."

"Yes, I've made thorough checks in every nook and crany."

"Good, and have you interviewed the staff and its patrons?"

"I talked and done a background check on the owner, but I would hardly think I need to interrogate his staff and certainly not its customers."

"I said interview, not interrogate Commander. Don't put words in my mouth." She sounded as fun as the décor.

“And, yes, I need you to interview everyone who comes in and out, no matter how frequently. I’m not going to leave this to chance. Any unknown variable could destroy any opportunity here. I would think someone with your experience would understand that.”

She hated to admit it, but she was right. Even if the President himself didn’t come here, his staff probably would and something might leave them to be compromised. The future of the PC couldn’t be put at risk. She nodded her head.

“I expect a report by oh six hundred. Local time of course.”

“Of course.” She held in a groan.

The official nodded and disappeared through the door, talking to the next person on their official hitlist.

“Time to get to it I suppose.”

And she did. The staff were first. They barely tolerated her questions, but it was a PC establishment so they bit their tongue. Comfortable work was hard to come by here. When it came to talking about their patrons they bit their lip. Privacy was a valuable commodity. To question one’s honour is bad enough, but to question the honour of a customer was going to far for the followers of the ITU.

The Commander considered palming this off to the other members of her team, who were now enjoying a couple of pints at the back table. However, she thought better of it. Technically they were off duty now and so was she, but she wasn’t going to be the asshole commander. They’ve worked just as hard as she had today and it would be one of many. The set up for this peace conference was serious business, As the official told her, the repercussions will be galactic wide.

“You could use a drink!” came a voice from behind.

“What?” she rattled. She looked around to see where it had come from.

“Are you ok ... Commander?”

Behind her a man was looking at her direction at the bar. Civilian clothes, human looking, definitely not a PCF officer perhaps an Empire agent. Their leaders were human after all, but that's another long story for another time. The eyes though, they were something else, something magnetizing.

"Yes, I'm good, I mean well, Mr ..."

"Ways, Milton Ways." It was very Bondesque.

He gestured to the seat at the bar. She didn't hesitate to sit down.

"So what's your poison?" Milton asked.

"Poison?" She queried, "Why would I need poison?" The question had her on alert.

"Sorry, it's an old English phrase meaning what would you prefer to drink."

"Oh, that's the first time I've heard it." She lowered her shoulders. "I'm on duty. I can't drink anything."

Milton looked around at the scene around them. He gestured to the officers at the back table.

"They're not. Why are you?"

"Their job is done, mine is not."

"And what is your job this evening Commander?"

"It's Belle." She considered. "No, call me Lilianna. I prefer that."

"Good to see you starting to relax." He repeated his question.

Lilianna explained as much as she could which was a surprise to her. She was not one to hide things, but she wasn't usually one to blabber her mouth.

"Well let's make your job easier, for the sake of the galaxy." His smile was infectious. "I know a thing or two about the regulars."

They talked back and forth all night, from the regulars to the benefits of Gorgarion bugs on the human digestive system. At one point, she even ordered a drink or two. Or was it three? It didn't matter. She was off duty now, and it wasn't often she got the chance to let her hair down and be open. PCF ships were many things, but they could be a bit stuffy at times.

"Ok, that's enough about me and everybody else around here. What about you mysterious traveller? What brings a human out this far from the Planetary Collective, or are you an Empire Human."

"Oh I remember that. That was a big shock when it was found out that the leaders of the Empire were descendants of humans who had been abducted from Earth. Who would have thought amongst all these alien species that the biggest threat to humans and their allies were other humans?"

"That was over fifty years ago. You don't look a day over 35 at best."

"Why thank you, I do like to keep in shape."

"Flatter yourself all you want amigo, but I saw your attempt to Segway the conversation."

He snapped his fingers. "Can't get anything passed you Lilianna. I guess that's why you're a commander."

"And flattery won't ... no actually. Flattery will get you everywhere with me tonight. Please continue."

And it did, from the evening to the early morning; from the bar to her temporary quarters on the base.

