



***Edited By: FSF Storm
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Welcome to the Commander's Table. This is a place for a FSF Hosts to tell their stories. The Commander's Table spans all time and space and you never know where you may find it or who may be there. The bartender, Cap, makes sure that only Commanders enter and, somehow, always knows exactly what you want to drink before you even realize it yourself. The bar appears differently to people, drawing from whom and what they are to make a place that is most comfortable to them.

To Klingons it would be just like a place found deep in the cities of the homeworld with weapons abounding on the walls. To the Irishman, it would be an old fashioned Irish bar. Each person sees and experiences exactly what they need to allow them to tell their tales.

There is no monetary exchange here. All drinks, no matter how many you have, are all paid for in the form of a story. It doesn't, necessarily, have to be a story of Command, just a story that means something and, hopefully, all can learn from it.

This issue's storyteller is FSF Ku of the Paragon.

Dark Origin

By: FSF Ku

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Vexxan Ku stared out at the dizzying effect given by the twirling escape pod, and all he could see was a violent maelstrom over a relatively insignificant planet. A small flash caught his eye and he knew that his ship had entered the atmosphere and was now a flaming wreck destined to crash, and perhaps add more deaths to the high toll counted in space. The biological enemy ships were too good, and the war looked to be going on for far too long. Once an officer in the military, Ku had left once he felt that his services were no longer needed and looked forwards to a calm life as a civilian. Life had not been as calm as he had desired, and the galaxy called to him. He purchased a ship and a crew and began a delivery company, however the company failed quickly, overshadowed by the large industries in the arena, and Ku and his crew entered into the shadowy life of smuggling. For several decades he had been able to stay under the radar, and live away from the galaxy on the whole living a relatively peaceful and fulfilling life, until they came. The Yuuzhan Vong sought the devastation or slavery of all the beings in this galaxy, Ku opted to come to the help of the galaxy again, as he had many times in the past, and joined the Galactic Alliance in their fight with a large group of other Smugglers, lead by the infamously famous information broker, Talon Karrde. Now Ku was waiting for his escape pod to crash land on the planet below, hopeful that his crew, scattered around the battle, would also survive and not fall into the hands of the sadistic self-mutilating enemy.

Ku awoke in the escape pod, the G-forces of entering the planets atmosphere apparently blacking him out, he guessed that crash landing onto a planet was something one never got used to no matter how many times it happens. He hopped out of the pod and looked out into the war-torn landscape. The fighting had not yet reached the surface, but the debris from space had, and it was devastating to the surface, it had been a long time since Ku had seen destruction of this magnitude and he was well aware his need to discover someplace safe for the duration of the battle, thus he headed down into the city he crashed into in an attempt to discover a safe haven. He found one far quicker than he expected, it stood out starkly amidst the dark and damaged buildings. It was small and unassuming but it was unharmed by the battle above, and it was also very familiar. He reached out his right arm and through artificial nerves sensed his metallic arm make contact with the archaic wooden door and push it open easily, with no squeaking or hindrance. He smelled the familiar scent of alien beverages from other galaxies. He had been in the place many times, and now it was saving his life, he stepped in and left his home galaxy behind.

He nodded his bloodied head towards some of the various ranking individuals he recognized. Most were wearing the odd outfits of a government he came to know

as the United Federation of Planets, others wore outfits of an unfamiliar planet called Earth. Still more were from other cultures. He knew many of them well, he had sat and listened to their tales, and they had listened to many of his. He nodded to the bartender who returned the nod, and proffered a beverage for Ku. It was an unfamiliar blend of multiple flavors Ku had never heard of. His first time in this place he had a Corellian Ale, but every time after that Cappie had surprised him with unfamiliar drinks from all over the mysterious galaxy he understood this bar existed in. He enjoyed the variety and exploration of a sort. He sipped the drink and nodded in appreciation.

"What is it this time?"

"A Beverage from Earth called a Malibu Bay Breeze."

Ku nodded and headed off to his regular table there was a group of people there, silent at the moment and all of them watching. He had noticed them all move there the moment he had walked in. All apparently interested in tales of his galaxy, tales of Jedi and lightsabers, battles with giant triangular ships, dark menaces forced to breath behind black masks. Events that Ku didn't know would occur since his first visit here well over fifty years ago. Ku sat down and looked among them all, most were familiar faces, though some were new, he took another sip of the fruity tasting beverage and began his tale.

"For those of you that have heard my tales, you know that most of them revolve around my time on a ship called Paragon, or events that led up to my commanding that ship. Today I'll try something a little different, even though it would eventually lead to me getting to Paragon in a very drawn out way, it is mostly unrelated. It's the story of my first command, a time before I heard of this place, a time before I was fully aware of the majority of things in my own Galaxy. Before I had left my home planet of Kushibah."

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Vexxan was born on the planet Kushibah, part of a species known as the Kushiban, like most Kushiban his fur was smooth and white, however his violet eyes made him relatively rare and would serve to give him an edge when it came time for him to choose a mate. His life was relatively normal for a young Kushiban, he studied hard, he played hard. His motivation served him to become highly intelligent among his people, and drove him to increase his physical capabilities as well. Unlike most species of the galaxy, the Kushiban lived with nature yet were highly intelligent, they chose to live a life without spacefaring technology. Vexxan embraced this philosophy, but also questioned it wondering if certain aspects of life could be improved upon if the technology was introduced into the lives of his people, unaware of the wars space technology created among the others of the galaxy. There were several chances for Vexxan to settle down and mate, however he felt his life lay upon a path different than what most

of the females were looking towards, so he declined most advances. As happens with any group of beings, tragedy struck. Several of the Kushiban started to disappear from the area without warning or threat. The best investigative minds were sent to discover the cause, but they too disappeared. Young Vexxan, barely considered an adult at the time, volunteered for the investigation. While many were unwilling to admit that he was ready, there was no one else willing to risk their lives on the endeavor for the investigation.

Vexxan left the village, and many felt that he would never be seen again. During that night a bright glow was seen from the village, as well as many nearby. It would soon become known as 'The Night That Turned Into Day.' The glow had been so bright that many Kushiban were unable to sleep, and many were fearful that it was a sign of something coming that would destroy them all. The following night however, the giant glow finally died down and appeared to fully disappear, putting many Kushiban in the various villages to ease. On the third day after he had left, Vexxan appeared on the horizon, some fur was missing and much that remained appeared to be caked with blood, but the fur which many could see seemed to be reflecting the sun's light with a golden hue, showing Vexxan's beaming pride of great achievement. By the time he reached his village his fur had changed to a grey color, showing a large sadness about how the situation had turned out. He informed the people of his village that the members that had gone missing were dead, all killed by Xinkras, a deadly creature, that had moved into an area nearby the villages. He had devastated the hive of Xinkras by burning the fields nearby where they were living and scared them away, those that did not run had burned to death. Though some were upset about the tactic he had used, none in any of the nearby villages would deny that he had potentially saved the lives of all them by eliminating this threat. Due to his willingness and capability he was awarded with a position of being in charge of village security of his local village, as well as the other villages he had saved from Xinkra attack.

For a year he set himself to a strict training regimen for the purpose of leading the area's security. He created ways to use his capabilities to battle many creatures with no weapons other than himself, he also ensured that he chose the best Kushiban for the security of each village and that they were well trained. He continued to deny the advances of all women, knowing how dangerous his chosen path would be. He did not want to leave a family orphaned. So he stood a solitary figure at the head of security, as time passed the size of his jurisdiction grew, as other villages noticed how well he was preparing for any possible threat. He helped build a fire-based defense system in case the Xinkras decided to come nearby the villages again. The villages had become far safer than they had been in hundreds of years.

The end of the first year had brought great prosperity upon Vexxan and the villages, it finished up, however, in similar fashion as it had began, with Kushiban from various villages disappearing. Not only from sight, but from some

Kushiban's memory as well. Parents were completely forgetting children they had for years, friends were forgetting friends. While there were some that remembered those that had gone missing, it was normally those that didn't have regular interaction with them. Thus Vexxan set upon the oddest investigation he knew he would ever have to deal with. It was near impossible to investigate any of the disappearances, as there were never anyone with any recollection of the missing person, let alone when and where they were last seen, and who with. Vexxan decided it was time to try tagging various Kushiban in the villages to see if they were tracked if missing. He gave his security team devices to set upon a variety of pre-determined Kushiban and report back with who got which. They were connected to a central control hub which would be watched by Vexxan and his main security crew in case any were to go missing.

A week later there were as of yet no official missing reports. He prepared to go about sending out a second batch of tracers to see if any helped when he noticed that various numbers he knew had been assigned were in the new batch. He knew everyone they were assigned to, yet none of the other officers were able to remember that they were even handed out. Vexxan checked the databases and noticed that all records that should have been for each number were mysteriously missing. He was even more perplexed than before it was as if his memories were telling him that people existed that had never been. Thus he went to the hardcopies that he had as a security backup. He found the names and numbers he was looking for, acknowledging that he was indeed right. Somehow the people that were going missing were not only being erased from peoples minds, but from databases...and the trackers were back. The mysteries were going further and further.

A long time ago, Vexxan had heard a tale from a distant Village. About ten years before his birth there was a Kushiban that returned from the far reaches of the Galaxy, one of the few that decided his life lay among the stars. The tale went that the Xinkras were assaulting his village and that he somehow saved the village by convincing the Xinkras that there was fire in the village, and tasty food elsewhere. Perhaps, if this story was true, this Kushiban migrated over here and decided it was time to pray on his own kind, or perhaps it was a child of his. Vexxan had to keep his mind open, the tale stated that the Kushiban returned to the stars and hadn't been heard from again. Plus it was a tale Vexxan had never thought was realistic, he knew that such magic did not exist. Though the current investigation was proving him wrong.

Thankfully, the investigation was providing some information, locations. He used the various villages that they Kushiban were missing from to try to triangulate where the criminal might possibly be. After analyzing the information he discovered there was several underground tunnels that had entrances nearby the various villages that had Kushiban missing. Vexxan sent out messages to the security forces of each of the villages to head to the entrance near their village, meanwhile he took his own team to the entrance nearby his central hub. He

wanted to find this criminal, and close up all possible exits. He gave his team a quick briefing and headed off immediately, if this was where the suspect was located he did not want to give him a chance to strike again.

The sun was setting over the horizon splaying a deep orange over the barren fields where Vexxan had once gone up against an entire horde of Xinkras, an event that despite that good it had done Vexxan afterwards, was one that he tried to forget over the past year. Causing such death and devastation was not something he had desired to do, but it saved the villages nearby. The cave entrance was in the middle of the field, Vexxan knew there were no Xinkras in these caves, he had made sure of that fact during the course of the past year. He also knew that the caves were deep, dark, and a maze. It would be easy to get lost, and hard to find their suspect. He looked around at his crew, all appeared orange in the light, their white fur reflecting the sunlight as it slowly disappeared. With the dying day, they disappeared into the darkness of the caves, hoping that they would not disappear forever like those they searched for.

They searched around the darkness with dim lights, splitting apart at every intersection, not wanting to leave any part unsearched. Eventually Vexxan was alone, for some reason he felt uneasy the caves were dark, his light barely illuminating five feet in front of him. Behind was complete darkness. But it wasn't the darkness that got to him, there was something else almost like a presence in the back of his head, as if something was trying to pull part of his brain out.

Without warning his light shattered, leaving him in complete darkness.

Echoing down from the depths of the cave he would hear feet scuffling around the light step of the Kushiban and a heavier step he didn't recognize. There was another sound he couldn't place coming in and out of notice, sometimes it was accompanied with a distant cry of pain, other times it was followed by the stopping of some of the Kushiban steps, until silence fell. It hung in the air like a smothering pillow in the darkness. Vexxan knew that he was the only of all the security forces left alive, the odd presence entered the back of his mind again, pulling, prodding, poking. Vexxan pushed at it as hard as he could trying to remove it from his head, he became so focused upon doing so he forgot his other senses.

Finally the presence was forced from his head, and he suddenly realized there was a quiet sound behind him, light breath and lighter footsteps. Almost as if some large bi-pedal was attempting to sneak up behind him. A flash caught in Vexxan's mind and he twirled and jumped to the left. Before he finished his sideways movement a red shaft of blinding light came into existence and swiped down through the air where he would have been had he not jumped. Vexxan looked up into a face mirroring the surprise he himself felt, it was not a Kushiban face. This face was a pale white, but had no fur, other than some red fur spurting

from the chin and scalp. Its eyes were an odd shade of yellow, that didn't seem to fit.

The moment of surprise for both was a short one, and they both reacted at the same moment. The creature swiped the red shaft towards Vexxan in an upward arc, Vexxan rolled further away and used the nearby wall to propel himself over the shaft, and was able to take a spinning kick at the head of the attacker, he missed but he knew he surprised the creature and could feel the restriction of the air of the hairsbreadth of space between his foot and the creature's head. He landed firmly and prepared to make another attack, not wanting to play a game of cat and mouse with the red shaft, he felt a large pressure against him and flew back as if struck by a giant object. He hit a wall hard and was shocked at the invisible attack, but when he saw the creature charging he recovered and quickly got back to his feet and initiated a forward roll, he came out of it into an immediate jump towards the face of the creature, the red shaft swinging close enough to singe off part of his back hair. The creature angled his head away from Vexxan, but Vexxan expected this and grabbed onto the creature's shoulder and used it to swing around the creature's head and come down hard onto its wrist, causing the red shaft to fall from its grasp. The shaft disappeared blanketing the two into darkness. The creature spoke, its voice deep and harsh. Vexxan was unable to understand the words it spoke, not being in the native language of the Kushiban.

He stood still, attempting to make no noise so he could listen for the creature, he heard and felt a rustle blow past like wind on his left side, and swung around to his right to listen behind him. The red shaft appeared from what was now behind him, coming in a downward slash again. He pushed away trying to get out of its path and instantly slammed into the wall, which bounced him slightly off and he felt the red shaft brush past his right side, he instantly twirled around ducked under the blade and did a flip-kick to the side of the creature's arm. Causing it to lose control of the direction of the blade. Vexxan watched as the creature was impaled by its own weapon, and collapsed in the deep red glow, that disappeared quickly. Vexxan lifted his right arm and went to lean on the wall next to him to rest, and instantly fell. Confused he tested the movement of his arm, and reached over to touch his left arm, he felt nothing. Fearful he reached out his left arm to touch something and was rewarded with being able to feel the floor. He sighed with relief and hugged himself to try to keep himself from being overcome from the emotional stress of the situation, he felt his left hand lay upon the bare skin of his right chest. Confused he moved his left arm up and felt the decline of his right shoulder leading to empty air. He suddenly realized that the last slice was closer than he had thought, it had removed his right arm, the adrenaline in his body and the speed that it had happened at caused him to not feel it come off, it also felt as if it was not bleeding, which meant that his wound had been sealed by the heat of the red shaft. Even if he was able to find his arm in the darkness, it was unlikely that they would be able to re-attach it. He got himself up, he knew he had to find his way out of the cave before he felt the pain

of his arm, before his head clouded up. He focused himself and ran as fast as he could towards the entrance he had taken into the cave.

The fresh air felt good on his flesh and fur, but it also brought the pain of his arm, the numbness of shock was beginning to wear off and he could feel the pain slowly increasing, he knew he still had a long way to go. He tried his best to increase his speed, he was running so fast that he didn't even realize he reacted to another flash at the back of his head, one step he was running full speed forward, the next he threw himself hard against the far wall as a glowing red shaft fell into the spot he was running at. He recovered his balance and looked up at the creature, a different one this time, but it looked similar. It spoke in the same language as the other and glared down at him with anger radiating off of it that Vexxan felt as if he could see it. Vexxan prepared to fight, but the pain in his arm was increasing greatly, it didn't help that it was the side that got thrown into the wall, he was using almost all his strength to remain conscious. But he had survived this far, and he was sure that this creature would continue the others reign of terror. Vexxan watched in what seemed like slow-motion as the creature began to swing its shaft towards him, he tried to push himself out of the way, but suddenly realize he didn't have the strength to do so. The shaft was going to kill him and there was nothing he could do.

A glowing green shaft appeared out of the creatures chest, and it's stopped the swing of the red shaft and glanced down at the green shaft in confusion and disbelief. The creature fell down next to Vexxan with a blackened hole through its body. Vexxan glanced from the creatures body and saw yet another creature, it did not seem evil like the others. It took a caring step towards Vexxan and he collapsed from pain and exhaustion.

Vexxan woke in the medical wing of his security complex, he saw the creature that saved him sitting on the floor, too large for Kushiban furniture.

"What are you" Vexxan asked.

"I am a human, those things you fought were also human, but they were tainted by something we call the dark side. I was hunting them and was able to trace them here, though it took a lot of searching."

"I owe you my life, I am thankful you came when you did. Were there any other survivors?"

The human looked hesitant for a moment, and Vexxan knew the answer without the human needing to answer.

"My name is Vexxan, I am the head of security for this area. Is there anything I can do to repay you for not only saving me, but potentially the lives of those in the surrounding villages. Perhaps all of Kushibah."

"You need not do anything, however you took down an apprentice of the dark side by yourself..."

"Not before he removed my arm, I now realize I won perhaps more by luck than anything."

"Perhaps, but we could use someone with your skills in the Republic. Could I convince you to come with me, we might even be able to do something about your arm."

Vexxan glanced at the empty space where his right arm should be, then looked around.

"I would say that I am needed here, but I was unable to save my security forces. I can see how unprepared I am for my position here. Perhaps it is time that someone better suited take my place. I will go with you, not because of what you offer. But because there is nothing for me here now but sadness and failure."

The man nodded and placed his hand upon the numb shoulder of Vexxan.

"When you learn what you truly accomplished today, perhaps you will lose the sense of failure."

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Ku looked up at the various patrons in the area. "That, my friends is the beginning of my tale."

He stood from the table taking a final sip and rubbing at his right shoulder. "I must go now, perhaps to meet the end." He walked to the door and opened it up, looking out upon the landscape of fiery rain, now seeing the downpour of vessels with fighting personnel on their way. The sight of a horrible war. He looked back into the bar and wondered if any saw what he saw out the door. Wondered if any of them were hiding from such an event. Something that might be the end of their tale. He turned around again toward the war-torn landscape and took a step out closing the door behind him, letting those inside wonder if he had more left, or if this was indeed, the end of Ku's Tale.



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"This is where the fun begins"

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