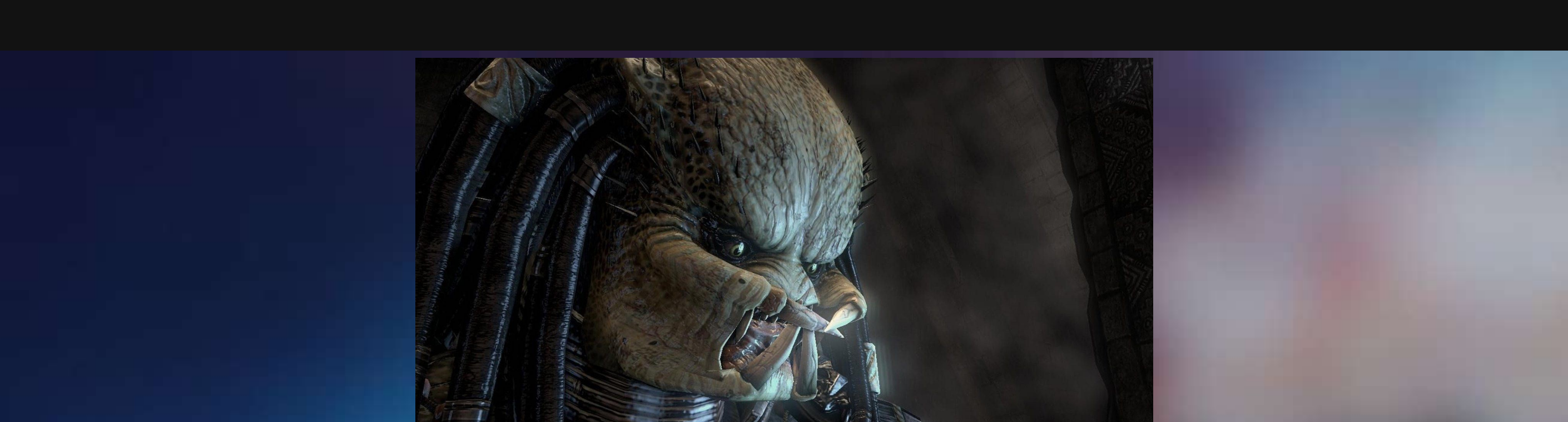

Six - Inferior Species

The alien ship they approached was massive. It was larger than the Colonial Marines' ships, which were miles long and capable of interstellar travel. Those were boxy and angular whereas this one was taller, sleek and silvery, with an aquatic shape.

Dhare's ship was tiny compared to the monstrous size of the one. It loomed before them in the darkness of space.

Anxiety bloomed in Ashaki's stomach as they passed through a nearly imperceptible blue light; a force field from the looks of it. Out of the viewing window, she could see a busy hangar full of other alien ships and more of Dhare's kind. She watched as some worked with tools on ships, making repairs or doing other things she didn't understand. The soft sound of the ship's landing was an indicator that they had officially arrived.

She wondered what else was different between these alien ships and her own. How were alien ships even powered? They couldn't have run on nuclear power like human-made ships.

Her questions would have to wait, as Dhare rose to his feet upon powering off the ship. Dutifully, she followed him, curious to see more of his mysterious species. So far, her little plan of being submissive and nice had paid off, her captor was none the wiser. She had the upper hand in this one-woman battle of wits against him.

At least, so she thought, until he abruptly latched a slim metal bracelet around her wrist.

"Hey, what the fuck? I thought we were past this!" Anger shot through her as he tapped a series of buttons into his gauntlet. A red light blinked to life on the bracelet. She tried to pull it off, but the device buried something in her soft flesh, sending slices of pain into her nerves. A whimper escaped her throat when she tried to pry it off with no success.

Dhare disappeared down the hall only to return a short time later with a net bag that held a shiny skull. The skull resembled his face. The empty sockets stared back at her, and she concluded that it must be the criminal he killed. He'd put on his silver armor, the metal clean of dirt and fluorescent blood, and his sinister mask, which concealed his monstrous features. The red leash appeared again, stretching from her shiny new bracelet to his gauntlet.

She gazed up at him with anger and a sudden spring of new fear. If she could, she would've burned a hole into his skull with the weight of her glare.

She thought this was a step backward, and here she thought, she was doing her best to follow along. What the hell changed? Why was she on a leash again? Her mind raced with more questions as Dhare's rough hand led her down the ramp and into the busy hangar.

As soon as he was among his own people, his body language changed instantly. Dhare's back straightened and he stood taller, that wide chest of his puffed up and out like a bird hoping to impress a potential mate. There was a tension in his shoulders, the defined muscles tight like he was ready for an altercation. He walked like he was numero uno, as if the world should bow at his feet. He became that much more intimidating.

It didn't pass her notice, as he led her down the walkway, how the other aliens stopped what they were doing and bowed their heads in some show of respect, their right hands fisted against their chests. All of them did this: this alien salute.

He was clearly respected by his kind.

She also noticed the curious stares as she struggled to keep up with Dhare's long stride. A few of them seemed outright disgusted, but others thankfully, only gave her a glance before returning to their work. It was difficult to tell their exact expressions with such different faces, but their eyes were the key. Her captor's eyes had been her only point of reference to gauge what he was thinking, so she applied it to others of his kind, but this only worked if they didn't wear masks.

The hangar was massive. Steam rose from vents built into the floor here and there. It was loud, crowded, and overwhelming. She was thankful Dhare kept a quick pace because soon they escaped the noise and entered a dim corridor. The light here was minimal forcing her to squint to make out the finer details of where they were headed.

Each of the many aliens along the hall saluted Dhare and quickly parted the way to let him pass. She dropped her head to avoid their stares, but she tried to catch glimpses of them.

They all wore different colored clothing, but most chose the same plain kilt like what Dhare wore or a loincloth. Every single one of them, all males from what she gathered, were topless. Ashaki quickly noticed that none of them were as big as Dhare. In fact, he was fucking huge compared to them. Dhare was a grizzly bear compared to the other aliens, who were small, slim cubs.

When they got to a fork in their path, she gazed down the opposing corridor curious where it led, but he roughly yanked her away. She sputtered angrily, but he barely gave her a backward glance.

Ashaki hated being led like a dog. It was humiliating. Her cheeks were hot with embarrassment. Still, she followed him dutifully. It was either that or be dragged along the floor like a grumpy toddler.

They turned so many corners that it felt like this maze would never end. When they entered an elevator full of curious aliens, she stepped closer to Dhare. She felt like a child compared to these tall, menacing aliens.

The elevator ride was thankfully brief, but the doors opened on yet another dim corridor. She sighed miserably. What a dull ship! Dhare tugged her along, actually turning back to look at her for a brief moment when she stumbled over her own feet. Her leg muscles had started to ache thanks to his quick pace.

Further down the corridor, they encountered two tall, slender aliens that looked female in appearance. Ashaki was able to tell they were female by their slightly wider hips and small covered breasts, but they also eyed Dhare like he was a prize-winning apple pie, hungrily drinking in his appearance. Each of them had long dreadlocks decorated with many cuffs and beads, like Dhare's, but not as ornate as his.

One wore a pale blue bandeau top and sarong that contrasted nicely with her mahogany and white brindled skin. The other one was dressed in a yellow bandeau with an orange sarong of her own, beads sewn into the top hem; her ensemble was a pop of intrigue against her green skin with black blotches.

He puffed up like a bird as they stopped, making himself bigger, despite already being huge on his own. The two females purred at him, one of them swaying her hips further out as she walked up to Dhare. His head tilted to watch her saunter over. The brindled female said something to him in a growly language. The words clearly had their desired effect because her escort purred.

Apparently, aliens could purr...like cats. They were tall, scaly cats that had dreadlocks and crab faces.

Ashaki was surprised to see aliens taller than Dhare. Though they were slender in appearance, they still towered a head or two above him. When the shrewd eyes of the females noticed her at Dhare's side, she shivered in intimidation. Once again, her eyes found the floor to avoid the predatory eyes of his kind.

She felt like they could see right through her and into her mind. It was unsettling, but there was nowhere to go. The bracelet that had been latched to her wrist wouldn't come off; not without a lot of pain and blood first.

One of the females said something, and then they were on their way again, disappearing around a corner. Dhare followed their departure with the tilt of his mask before commencing his quick pace. Soon they came to a door that opened into a large room that seemed to go up for several meters, like an atrium or airshaft, but for the dead. Skulls by the hundreds covered the wall everywhere she looked—all of them the same species as Dhare.

In the middle of the room stood a tall male who perked up upon seeing Dhare stride in. He was smaller than Dhare, with dreadlocks that had just a few cuffs on the inky tendrils. His blue eyes peered at Ashaki with curiosity as Dhare set his bag on the table between them and the stranger. This alien was orange and white with brown stippling on his arms and chest.

The two spoke back and forth until Dhare removed the skull from his bag and handed it over in exchange for a slim silver device that looked vaguely like a credit card. The alien bowed deeply to Dhare, clearly honored to be in his presence, too.

He must really be an exceptional cop to garner this amount of respect.

After seeing everyone on the ship react the way they did, either in awe or, in the females' case, flirting with him. This asshole clearly was a big fish in the pond.

With business concluded, he tugged her back the way they came and to a different part of the ship. She took in the dizzying number of new sights, letting her mind get lost in wonder.

Seeing an alien ship first-hand wasn't something every human got to see.

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Dhare quickly acquired the new technology he was seeking with the exchange of the credit chip.

This brand new innovation would enable him to create a shield around his ship that would aid in interstellar combat. Already, his shields were some of the best, but he wanted better. The shields would be installed during his one day stay with the Cracked Skull clan, and would make his ship impregnable.

His human captive, Ashaki, watched in wonder as the technician demonstrated the barrier on a ship that already had it installed.

When activated, the shielded ships shimmered crystalline blue. Dhare discovered it was made from a substance stronger than D'lex, the ore used to make Yautja metals. He was so thoroughly impressed that he added a thousand more credits to the payment as a tip. His credits were deep, so it didn't even dent his balance. With that out of the way, his business concluded, he was free to roam the ship for pleasure.

Dhare quickly found his way to the quarters his host clan offered him. Inside, it was big enough for two, with a couch, a small eating area, and a large pelt-covered bed. He chuffed at the accommodations. They were agreeable. He immediately set about making a palette on the floor with a mountain of furs while Ashaki watched him, her arms folded across her chest.

"I thought I wasn't a pet or a slave. Can't I just sleep on the couch? Sleeping on the floor really hurts my back, ya know." She groaned, a hand rubbing the small of her back.

Sighing to himself, he turned to face her. His claws flew over the keypad of his gauntlet to disarm the bracelet but not remove it. The tether disappeared as he approached her.

"You sleep where I say." Dhare ordered, a claw pointing at the palette of furs on the floor.

Her eyes widened for a microsecond before they narrowed, "No. I'm not an animal." Ashaki stood straight and defiant, fists on her hips and a gleam in her golden-brown eyes.

He removed his mask so he could see her with his own eyes. She hadn't had a problem with it before, so why now all of a sudden? Arguing with her would be foolish. At the age of six-hundred and forty-seven, he thought it was childish to do this.

She was right, though. She wasn't an animal, but he found the return of her fire annoying. Incredibly annoying. Artemis had never been this annoying. Were all humans this...frustrating?

"You may have upended my life and kidnapped me, but I am not some little dog you get to order around! I'm a person!" Ashaki spat, a little crease forming between her eyebrows. He wanted to get her to comply, but there wasn't a way without harming her and he wouldn't go that route. He was bigger and stronger; it simply wouldn't be right. "Why don't you go fuck one of those Amazons and leave me alone."

Dhare chuffed indignantly, "At least females of my kind do not complain like you. They are much better company."

"Let me go, then! I'll make every waking minute of your life fucking miserable if you don't." Those plump lips of hers pursed as she popped her hip to the side. "Just drop me off at the nearest human occupied space station. I'll manage."

His thwei burned as he took in her attempt at being intimidating. A little creature like her could never scare him, especially one with such defiance. She was nothing more than a tiny pest. Something that disrupted the quiet he craved.

"I am the reason you are alive right now, so you could at least be grateful, you small inferior creature." Dhare stalked towards her, adding bass to his already deep voice. He narrowed his eyes at her and snarled in his throat.

Rightfully, Ashaki lost some of the courage she had. Fear glinted across her eyes and she began to retreat, treading backwards and into a wall. He trapped her there with his arms at her sides, resting his hands on the cool metal wall as he glared down at her. He allowed his massive size to cage her in and show just how outmatched she was against him.

"You will do as I say because I could have killed you once I dispatched the ic'jit. Your life is literally in my hands. I could," He paused, a claw stroking her delicate neck, "snuff you out like a candle. It would be all too easy, Ashaki." He pressed the claw against her skin until it left a tiny pinprick of blood pooling at the surface of her dark skin.

The memories of finding her barely alive on that wasteland of a planet bubbled to the surface. She had looked so frail and was doomed to die from her injuries. They were arguing only because he had intervened. Telling her about their first real meeting now could sway the pendulum in his favor, but it would leave him without something to use against her in the future if she persisted..

"I could have left you to die a long time ago." He murmured

Dhare pushed himself away from the wall and the glowering human with a huff. She stood there with her face turned to the side, her eyes watching him carefully. Her fear filled the room with an acrid scent that made his scent glands tingle unpleasantly.

The bhu'ja of a giant beast constricted his chest and left him struggling for air despite it being plentiful in the room. His claws dug into his palms in an effort to ignore the phantasm.

He didn't bother to remove his awu'asa as he left the room. Staying there a second longer would've suffocated him. It was wiser to leave.

The dim corridor was empty, with yellow ambient light illuminating the path. Shadows clung desperately to the corners and edges of the ceiling. The night cycle was in full swing, and the denizens that had previously flooded the breezeway were long gone.

Arguing with Ashaki hadn't taken that long; their arrival must've been right before the night cycle began. This may put a kink in his plans to test her blood, but despite that fact, he quickly consulted the map on his gauntlet's display before heading to the Medical Bay.

The most important areas were never closed on Yautja clanships. He hoped this one would be no different. This was a high priority that had to be completed. His interest in the 'short annoyance' couldn't be natural.

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The Cracked Skull's Med-Bay was slightly bigger than his own clan's, the Blue Spear.

A singular female sat on a stool at a computing unit with a litany of various devices scattered around her bench. Along the side wall were a row of cots waiting for the injured, and opposite of that were a number of medical devices prepared for future use. Dhare had never been interested in that area of expertise, his interests lay in the public sector. He couldn't identify the medical equipment by use or name, save for the med-kits that were waiting to be refilled on another bench behind the medic.

The medic's yellow eyes watched as he strode in with vials in hand. He greeted the female by placing the three metal tubes on the black metal bench in front of him.

"Gkaun'yte."

"Gkaun'yte," The medic purred, straightening her back as her eyes took in his armor and heavily decorated locs, drinking him in unapologetically. "How may I be of assistance, Arbitrator?"

His chest puffed up thanks to the attention of the female. She was tan with calico coloring on her cheeks, shoulders, and arms; the sight of her was pleasing. Dhare did what he did best when it came to females who thirsted after highly ranked males.

Dhare leaned forward, his palms flat on the table, and his chest-length locs fell forward with the motion, clearly eyeing the female. The longer one's locs were, the more attractive one was considered; by these standards, Dhare was sought after by his kind by the dozens. He would sometimes use it to his advantage to get what he wanted. His sexual prowess was well known among several clans, as he had produced pups in a number of them while on visits.

"I need this blood tested as soon as you are able. It is of the highest priority...?"

"N'dasti."

"N'dasti." He purred, cocking his head to the side with heavy-lidded eyes.

The female collected the tubes and rose to her feet to place them in a machine. He followed her to another station, where her claws flew over a keyboard as she watched a screen. Results started to immediately come through, none of it anything Dhare understood. Graphs and charts appeared where they displayed numbers and readings.

"Ooman blood. Interesting..." N'dasti murmured, side-eyeing him, "This blood has nothing wrong or remarkable about it. I see no indicators of disease, illness, or outliers that would be of alarm."

It had to be a fluke, so he asked, "That's not possible. There has got to be something wrong with it."

N'dasti shook her head, her braided locs down her back swaying back and forth with the motion.

"Not that we can detect. I am sorry, Arbitrator."

"Dhare."

"Dhare, there is nothing wrong with the ooman blood. There are traces of Yautja blood, but that is the only remarkable finding. The ooman has been given our blood and thus greatly extended her life. My apologies." explained the medic, her eyes shifting from the screen to Dhare.

A growl rumbled in his throat, and he growled at seeing such lackluster information. If nothing was wrong with her blood, then surely...it was...his own body reacting to her naturally.

Disgusting.

His sire hadn't experienced this with Artemis. At least not to his knowledge. A talk with Rhage was also in order. There was information that he needed from both of them, it seemed. He hated being in the dark about anything. It bothered him greatly.

So purring drew him from his thoughts to find N'dasti circling him, a shark inspecting the succulent flesh of a swimmer. Her claws trailed down his shoulder and chest with interest. Predatory yellow eyes devoured his body.

"Dhare, you are a fine male. Very large and surely virile. I now recall whispers of your...skills in the nest..." Her voice was husky and deep as if at some point her vocals were injured but rehealed.

He stood straighter, growling playfully.

The female could be the ideal diversion from his...fluke. Since his last rutting, many rotations had passed. At that moment, he was decided.

"Your coloring, N'dasti, is most pleasant. How about I show you my...skills? There is much to enjoy." His eyes narrowed as he removed his awu'asa, followed by his loincloth, until he stood naked before her.

N'dasti's eyes widened as she took in his wide, muscular body. Before he could react, she shoved hard at his chest and sent him flying across the room, where he landed on a cot, the object breaking in half beneath his weight.

He lay there, sprawled out for mere seconds before he shook the shock from his system. Dhare chuckled as he watched N'dasti strip off her own clothing, revealing more calico coloring. His cock hardened at the tantalizing sight before him.

This was going to be the highlight of his week. A worthy distraction from the human that bewitched and annoyed him.

Continue reading next part