

Tod the Luckless

Tod was hatched into a family on one of the moons of Welinstead. His sires and dams were representative of most Allied Worlds citizens in that they weren't particularly religious. Despite this, his dams insisted they at least go to the local lighthouse on the Feast of the Kindling of the Fire of Understanding every year.

As a pup he was teased constantly thanks to his red coat and black ears. In school he was the favorite target of a notorious bully. The teasing fueled in him a thirst to prove that he wasn't a luckless airhead, and his abuse at the paws of the bully gave him a thirst for revenge. These two driving forces are what lead him to join the Welinstead military upon coming of age.

While in training he excelled at melee combat, but ended up as a pilot ferrying troops and supplies between Welinstead and a base at Moonlitter.

The day of reckoning would come while he was at Moonlitter on yet another routine resupply mission. He entered a public bathroom, and there, just finishing up washing his paws was his childhood bully.

The bully turned and noticed his former victim loping toward him with a look in his eye that could melt a cube of tungsten.

"I'm--" and that's all he got out before Tod wordlessly struck him across the muzzle with his tail.

"I'm--" he tried again, but Tod shoved him against the wall and issued the merciless drubbing he had been imagining since puppyhood. The bully offered no resistance, limply accepting each blow as it came.

Tod eventually exhausted himself, and as he stood over his former tormenter he noticed red lacrimal fluid had matted the dusty gray fur of the bully's muzzle and neck. He was weeping.

"I'm sorry," he said.

"Yeah, I bet." Tod spat. "I'm not the scrawny whelp you shoved around in school anymore. You're only 'sorry' because I'm a threat to you now."

But the bully continued, "I don't expect you to forgive me. I deserve every one of these lumps." The bully tearfully recounted his intervening years, how he had found faith as an adolescent, and had signed up with the peacekeepers, risking his life helping refugees fleeing Partisan border conflicts.

"So you're one of those hearth lickers now, eh?" Tod growled, then turned and left without waiting for a response.

Tod spent the next few hours restlessly pacing around his quarters. His head a swirling maelstrom of conflicting emotions. He was surprised to run into the bully at this little outpost so far from Welkinstead. He was a bit nervous about the inevitable dressing down he'd get once his superiors got word of his little dustup, but most of all he was... unsatisfied. Getting roughed up in a bathroom was a nearly weekly occurrence for him while in school. No, that little tussle wasn't even a taste of what he had to go through. They weren't even, not even close. But how was he going to find the guy again without attracting unwanted attention.

Then it hit him--the lighthouse! He had been blathering on about seeing The Light and other such nonsense. Tomorrow morning was when most of the faithful attended their weekly liturgy. Tod would wait for him to leave, and then... he didn't know what, but honestly he didn't care.

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