

BREWSTER'S CLEAN SLATE

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PART 2 **KIDNAPPED?**

"Here's another one," Lenny said as he pointed to a holo poster on the wall. "How are we supposed to make it through a crowded spaceport when everyone here is looking for the kid."

Brewster looked to the holo poster that showed Doug's face, along with a desperate plea from his parents that the boy was in need of his medicine or he could die within the hour. Doug had laughed at the first poster they saw mentioning his loving parents were worried about him. He said his parents had been dead since he was seven. The whole thing brought back a flood of memories for Brewster and he knew the laughter was just a reflex to cover up the hurt inside.

Lenny caught Brewster's attention with a motion, then used their sign language to speak, 'This kid is trouble let's drop him and run now.'

Brewster fired back silently with his hands, 'This kid is the same as you and me were. We're going to do what no one in our lives ever did and that's give the kid a chance.'

Lenny nodded, then looked at Doug who was watching the two of them with a puzzled expression. He put his hand on the kid's shoulder.

"Alright Doug, listen up. This could get real hairy so if things go bad get to dock 136, the old rusty IM-40 freighter is ours," Lenny said.

"What's with you two and old stuff. The antique wheeled car and now a rusty IM-40? Did you guys steal it from a museum?" Doug asked.

"No. We stole it from police custody on Kleet after almost getting gutted by some type of manbeast," Brewster said as he pulled his helmet off.

Brewster squinted at the sunlight. He wasn't used to being outside without his visor covering his eyes. He somehow felt less than whole without the big thing on his head but shook it off. He reached over and plunked the large helmet down on Doug's head.

"Hey! What's the big idea?" Doug complained.

"The idea is to walk you across a spaceport without anyone trying to help the poor kid who needs his medicine. You know as well as I do that the 'medicine' your parents want to give you doesn't come in liquid form but in bullet form," Brewster said sternly.

"Okay fine. I'll wear it but seriously man you sweated all over the inside and that's not cool," Doug said as he adjusted the helmet.

Brewster checked his weapons then turned and headed into the spaceport. Doug was beside him and Lenny hung back about ten feet to bring up the rear. Everything was going smoothly until they happened upon a group of rowdy men sitting and drinking at the end of a shiny new freighter's loading ramp. They were making outrageous comments to everyone who walked by.

Brewster signed a warning to Lenny to be on his toes with the drunken troublemakers ahead. Lenny simply nodded and rested his hand on the pistol he carried at his side. They got within the men's line of sight and the taunts began.

"It's a little baby boy with a big stupid helmet and his sidekick tall stupid man. What's the matter tough guy? Did a little bitty kid steal your helmet and you're too much of a wuss to get it back?" One of the big drunks shouted.

Brewster kept on without paying any attention. This infuriated the men and they began to shout louder. People were starting to look now so he pushed Doug on faster. He heard a grunt and knew someone had just thrown something. He turned quickly, ready to deflect what had been hurtled at him. He was surprised to

see a whiskey bottle spinning right at Doug. The bottle shattered on the back of the helmet knocking the kid forward.

"Now you got the devil to pay!" Brewster growled in a horrific voice.

He charged straight at the big man who had thrown the bottle. All the other men were standing around laughing.

"See who can hit Mr. I lost my helmet to a twelve year old!" The big drunk yelled.

The air instantly filled with empty liquor bottles. The group continued laughing as the bottles sailed towards their target but suddenly their smiles turned to confusion as every bottle began to shatter in mid air. There was no explanation for what they were seeing. Panic began to set in as the last bottle fell to the ground in pieces and an enraged Brewster continued his mad dash directly at them. They scattered in all directions, tripping and falling over one another.

Brewster arrived at the bottom of the freighter's ramp to find only the big man left, lying on the ground. He saw Lenny step up holstering the silenced pistol he'd used to shoot the bottles out of the air. He kicked the big man who was trying to untangle his leg from a folding chair and he instantly started crying.

"Please mister don't hurt me. We we're just messing around. I swear we'll never do it again," The drunk whimpered.

Brewster pulled the big man up by his shirt until they were face to face.

"You ever say a cross thing to someone on this planet again I'll cut your tongue out and use it to clean my boots you understand?" Brewster threatened.

"Yes...yes sir,"

"You EVER hurt or even think about hurting another kid again and I promise you that by the time I send you to hell you'll be thanking the devil for letting you in, understand me?"

The man's eyes went wide and he passed out. Brewster dropped him and hoped he'd scared some sense into the big man.

Talking tough was an easy skill to learn as a dark bounty hunter. If you could talk vile enough you could walk away from most situations based on the fear of what you'd do. It was the times Brewster had to back up his talk that would sometimes haunt him at night.

Brewster turned to check on Doug and his stomach sank. The kid was starting to pick himself up off the ground but the helmet had fallen off. There was a large crowd gathered round applauding Brewster and Lenny for running off the drunken menaces. A few people began to help Doug up when someone shouted.

"Hey, that's the kid from the holo posters!"

Brewster ran to Doug's side and pulled him away from the crowd. He scooped up his helmet and put it on his head where it belonged.

"Lenny take Doug and get to the ship. I'll figure something out here," Brewster said.

Lenny grabbed Doug's arm and took off running. The crowd instantly started murmuring and shouts went up. People cried out for the police. Shouts of anger and some women were crying that the poor boy was being kidnapped. Several of the men started forward but Brewster pulled out his gun and a plasma grenade.

"Well folks I hate going from hero to villain but I can't let you stop my partner and our little friend there. If that means I shoot a few of you or blow all of us up that's fine but you aren't getting the kid," Brewster said.

He watched as the shocked crowd came together and their good morals won out over the danger of losing their lives. Several of the men banded together and rushed Brewster. While several women ran off to find the authorities.

"This is what I get for trying to turn my life around?" Brewster mumbled to himself.

He fired his pistol into the air several times which caused the crowd to shriek and start to disperse. The men kept coming at him though. Brewster cursed under his breath then tossed the plasma grenade into the air. The men froze as the deadly weapon flew over their heads and into the middle of the now panicking crowd. They turned back to try and get people away. Brewster used the distraction as a chance to run at top speed to dock 136.

As Brewster got closer Lenny spotted him and throttled the freighter to start taking off. The loading ramp was still down and Brewster jumped on just as the ship pulled away from the dock. He stood and hit the button to close the ramp. When he turned around he saw Doug standing there watching him.

"I guess I've got some explaining to do," Doug said.

"You know It's not everyday I wake up, shoot four men to save a kid, get accused of kidnapping and finish the whole thing off by tossing an unarmed plasma grenade into a crowd of innocent people," Brewster said in a sarcastic voice. "So yes Doug, I'd say you've got some explaining to do."

End of Part Two

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