Lightspeed

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Lightspeed

by FallLover

Summary

Seth is on a mission to rescue Anubis from Osiris, one of Seth's old enemies. With Isis' help, Seth hires two pilots ready to take on the dangerous assignment, one of whom particularly catches his eye. But with a confrontation with Osiris looming before them, Seth has more secrets than they realize…

Notes

This was originally published on Archive of Our Own for Star Wars Day in 2023.

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The bar was dark, smoky, and loud with garish music as different alien species entertained each other for the evening. Seth – covered in a thick, pale brown coat against the cold, like a number of other thinner-skinned patrons – walked past a few drunken parties and at least one orgy as he followed Isis.

Isis was an old contact of his from back before the Jedi Order fell. When Seth was still a Jedi Master, she used to send him tips, that he used for his investigations. Now, he was calling in a big favor, albeit with quite a bit of the funds he kept for emergencies. Osiris had taken Anubis captive, and Seth needed to rescue him. It was almost certainly a trap of some kind, but Seth couldn't leave Anubis in Osiris' hands.

But Seth needed a ship. One piloted by someone reckless enough to walk into the lair of one of the most dangerous politicians in the Galactic Empire.

Isis wore a finer coat than Seth's, but which could still be lost among the many casual pieces of travelwear sported in the bar. As an information broker, she'd done well for herself since the rise of the Empire. But a bar like this was typically filled with the curious. To be a bit more inconspicuous, she wore no decorations in her short dark hair, her earrings were absent, and she'd even lessened her usual make-up.

Their destination was a booth in a darker part of the bar. The booth in question was round, covered with half-empty plates of food and some drinks, and had two occupants who looked up when Isis and Seth arrived. The one by the booth edge lounged with his right arm over the back of the chair. He had light brown skin, and shoulder-length, wavy brown hair. Unlike Isis, he wore quite a bit of jewelry on his wrists, ears, and neck, but was otherwise outfitted like a well-off smuggler, with a dark leather coat that accentuated his broad arms. His white-toothed grin under his dark stubble was dangerous. He eyed Seth up and down with no shame whatsoever, and Seth already hated him.

The other booth occupant sat a little in the darker part of the booth, with his arms crossed over his chest. He wore a blue coat, with the hood over his face, and his expression was unreadable.

Isis sat in the booth across from the first man, somewhat nearer the hooded one, and Seth followed her. "This is Horus and… what name are you going by now?"

"Apollo," the grinning man said, his eyes still on Seth.

"Apollo," Isis repeated, sarcastically. She looked at Seth. "They pilot a fast, good ship that should get you where you need to go."

“And where is it you need to go?” Apollo asked, his brown eyes glinting as he watched Seth.

Seth glanced at Isis, who nodded and pulled up her wrist comlink and typed in something.

Apollo and Horus looked at their own comlinks. Apollo whistled. Horus frowned.

“Is that going to be a problem?” Seth asked, eyeing them both and not particularly caring for their reactions. “The goal is to get in and get back out. But if you can’t manage it…” Time was of the essence and he didn’t have much to waste on arguing. He’d rather find someone else who was interested if he needed to.

“Oh, we can manage it,” Apollo said, sitting back again. “We’re the best pilots around, and we’ll keep you nice and safe on your dangerous little mission. As long as you have the money.”

Isis scowled at him. “You know I wouldn’t give you a commission that would fuck you over.”

Apollo grinned. “Times change. Empire patrols have increased lately.”

“Stop it,” Horus said, quiet but firmly. “You’re trying to pick stupid fights again.”

Apollo raised his left hand lightly and leaned his head back.

Seth looked at Horus, who was watching him, too. Horus met Seth’s gaze with bright blue eyes. As Seth’s eyes adjusted to the dark, he noticed there was gold trim on the edge of Horus’ hood. “What’s the goal for this mission? Are you taking on cargo?”

Seth grimaced. “I’m rescuing someone. They were captured by the Empire.”

Apollo raised his eyebrows.

Horus’ expression remained unchanged. “Okay. We’ll do it.”

“Horus—” Apollo began.

“You already thought the idea sounded good when Isis brought it up,” Horus said. “Besides, we could use the money.”

Apollo scowled.

“Welcome aboard,” Horus said, giving Seth an oddly warm smile.

“You can trust them,” Isis said as she and Seth watched Horus and Apollo prepare their questionably safe ship, which looked a bit like a dinner plate had taken a vacation in an asteroid field. “Well… you can trust Horus, anyway. He manages Apollo well. And he’s the better pilot.”

“How do you know them?” Seth asked, watching Horus clearly move around the ship like he knew what he was doing. Apollo was arguing with some of the mechanics.

“I know Horus better,” Isis said. “He’s my son.”

Seth blinked and looked at her in surprise.

Isis’ expression was distant, and perhaps a little sad.

“I didn’t know you had a son…” Seth said.

Isis shrugged. “I kept it quiet. In this business, it’s important to do that.”

Seth nodded. “I’ll try to make sure he stays safe.”

Isis smirked. “With you on his side, I imagine he’ll be fine. But he can take care of himself, anyway. He’s only spent years reminding me of that. And *showing* me.” She reached out and patted Seth’s left arm. “Good luck. Come back safe. Your money’s always good with me.”

Seth gave her a small smile, and wished he could be as honest as she was with him. Maybe when he came back with Anubis safe and sound. Then they could talk.

“Welcome aboard, Your Majesty,” Apollo said as he led Seth onto the Falcon. The hallways were narrow and not the prettiest, but Seth had been on worse ships. “The royal quarters are this way.” Apollo indicated a recessed room that Seth glanced around. It was small, but it had a comfortable-looking cot, a clean bathroom, and a door he could shut. There was even a small window he could look out from, though all he saw now was the space dock.

“Does it meet your standards?” Apollo asked, still with the sarcasm.

“It looks good, thanks,” Seth said, restraining himself from getting snippy with one of the people who’d be piloting the ship. He lowered his hood and breathed in. He was already a step closer to rescuing Anubis, and that was reassuring.

“If you want company…” Apollo said.

Seth had almost forgotten the man was there, but glanced at him and noted that the man’s face had lit up with interest and lust. It was probably Seth’s hair or something. Strangers were always drawn to that. It was why Seth kept his long, bright red hair covered most of the time. He’d dye it, but dyes never worked. And he didn’t want to cut it off unless he had to. He’d lost so much when the Order fell. It was hard to give up even that bit of himself, too.

“I won’t,” Seth said, frowning at him.

Apollo grinned sunnily and put a hand up. “Your choice. Offer’s still open though!” He waved as he left Seth alone. The door shut behind him.

Seth sighed and looked back at his quarters. He was worried about Anubis, about what Osiris and his people were doing to him. Anubis was still young – barely 16 – and already jumping

into trouble, which was how Osiris found him. Seth also remembered Nephthys' teary face as she'd asked him for help. Perhaps Seth and Nephthys hadn't dated in years, but he could never say no to her, even now.

I'll find you, Anubis, Seth thought, sitting down on the cot as he felt the engines start up. *I'll bring you home.*

The trip was pretty quiet early on, and when Seth went down to the lounge to eat lunch the first day, he was surprised to find Horus sitting at a table and reading on a tablet. Horus looked up at Seth in surprise, then nodded at him. What was most startling about Horus was that the blue hoodie was gone, and Seth could see Horus' dark brown skin, and his short, spiky brown hair. His eyes were still a bright blue, and he had dark make-up around his eyes, similar to what Seth often wore. Although Apollo clearly liked to make his presence known, Horus was no less tall or muscular, particularly now that he wasn't hidden in a booth at a shady bar. His shoulders were broad, and his pilot's outfit framed his thick limbs well. He wore a soft blue sweater, which framed his broad chest quite neatly, and made Seth force himself to look elsewhere.

"There's some stew if you're interested," Horus said, his voice still quiet but firm. "You're welcome to anything in the pantry, and the dishes and utensils are in the cabinet."

"Thank you," Seth said, moving to get himself some food. Not knowing where else to sit with his food, he sat by Horus at the table, but not right next to him. "Don't let me bother you."

"I don't mind," Horus said, not looking back to his tablet. He had a soft smile on his face. "The news will unfortunately still be there after we finish lunch."

Seth almost wanted to ask, but he knew it'd be nothing good, and he had more pressing issues. "Do you think there'll be any issues getting to our destination?" Seth asked, spooning his stew, which smelled quite good. It was awkward, but he wanted to know if there were any problems ahead, outside the patrols. He'd seen the weapons the ship sported, but he hadn't seen them in action.

"There probably will be issues," Horus said, neutrally. "But we'll deal with them. For all he's full of bluster, Apollo is a good co-pilot. And particularly good with the weapons systems. And I can get us anywhere we need to go, without being spotted by patrols."

Seth raised an eyebrow. "So you're the main pilot?"

Horus grinned. "Yeah. Apollo's good enough, but he doesn't really *connect* with ships. He sees it as a job on the way to his next score. I just like flying them, and money is mostly good for keeping me in the air to keep doing it." Horus grimaced. "Sorry, that's probably kind of strange…"

"You're passionate," Seth said with a smile. "That's not a bad thing."

"What about you?" Horus asked, watching Seth again with clear curiosity.

“I just do odd jobs,” Seth said. “I’ve done some mercenary work here and there. Tracking down bounties sometimes, that kind of thing.”

“But you’re not a bounty hunter?” Horus asked with a raised eyebrow.

“I’m not that competitive about it,” Seth said with a shrug. “Mostly when someone needs hired muscle, I’m there.”

“I imagine you’re good at it, then,” Horus said.

When Seth raised an eyebrow at him, Horus’ cheeks turned pink, which amused Seth.

“I mean… Well… You look like you work out or… Well… You carry yourself in a way trained fighters do, is all.”

Seth let himself smirk a little. He knew Horus had been watching him walk, and he couldn’t quite say he minded. “Oh? You noticed?”

Horus smiled. “I’ve been raised around warriors a lot of my life. It’s easy to spot.”

Seth softened his smile and said, “Ah well. There goes that surprise. What news are you checking?”

“Oh, banned materials and the like. The latest Rebel Alliance newsletter.”

Seth raised an eyebrow. “And you’re telling me?”

Horus grinned. “You came here on Isis’ recommendation. You’re one of her old friends. I doubt you’d turn me in.”

Seth blinked and felt a bit of a chill down his spine. “How much did she tell you about me?”

Horus’ expression grew more serious. “Just that I can trust you. That you and her go way back. And to make sure you get out of this okay.”

Seth felt a hand around his heart at that, too. His relationship with Isis hadn’t always been good, but they were still old friends. He was sad he knew so little about her, relatively. At least so little that he hadn’t even known she’d had a *son.* Even with his travels, he should have kept a better eye on her. But that was in the past. He could only go forward. Now he looked at Horus and said, “Well… tell me what the latest is, then.”

They chatted amiably, for all the talk was a bit gloomy. Raids, arrests, protests, tracking troop movements… It was a lot. Seth wasn’t a member of the Rebel Alliance, at least not formally, but he tried to keep track of things as he could, and help where he was able. He’d been debating his position with the whole matter for years. Everything was just so dangerous, and his presence could sometimes attract unwanted attention, particularly if he used any of his special abilities. But looking at Horus now, he wondered about all the young people getting involved, hoping to make the universe a better place, risking their lives for a cause.

Seth had been like that once, too.

Horus eventually got up to clean his plate, “Time for me to take over from Apollo. We should be there in about three days, if nothing difficult pops up.”

“Thank you,” Seth said. As Horus put his dish away, Seth added, “My door is open, by the way.”

Horus looked back at him in surprise. “Sorry?”

Seth gave him a *look* that he could tell made the man’s cheeks blush beautifully. “You heard me. My door is open.”

Horus slowly smiled, a glint entering his blue eyes. “You didn’t take Apollo’s invitation…” At Seth’s confused look, Horus explained, “He was complaining about it earlier.”

Seth snorted. “I don’t ever plan to, either. But… I like you. And three days is a long time on a ship like this.”

Horus smiled warmly. “I’ll take that into consideration.” He nodded and left.

Seth watched Horus’ leave, taking note of the way his pants framed what looked like a very good ass. It had been a while since Seth was with anyone, given his schedule and lifestyle, though people in their trades often had quick and brief affairs. Since finding out Horus was a pleasant and friendly companion, he found he didn’t mind the idea of getting some comfort while he could.

He didn’t know what awaited them at their destination, after all.

It was late when Seth was flipping through the last few days of messages Anubis had sent him before he went silent, whereupon Nephthys had showed up at Seth’s door to say that Osiris had captured him. Anubis sounded happy and excited in his messages. He’d been learning to become a pilot, and Seth hoped he’d be safer that way. Maybe working for a merchant fleet or something.

There was a knock on Seth’s door and he lowered his communicator. He was laying on his back on the bed, with his shirt off, thinking about sleeping. He stood up and walked over to the door to look out through the peephole.

Then he smiled and opened the door.

Horus stood there, still in the same clothes from earlier. He looked a bit nervous, but when his eyes met Seth’s, they widened, and he glanced down at Seth’s bare chest, then back up hastily.

“Need something?” Seth asked, leaning against the doorframe.

“…Is that offer from earlier still open?” Horus asked, his cheeks pleasingly red.

Seth grinned and gestured with his head into the room before backing up, letting Horus inside. Seth closed and locked the door behind him – he didn’t trust Apollo – and said, “Will

your co-pilot know to get you if there's an issue?"

"Oh yeah, he'll let us know." Horus turned in the small room, and Seth realized the man was annoyingly taller than him. But well…

Seth stepped up to him and reached out to touch the soft material over Horus' left breast. "Anything in particular you're looking for?"

Horus shuddered slightly under his hands, the hard muscle feeling wonderfully firm. "I'm open."

Seth smiled and reached up to pull Horus down for a kiss.

Horus' hands wrapped around Seth's chest, pulling him close. His right hand traveled down Seth's spine, before moving below the waistband of Seth's pants to cup his ass.

Seth moaned into Horus' mouth and squeezed the mound of flesh over Horus' heart, feeling the nice give there. His left hand moved down to push up Horus' shirt, searching hungrily for Horus' warm skin.

When they released the kiss, Horus pulled his shirt up and dropped it on the floor, while Seth worked at his pants to drop them. Horus quickly followed suit and pushed Seth towards the bed, laying on top of him completely as he kissed Seth again. Horus was heavy and the cot was small, but he moved his legs so as to not entirely *crush* Seth. He moved his lips down Seth's chin, over his neck, and then to Seth's right nipple, sucking on it.

Seth dug his fingers into Horus' back and tossed his head back on a moan. His cock stirred. When Horus finally gave him a break, he sat up and moved between Seth's legs.

Seth raised a bottle of lube for him. "Here."

Horus blinked. "You just… had that?"

Seth felt his cheeks warm. He did, for… emergencies… but it hadn't been within reach. He'd accidentally force grabbed it without thinking because he wanted Horus *inside* him so badly. But thankfully Horus was distracted, so he hadn't seen it. "I thought you'd say yes, so…"

Horus grinned and took the bottle.

Given the space, Seth turned on left his side with his back to Horus to give Horus better access. He moaned quietly as Horus' wet fingers entered his ass, rubbing gently over and inside his rim before moving deeper and making careful thrusts. It really *had* been a while…

Horus eventually replaced his fingers with his rather large cock and began thrusting back and forth. Still gentle and careful, but harder and harder as time passed.

Seth grunted on each thrust, feeling deliciously full as Horus moved. Horus was wonderfully warm against his back, and the air smelled faintly of some flower Seth couldn't recognize. Probably Horus' shampoo. It was pleasant, and a nice distraction from all the worries in his head.

Horus leaned forward and sucked on the hollow where Seth’s neck and right shoulder met. He increased the pace of his thrusts, making Seth moan louder. When Horus bit down, it was on a particularly powerful thrust, and Seth shouted as he came, splattering the cubby wall with his seed. Horus kept going, pushing for his own release. He mouthed the bite, sending waves of pain-pleasure through Seth, particularly as the overstimulation in his ass increased. When Horus finally came, Seth was still in the aftershocks, and he winced slightly as Horus’ seed filled his ass.

They lay there for a while, breathing heavily. Horus’ right hand rested on Seth’s right hip, and their legs were tangled together. Horus’ hot breath moved through Seth’s hair.

It was nice, Seth realized, to have someone at his back again. Trusting people was hard, and finding the time for quick lays with people he trusted was harder. But whatever happened, at least there was this.

“I’m glad you picked us for your ship,” Horus said, squeezing his hip. “This was nice.”

Seth chuckled and moved his right hand to rest on Horus’. “I’m glad, too.”

Chapter End Notes

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Chapter 2: Old Enemies

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Seth, Horus, and Apollo were lucky – or at least glad to have Horus piloting – because they avoided all the Empire patrols, and made it to their destination in under three days. To the general public who happened to get their hands on imperial starcharts, it was purportedly a fueling station – just one of many – made for imperial soldiers, with lockups for prisoner transport.

“This is the most well-guarded fueling station I’ve ever seen,” Apollo said during their debrief before arriving at the station, where they reviewed information Isis had given Seth about it. This included diagrams, patrol schedules, and a great deal of background information that Horus and Apollo were trying to review. They were sitting at a large table in the lounge.

“That’s because it’s not one,” Seth said. “Duat is a science facility where the Emperor and his scientists conduct some of his more dangerous biological experiments.”

“And you’re looking for someone there?” Apollo asked, leaning back in his chair and eyeing the particularly large amount of information on his tablet that he idly swiped through.

“Yes,” Seth said. “Isis’ sources said that he was taken here.”

“Why?” Apollo asked. “Is he going to work there?”

“No,” Seth replied.

“They’re going to use him in experiments?” Horus asked.

“I’m not sure,” Seth said with a grimace. “It wouldn’t be the first time the Emperor took captives for his work. But the way Anubis’ mother described it, this was targeted. And I agree.”

“Targeted how?” Horus asked.

Seth met Horus’ gaze without saying anything. They’d spent a lot of time together on the ship, mostly in each other’s beds, but this was a stretch. Seth trusted Horus, but only to a certain extent. It touched too much on topics he preferred to avoid.

“We need to know what we’re walking into,” Horus said. “If there’s some extra danger we’re not prepped for…”

“You’re just supposed to get me there, and then get Anubis home.” Seth disliked the snippiness of his tone, but it was honest, too. He didn’t like his privacy being invaded. Too

many years on the run from Osiris and his troops, from a past Seth wished would *stay* buried, had made him into this.

Horus simply watched for a bit before he asked, “Get Anubis home… but not you?”

Seth sighed, glad Horus had changed his focus. “I can sneak into the facility. I can get him out. But if I’m detected, my priority is getting *Anubis* out. Most people who go to Duat don’t ever leave.” He looked at the tablet he’d borrowed from them to read with them. He’d heard reports over the years, but Isis had truly gathered so much here, and he’d barely cracked it. It was horrifying, what they did to people in there. What *Osiris* did. “Your fee is covered. You’ll get the other half once you return Anubis home. Isis has it handled, whether or not I’m alive to give it to you.”

“You expect to die here,” Apollo said.

“If that’s the worst that happens to me, I’m willing,” Seth replied. From the reports, it was the best possible outcome.

Apollo smirked. “I’m not one to mock bravado, but don’t you have any faith in us? We’re pilots and smugglers with good records. We don’t just leave cargo to perish.”

Seth blinked, and glanced at Horus, who shrugged.

“He’s right,” Horus added. “We’re not planning to exchange you for your target. It’s noble what you’re doing, but not in the plans.”

Seth frowned. “I’m not going to endanger Anubis’ safety for my own. If it comes to it—”

“Then it comes to it,” Horus said, his gaze firm. “We’ll handle that if we get there. But for now, we plan for a way to get you out alive, too.” He looked at Apollo, who grinned.

“My turn,” Apollo said, clicking some buttons on the table to reveal some new data. “You can get through the station? Cool. Here’s how we’re going to get you *on* it.”

The plan was relatively simple: Horus and Apollo would pretend to be supply delivery. They had the proper codes and passes to get through it, courtesy of Isis and other contacts – and Seth was grateful he’d tipped her so much for this. Apollo could keep the guards tied up checking their information for a while, as Seth and Horus went through the facility on foot to pick up Anubis, and then return to the ship before anyone was the wiser.

“I’ll blast us out if I have to,” Apollo said with a grin. “People underestimate how much firepower there is on this ship.”

Seth chafed at the idea of *back-up*, but Horus was thankfully good at following Seth’s orders after they’d docked and snuck off the ship, disappearing into the back corridors of the facility. Seth had memorized the facility blueprints, and pulled Horus back whenever he sensed someone approaching.

The main reason he agreed to the “help” was that if something happened to him, Horus could get Anubis back to the ship.

Facility security was heavy, but not as much in the maintenance corridors Seth found for them. Horus had them pause at a wall of wires and a network hub so that he could hack in and check their information, to see about guard schedules, test subject transports, that kind of thing.

Seth kept watch, but the corridor was small and pretty empty, since it was mainly meant for droids, who largely ignored them. The droids had limited memory storage, for confidentiality and also cheapness, and solely stuck to keeping the place clean. Whenever Seth or Horus moved too close to a droid, it would move around them and continue on its way.

Horus was watching his comlink, and then smiled. “Okay. There were a few new arrivals around the time Anubis was captured. They’re being kept in the cells here.” He showed Seth the map.

“Let’s go,” Seth said, glancing back to make sure the area was clear before moving onward.

The cells themselves were heavily guarded by guards and cameras, but not so much the air vents, at least when you weren’t on the prisoner side. They found a grate leading to one of the cells that was a bit of a tight squeeze, but would be functional. The main issue was getting the grate off.

Horus tried one of the lockpick tools Apollo had given him, to no avail. He turned back to Seth but still frowned down at the tool, trying to recalibrate it, with little luck. “We’ll have to try to find another way around…”

Seth kept his gaze half on Horus and half on the screws holding the vent in place. “There isn’t another way around, unless you want to fight more guards.”

“Well, I’m sorry, but unless you can make the grate disappear—”

Seth stepped forward to catch the grate as it fell down, before it could make noise. “Huh. Looks like your lockpick worked!”

Horus blinked and stepped forward, staring at the removed metal grate resting in Seth’s hands, then back to his lockpick, then back at the grate. “But… that’s not how it works!” He was clearly alarmed.

Seth shrugged. “Maybe you’ve got someone looking out for you.”

Horus snorted, looked down at the lockpick again, and then pocketed it, before climbing through the opening.

Seth followed after him, ignoring the dark corner of the room where he’d dropped the screws he’d pulled out of their sockets with the force.

They were right in the middle of a cell, and the place was covered in white, sterile walls and floors. There weren't any windows. On the right side of the room was an uncomfortable bunk, upon which lay a young man with pale skin and long, wavy black hair. He wore white and orange prisoner garb.

Seth walked up to him and gently touched his shoulder, "Anubis? It's Seth. Wake up."

Anubis grumbled and opened his eyes. "Seth?"

Seth leaned in close and studied him for a bit, and said, "We're here to rescue you. Can you stand?"

"Think so." Anubis wobbily pushed himself into a sitting position, and Seth had to catch him.

"They drugged him," Seth half-hissed. He helped Anubis stand up. "Can you support him?"

When Horus frowned at that, Seth continued, "I'm the mercenary, remember? If we get into a fight, I need my hands free. I'll take him if we need you to unlock more doors."

Horus sighed and stepped forward so that Seth could lean Anubis' left arm over Horus' shoulders, allowing Anubis to lean on him.

The cell door unlocked.

"My dear desert," a slick voice said from the lit doorway, "You came to me at last."

Seth's blood ran cold and he lightly shoved Anubis and Horus back to the vent. "Go!"

"Now, now," the Emperor said as he walked into the room and the whole place lit up with a floating droid light, "Let's not be hasty. You've only just arrived!"

Seth kept Horus and Anubis behind him while glaring towards the Emperor, who smirked at him. "And we have no desire to stay, *Osiris.*"

Osiris was tall and intimidating as he stood before the door, smiling patronizingly at Seth. He was handsome, with dark brown skin and dark eyes lined with fine blue and black make-up. He had short, curly, dark hair, and a sharp chin. He wore a dark green suit that made him look like he'd taken a wrong turn on his way to a board meeting. "But it's been so long, my desert. I've missed you."

"Stop calling me that," Seth said, still pushing Anubis and Horus to the vent opening.

"Seth, guards are coming," Horus hissed.

"You'll have a hard time going back the way you came," Osiris said, still smiling. "I let you in because you seemed to be into the pageantry of it all. Was it fun?"

Seth stiffened. "You… let us in?"

"Of course. Who do you think gave that information to Isis?"

Seth's right hand twitched. He didn't think Isis would betray him, and on a mission with her own son, but…

Osiris chuckled. "Not directly, of course. She doesn't know it was me. But I've been aware of her for a while, and I knew she'd find you. And brought you right to me, like a present."

Seth swallowed and stepped forward. Osiris had always been taller than him, and that felt even more obvious now, with Osiris stepping nearer and nearer, like so many of Seth's nightmares. "Let them go. They have nothing to do with this. You can have me if you want. But let *them* go."

Osiris glanced at Anubis and Horus, then back at Seth. "I think no, my desert. They'll stay here, for a time, to ensure your good behavior. Besides, the boy's force-sensitive, and he could make a good apprentice for you."

Seth stiffened.

Osiris smiled. "You didn't know? Nephthys comes from good force-user stock. It makes sense her son would be."

"Leave him *out of this*." Nephthys hadn't told him, although Seth had wondered a few times. He'd both hoped and afraid Anubis might inherit some of his mother's abilities, but he'd been rather normal for most of his life, which wasn't a bad thing. It meant his life would be easier and harder in different ways. Easier, because he could blend in better. Harder, because he'd have to push to protect himself.

Osiris sighed. "Seth, you haven't changed at all." He reached out cupped a hand over Seth's right cheek, making Seth's skin crawl. "Ahh, Seth… you have no idea how long I've wished for—"

There was a whir of sound and a hand went flying, along with a scattering of blood.

Osiris backed up to the door with a frown, even as his right arm was shorter a hand. His expression was slightly confused, as if it was a minor cut of some kind, not a de-limbing. "Really Seth? Is that how you greet your old master?"

"You're not my anything," Seth said, holding his bright red lightsaber aloft.

"And yet you haven't changed your lightsaber," Osiris said, still smiling, as if they were having a casual dinner conversation. "Do you miss me so much?"

Seth leapt forward to cut down at Osiris' head, easily slicing it off. He glanced back at Horus and Anubis, breathing hard.

Horus was staring at him, clearly shocked. Even Anubis seemed a little bit more aware, and his eyes were wide as he watched Seth's lightsaber.

Seth could only imagine how his own face looked. Even with so little, between facing Osiris again and having his lightsaber in his hand, and the life-or-death stakes of it all, he felt...

He ignored it, breathed in deeply and said, “Come on. We’ll have to fight our way out.” He walked out of the doorway, but ducked from gunfire. There were indeed more guards in the hall. He rolled and leapt upward, quickly tracking where the armored guards were standing. It took barely any thought to maneuver around, slicing down at shots and enemies, easily taking them down with finely placed cuts and kicks. There was yelling and screams, and Seth didn’t care. The memory of the hand on his cheek was too present for that. Soon enough, all the guards were on the ground, motionless, with the smell of burnt clothing and flesh in the air. Seth went to the main terminal in the guard station at the end of the hall, next to an elevator bay. He hacked his way through security, finding them the fastest way to the landing pad.

“Seth…” Horus said from nearby.

“I’m busy,” Seth said, briefly checking the guard channels. He didn't want to meet Horus' eyes right now. He didn't want to see the judgment there.

Horus didn’t continue.

Seth led them to the elevators, with Horus still supporting Anubis along, who seemed to be a bit more aware as his eyes settled on the dead guards.

The elevator door opened, only for another Osiris in the same outfit walking out, smiling as ever. His arm was restored, too. “My desert, that was *rude.*”

Chapter End Notes

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Chapter 3: Hope

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Seth snarled and raised his lightsaber as he lit it so that he could bring it down on Osiris's face—only to be met with Osiris' own bright red lightsaber, holding him back, barely pushing him towards the elevator bay.

"Can we not have a civilized conversation?" Osiris asked, still smiling at Seth, as patronizing as ever. The red light gave him a more sinister look. "You belong at my side, Seth. You know this."

"Shut. Up!" Seth snarled, ducking aside to kick Osiris away. He looked at Horus and Anubis.

Horus grabbed Anubis' left arm and pulled him along to the now empty elevator.

Osiris sprang up and swiped at them with his lightsaber. Seth was there to block his attacks, and batted Osiris away from the elevator bay.

Seth called back, "Go!"

"Why do you waste time with people like that?" Osiris practically purred at Seth. His lightsaber would have crushed a weaker person to the ground, but Seth stood his ground. "Anubis has potential, but your tagalong doesn't. And even Anubis is nothing in comparison to what you'll have once we're together again."

Seth slowly pushed back. The brightness where the sabers touched burned his eyes, and there was an ever so slight tremble to his hands that he despised. This was the last place he wanted to be, but he knew he might end up here once he heard about Anubis' kidnapping. Somehow he always knew he'd end up back here in the end, facing down Osiris, under the weight of his own past mistakes.

"It'll be like old times," Osiris continued. "You and I, ruling the galaxy together. As we should."

Seth wanted to gag. "That was never the reality, and it was never what I wanted!" He couldn't look back to see if the elevator had moved, but he could still sense Horus and Anubis behind him. What were they waiting for?! He focused his energy into his lightsaber, and shoved it out, knocking Osiris back. He reached out with his mind for part of a computer terminal, yanked it out of the floor with a screech of metal and flickering electric cables, and tossed it at where Osiris fell. Then he turned and ran for the elevator.

The door shut behind him with Horus pressing the button, and they raced away, in a direction Seth hoped led to the docking bay. The elevator itself was small, but had room enough for two adults and a tall teenager.

Anubis leaned against the side of the elevator, staring at the shut door. “You… You killed him, again?”

Seth was breathing quickly, and checked Anubis over, happy at least he was physically fine, and glad to see he was aware. “Hopefully.” Then he looked at Horus. “We need to get out. He’ll have precautions for this.”

“He can just make more of himself?” Horus said, alarmed. “You cut his head off! And he came back whole!”

“He’s got a cloning facility,” Seth said. “It’s on one of his private worlds. He controls them from a central body. He stockpiles clones for emergencies, so he can send them out as needed.”

“…Do we have to destroy the cloning facility?” Horus asked. “To make sure he doesn’t follow us?”

Seth shook his head. “There isn’t one here. He’s just got some clones here, probably with a brain hub of some kind. We could destroy that, but it’s just part of the network. He probably just sent a lot of his clones here because he knew I was coming.” *To trap me here.*

“You said Anubis’ kidnapping was targeted,” Horus said, his gaze hardening. “This was why.”

Seth grimaced. “I knew he sensed I was still alive, just not *where*. But I knew he’d come after me, considering our history. I’ve kept off his radar, or so I thought. I didn’t know he knew about Isis.”

“…If he knew you were coming and was after you, why do you think he’s not here himself?”

“He has to run all the hubs from somewhere. This would be too exposed. He probably filled the place with clones, though.” Seth grimaced. “But if Osiris *is* here, then I’ll… I’ll kill him. You have to get Anubis out, though.”

Horus grimaced.

“Uncle Seth?” Anubis asked, quietly, drawing Seth’s attention back to him. He still looked too pale and a bit frightened, but he still sounded more and more aware. The drugs seemed to be wearing off. “Are you all right?”

Seth forced something of a smile. “I’m fine, Anubis. We’re going to have to move quickly when we get out of here. Stay by Horus, okay? He’ll get you home.”

“…Okay.”

Seth could still hear his nervousness and asked, “How are you feeling? Do you know what they gave you?”

Anubis put a hand to his head. “Something in the food, maybe? I just felt so tired. And my mouth tastes kind of chalky.”

“We’ll get you checked out when we’re out of here.”

“Okay.”

The ride was quick after that, and Seth didn’t let himself rest, but he was grateful, because he though Osiris might cut the power and trap them in the elevator. Horus had enough time to show him the map of where they were headed, and Seth was ready to lead the way once the door opened. He had his red lightsaber up and was blocking shots from guards down the hall, and leapt ahead. Horus and Anubis took shelter outside the elevator behind him, in case Osiris somehow *did* bring the elevator back.

It had been a while since Seth fully cut loose, and he had to admit there was *something* cathartic in it. Normally he was a bit limited: he couldn’t reveal his powers for fear of discovery. He was just a bit stronger and faster than others and well trained in relatively normal martial arts, most of the time. He could use various weapons, but he missed fighting this way, and there was a fluidity his body fell easily into, as he brushed aside shots with the lightsaber or picked up large objects with his powers and tossed them at enemies.

Perhaps some of his old teachers would be upset with him for how he was letting loose this way. How even the people who worked on Osiris’ horrible experiments deserved a chance for something. But Seth had seen the reports about this place. So he kept cutting down. He had to get Anubis and Horus out of here.

At a break in the fighting, Seth stepped back, his lightsaber raised high, his breathing fast, looking around for his next opponent.

“You’re always beautiful when you’re fighting,” Osiris said as the latest clone stepped forward, no different in appearance from the others. His own lightsaber was off at his side. “I’m so glad to behold it again.”

Seth snorted and nodded back to Horus and Anubis to move down the corridor with him. “I’m just going to go through every one of these you have.”

Osiris grinned. “Please do. I have more for you to fight.” He picked up his lightsaber and switched it on, moving into a combat stance. “And when you’re exhausted from it all and unable to move, we can still be together.”

Seth breathed in, centering himself, before leaping forward.

In the end, the facility nearly collapsed under the weight of Seth’s attacks. Osiris didn’t wait for his first clone to die this time. A second arrived to take his place, and when Seth saw two of them, he started hitting harder, and faster. He knocked down walls, made circuits explode and glass shatter… It was a mess.

Seth was breathing hard, standing over a mess of limbs and green cloth on the ground, when he heard Horus shout, “Seth, come on!”

So Seth blinked, recalled where he was, and fled towards Horus' voice. Alarms were blaring, and guards largely ignored them as the facility seemed to have bigger problems.

"Get the ship ready to go!" Horus said into his comlink.

"What the heck did you guys do?!" Apollo said loud enough for Seth to hear it.

"JUST DO IT!"

There were no more obstacles on the way to the landing bay. Seth assumed most people were heading to emergency stations. No one was really paying attention to the Falcon, and the three of them easily ran aboard. Horus went to the cockpit while Seth pulled Anubis to the lounge to settle down and breathe. As much as he wanted to see what was happening, he didn't think an upset teenager recovering from being drugged would be a good idea in a cockpit during an escape.

"What's going on?" Anubis asked, looking around. "Where are we?"

"Your mother heard about what happened," Seth explained. "She asked for help."

Anubis frowned.

"I hired this ship, Horus, and his copilot to help me."

"Oh." Anubis looked around more, his eyes brighter with curiosity. His skin was already less pale, which Seth hoped was a good sign.

Seth searched around and grabbed a first aid kit, which had a scanner he used to quickly check Anubis' vitals. "Nephthys said you went looking for your father."

Anubis blushed and looked away, but stayed still while Seth checked him over. "Yeah…" He sighed and shook his head. "It was stupid. I thought I had a lead." There was a rumble in the ship and they both looked up for a moment, alarmed. But things grew quieter, and calmer. They could hear the engines going, that was all.

"What lead?" Seth asked, to distract Anubis.

Anubis swallowed. "He said he had access to genetic records spanning multiple star systems. That he was able to track anyone down…"

"…You gave him something to scan your DNA."

"Yeah."

Seth shut his eyes and breathed in deeply. Osiris knew Seth and Nephthys were close. If he'd gotten a ping on her DNA being somewhere, he'd have tracked her down. And snatched Anubis up immediately.

"I know it was dumb…"

Seth put the equipment away, and replied, “You’re okay for now. We’ll get you checked again with a proper doctor when you get home.” He turned to meet Anubis’ gaze. “And it was very dumb.”

“I just wanted to know!” Anubis said, banging his hand on the table. “I’m tired of you and Mother keeping it from me!”

Seth breathed out. “It’s not easy to explain this kind of thing, Anubis.”

“How? He’s one man. It’s not hard.”

“…Not for *this* man.”

Anubis frowned at him.

Seth grimaced. “Osiris. Osiris is your father.”

“…What?”

Seth leaned back in his chair. “Your mother was a Jedi, once, you know? She still is, but she’s quieter about it. Happier to teach, to run her clinic. And Osiris… we thought he was a better man. Your mother and he had a bit of a fling and… well. You were conceived then.”

Anubis frowned. “But he’s been Emperor since…”

“Your mother put the embryo in cryo. Some years after the fall and things were more stable, she wanted a baby, so she took you back. And had you.”

Anubis stared at the table. Seth wondered if he was thinking of all the stories people told about Osiris’ atrocities. The stories Nephthys and Seth had told him, as much as the local gossips. Nephthys and Anubis lived in an area with decently strong Rebel ties. The only reason Osiris had grabbed him was because Anubis had been trying so hard to find help outside the usual channels.

“…We aren’t our fathers,” Seth said. “We aren’t our parents. Who he is has nothing to do with who you are.”

“He’s *evil*.”

“…Yes.”

“You should have told me.”

Seth winced. “I know. We just… didn’t know how.” Seth sighed. “And we’re going to have to talk about you being force sensitive, too. Have you heard or felt weird things you couldn’t explain?” Seth should have noticed. Nephthys might have and dismissed it.

“…I didn’t know what it was. Not until the people who caught me pointed it out.”

Seth sighed. “I know. We’ll… talk about it when we get to your mother.” He got up to get them drinks, and froze when he saw Horus walking to them from the corridor.

Horus’ expression was unreadable. “We’re away. Apollo has the controls. It’s fine.”

Seth breathed in deeply. “Good.”

Horus looked at Anubis, who was staring at the table. “Everything going okay here?”

Seth shrugged. “A lot of big things, I guess.”

“Ah.”

Seth reached out for Horus’ arm, then pulled back at the last second. “I’d like to talk to you in private later. About… About things. If you’re okay with that.”

Horus blinked at him, then reached out and took Seth’s hand, squeezing it lightly. “Yes. Yes, I’d be okay with that.”

Seth smiled, and almost dared to hope.

Horus’ room was one of the bigger rooms on the ship, with a bigger and more comfortable bed, and a minifridge where he kept a variety of nice drinks and snacks. There were posters of ships, schematics, and some pictures of different people Seth hadn’t asked about, but they seemed to be having a good time in all the pictures.

Seth sat on the edge of the bed, and Horus joined him. Horus was a large, warm presence nearby. Seth wasn’t sure he deserved it.

“I imagine you have a lot of questions…” Seth finally offered.

Horus snorted. “Yeah.”

“Your mother never spoke about me, right?”

“Not a peep. She just said you were trustworthy. That’s a big reason I let you back onto my ship while we were getting away.”

Seth winced.

“And also because I trust you,” Horus said.

Seth blinked and looked up at him.

Horus’ expression was serious. “You’ve been decent in the short time I’ve known you. And you care about that kid. No Sith I ever heard of did that.”

Seth snorted. “Osiris did, once.” He picked up the lightsaber from his hip and rolled it in his fingers, feeling the cool dark metal there. “He was good about it. He knows how to butter

anyone up. Make them feel like they deserve more. Deserve everything." He sighed and lowered the lightsaber. "I fell for it."

"You became Sith?"

"Almost. It's why my lightsaber is this color. But it didn't really… It's complicated. I was angry, yes. I had difficulty meditating sometimes, and fitting in, as it were. And I had to work off my feelings in unique ways that weren't always the idealized in temple life. Still do, honestly. Sometimes I felt like any day, they'd kick me out. Osiris made me feel safe, like what I did was normal, and even the more *right* way to act." He smiled grimly. "I was one of his followers, for a time, going on missions where he bid." He sighed. "But I was lucky. Other Jedi reached out to me, to talk to me about my difficulties fitting in with the Order. I learned a lot of alternate techniques, things that didn't necessarily make me feel the same as everyone else, but that at least let me breathe more comfortably. And suddenly I didn't always *want* to be at Osiris' side. And I realized just how stifling he was." He looked down at the lightsaber. "But I regretted many of the things I did for him. And I realized how lucky I was to get away. I always left the Order of it, but friends convinced me to stay."

"Don't Jedi not have red lightsabers?"

"They don't. But no one was going to tell me to *change* it. Even then, I was strongly associated with Osiris' faction. And when he took over, well… That was that. And I went into hiding."

"I'm sorry."

"I know a lot of good people who died," Seth said. "Most people do, but… They were my family, too. And I couldn't help them. I could barely help myself."

"That's awful."

Seth shrugged. "It's what I chose."

"He took advantage. That's not on you."

Seth grimaced. If he'd been stronger, paid attention… He'd made so many stupid mistakes in his life, thinking power meant strength, and cruelty was better than compassion. Because it meant Osiris smiled at him, and people respected him. Or, really, feared him. "You don't know how much I dug my own grave on that front. I've done a lot of terrible things. It's honestly amazing that the Order didn't kick me out several times."

"I heard the way he talked to you. I've seen people like that before. It's not on you, Seth. Whatever happened in the past, you've grown. You've moved on."

"I'm hardly perfect, Horus. You really don't know me…"

"I know you were willing to throw your life away to get me and Anubis off that station. Most people would sacrifice us in a heartbeat to save their own skin. You didn't."

Seth's cheeks burned.

“And I know why Osiris knew about Isis.”

Seth blinked and looked at Horus, who looked uncomfortable. “What?”

Horus grimaced. “Mother… She had difficulty conceiving. So she looked into medical programs to help. There was a big one around the time I… Well, it worked. It was only afterward the story got out that it was another of the Emperor’s testing labs.”

Seth stiffened.

“He’d been sending out his… genetic material to impregnate different species. No one was really sure why. The general consensus was he was just curious. It was too late, anyway. I’d already been born by that point.”

“I’m… Sorry isn’t right, but… that’s awful.”

Horus shrugged. “We aren’t our fathers, right?”

Seth blushed. “You were listening.”

“I needed some air, and Apollo was in a mood to handle maneuvers during the escape. You two weren’t being quiet.”

Seth snorted.

Horus smiled briefly before it faded away. “Isis had a suspicion the Emperor put a tracker on her from that, to see how I developed. She’s done her best to evade it, but they got a big data dump on her when she used the program, and throughout her pregnancy. It pissed her off a lot.”

“That’s so…” Seth scowled at the floor, and wished he’d stuck around to kill more of Osiris’ clones. “He just… finds all new ways to be fucked up.”

Horus grinned bitterly. “Yeah.”

“You’re nothing like him, you know,” Seth said, looking up at Horus with a firm gaze. “I’ve known him for decades. You’re nothing alike. And you take more after your mother in your looks.”

Horus grinned. “You’re lying.”

Seth stiffened.

“It’s a gift I’ve had since childhood, being able to tell when people are lying. Makes smuggling easier.”

“…You’re kidding.”

“I’m not!” Horus grinned. “You *were* lying, weren’t you?”

Seth scowled.

“It’s okay. I don’t mind hearing the truth.”

Seth looked away. “I didn’t notice it before, but now that I know… In little ways I can see him in you, and it’s becoming more obvious the more I look at you. There are bits of him in your physicality… but also your drive. Your thoughtfulness. They’re things he had, too.”

Horus winced. “I didn’t mean to… bring up things from your past.”

Seth shrugged. “Those aren’t bad traits. It’s Osiris who twists everything, not you. It’s more likely you just have them, yourself, and he’s the one who does it all wrong, not that you have those traits *because* of him.”

They were silent for a while, until Horus said, “Is this it then? We drop you off and we go our separate ways?”

Seth blinked and looked at Horus thoughtfully. Horus was staring at the carpet.

“Did you… not want that?” Seth asked, confused.

“Honestly, I feel like I don’t,” Horus asked, looking at Seth thoughtfully with those terrible bright blue eyes and fervent gaze that were all him. “I like you. I like being honest with you. And yeah, I… get it’s a sore thing with Osiris. But you *are* really hot when you’re just going at it in a fight.”

Seth snorted. “I bet you say that to all the force-using killing machines you’ve met.”

“I sure do.”

Seth studied Horus for a while, and reached out and cupped Horus’ right cheek, brushing the corner of Horus’ lips with a finger. “You really want more of this?”

“If you’re okay with it.”

Seth swallowed. “I don’t know that it’ll be easy. I’m a Jedi in hiding, one of the Empire’s most wanted. Osiris will be after me.”

Horus nodded. “I am in fact a smuggler a good portion of the time. I kind of work with illegal stuff. Part of the job description.”

Seth snorted. “Oh well, if that’s all, then…”

Horus wrapped his left arm around Seth’s back to pull him in for a kiss, crushing their chests together. It made Seth feel warm.

Seth clawed the back of Horus’ shirt, keeping him close. He hadn’t been with anyone in so long. And he didn’t know how this would work. But he was curious.

When they finally broke for air, they leaned close to each other, just existing in each other's space.

"Does it bother you that it's red?" Horus asked.

"What?"

"The lightsaber. Does it bother you that it's red? I know they come in different colors…"

Seth laughed. "Sometimes. And sometimes it's easier to pretend I'm one of Osiris' people that way. It helps."

"…I could help you change it, if you want. If that's a thing we could do."

"It's a thing… but, you'd do that for me?"

"Yes."

Seth chuckled and pushed Horus back on the bed, letting his legs tangle with the bigger man's. "Let's start slow. We need that after getting out of Duat, and getting Anubis home."

Horus grinned up at him, and Seth moved down to meet him.

Chapter End Notes

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