

BREWSTER'S

CLEAN SLATE

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PART 4
PAYBACK

"Brewster! What took you so long?" Lenny asked.

Brewster was breathing hard and sweat was pouring from under his helmet. He signed briefly to Lenny to hold on a moment. After a few minutes he finally had his breath back. He looked around and saw several people staring at him.

The bar they were in was extremely high class. Two dark bounty hunters and a teenage pick pocket definitely stood out compared to the suits and nice dresses of the other customers.

"Yeah, not exactly an ideal location," Lenny admitted.

"How did you even find us?" Doug asked.

"Me and Lenny's three step emergency meet up plan. One, run like hell. Two, find the third bar in the directory and go there. And three, wait for 2 hours. It hasn't failed us yet!"

Brewster and Lenny gave each other a high five.

"So what went down with the dock manager?" Lenny asked.

"He said someone from the university called and told him to stall us as long as possible. Then I got jumped by Sean Varis," Brewster said.

"Sean Varis the rich kid turned famous bounty hunter?" Doug asked.

"Yes Doug, that Sean Varis. So anyway, I tried to explain to the kid what we're doing here but I don't think he really got it," Brewster said.

"What's so hard to understand about the reason we're here?" Lenny asked.

"Well, mainly he couldn't get past the whole part of me holding a gun to the dock manager's head. It doesn't matter anyway because I'm pretty sure after I threw him on the ground and ran off he's not gonna want to talk much. We've got to find whoever it is that's showing up on Skandlen's tracking device, warn them, then find a way to get to Gordon Fay," Brewster said.

Brewster waited as Doug pulled out the tracking device and turned it on. They all watched the screen update with an overheard map and a single red dot flashed. Brewster flagged a waitress as she was walking by. The uppity lady came to the table with her nose turned up.

"What do you people want here?" the waitress asked in a snotty voice.

Brewster took the tracker from Doug's hands and held it up to the waitress.

"Where is the red dot on this map?" Brewster asked.

"That's the Covan Unified University main campus. Now you have to order something or we're calling the cops. This city has seen enough of you dark bounty hunting creeps to last us a lifetime," the waitress said.

Brewster stood up and the woman jumped back. He started to yell but quickly caught himself. He leaned towards her and spoke in a quiet powerful tone.

"We're not dark bounty hunters."

He turned and walked towards the door. Lenny and Doug quickly followed. They made it outside and around a corner before Brewster calmed down.

"You know Lenny, the more we try to change the more we end up slipping further down the hole, but you know what?" Brewster said.

"What Brewster?"

"I'm not giving up this time. Neither of us are giving up. I don't care if we have to battle the entire galaxy. Now let's get over to the university and find that red dot and hopefully Fay too."

Brewster and the others headed down the street. It didn't take long to find the huge Covan Unified University campus but as they got closer they could see there

were some obstacles ahead of them. There were police check points with weapon scanners at every entrance to the building.

"This could be a problem," Brewster said

"If the Varis kid put the school and police on alert then I bet they know what we look like too," Lenny added.

Brewster thought for a moment then motioned for the others to follow him. He led them into a very small alley between two buildings.

"Obviously we can't go through any entrance that has cops. I also spotted several cops on the roof as well so that's out. Maybe we can try the sewers," Brewster said thinking out loud.

"I have an idea but I don't think you'll like it," Doug said.

Brewster and Lenny both turned to the teenage kid with puzzled looks.

"Alright kid, let's hear it,"

"I am not happy with this plan," Brewster said.

"Just smile and don't threaten to kill anyone," Doug replied.

Brewster tugged at the uncomfortable suit coat he was wearing then glared down at the slacks and shiny black shoes. He ran his fingers through his short hair and gave a sour look at Doug.

"I don't like not having my helmet on," Brewster whined. "Or my pistol, body armor, knife..."

"If you want to get in there without anyone getting hurt this is the only way."

"Fine. Let's go."

Brewster headed towards the main entrance of the university. His stomach was in knots as he approached the police checkpoint. There were six cops at this entrance, all wearing full body armor and armed with some powerful weaponry. As they approached an officer held up his hand.

"Hold up a minute there," the officer said.

Brewster's entire body tensed up and he prepared for a fight. He knew he could take out at least four of the officers quickly but six was stretching it. He ran through several plans in his mind of how to escape, attack or defend. More than a

few times the thought crossed his mind of using Doug as a human shield for making him wear this suit and go without his helmet.

"What's your business at Covan Unified University today, sir?" the officer asked.

"I'm bringing the kid here to check the place out," Brewster replied gruffly.

"Check it out how?" the officer asked.

Brewster began to get nervous as smooth talking wasn't his main strength. There was a moment of silence and finally Doug stepped in to help.

"My dad is taking me on a tour of all the universities so I can better decide which school I'm going to attend," Doug said.

"Aren't you a bit young to be thinking about college?" the officer asked skeptically.

"My dad always says, it's never too early to plan for your future," Doug said, then elbowed Brewster. "Right dad?"

"Oh uh, yes of course. It's never too early to make plans for stuff."

The officer smiled and stepped to the side. He motioned for them both to walk through the weapons scanner.

"Well you listen to your dad there kiddo because he's right. You'll both need to check in with the visitor's office for a badge once you get inside," the officer said.

Brewster nodded and pushed Doug ahead of him. They walked through the weapons scanner without any issue. There were two more cops just inside the doors and one directed them to the visitor's office around the corner. They waved and walked on.

"You did good, dad," Doug said.

"Shut up, because if you were my kid I'd whoop your butt right about now," Brewster said, then nervously cleared his throat. "Seriously though, good job on getting us inside."

Doug smiled then pointed to a bathroom on the other side of the visitor's office. They both headed for it. Once inside Doug pulled out the tracker and could see they were very close to whatever item was being tracked.

"It looks like it's actually inside the visitor's office. Let's go check it out," Brewster said.

They left the bathroom and went over to the office. It was a medium sized waiting room with chairs lined up. They approached the smiling assistant at the main desk.

"Good afternoon. I'm Vicky, what can I do for you today?"

"We're here to meet Gordon Fay," Brewster said.

"You mean Professor Gordon Fay. Do you have an appointment?"

"No," Brewster said.

"I'm sorry Professor Fay only meets by appointment."

"I meant yes. Yes we do have an appointment," Brewster said.

"Your name, sir?" Vicky asked.

"Brew..." Brewster said then paused. "Bruce. Doctor Bruce Brackenbridge."

"Please take a seat Doctor Brackenbridge. I'll be right back."

Brewster and Doug took a seat near the door. Doug was staring at him.

"What?" Brewster asked.

"Nice recovery Bruce, but doctor? Seriously?"

"It just came out. Now check the tracker and let's see if we can tell which room this thing is in."

Doug looked at the device and pointed to the back wall. There was a large door with a name plate. Brewster stood up and walked past the front desk and straight to the door.

"Dean Lawrence Washington III," Doug read aloud.

"Let's go introduce ourselves," Brewster said.

He pushed on the door which opened easily. The light was off in the huge luxuriously decorated office. Brewster flipped the switch on and walked right in. The dean spared no expense for his office. Holo screens were everywhere. The large desk looked to be made from some rare type of wood that Brewster had never seen before.

"Okay, so where is that tracker pointing to now?" Brewster asked.

Doug glanced at the device, then pointed to a box on the dean's desk.

"Right there."

Brewster walked over and could see the box had been delivered early this morning. He opened it up and inside was a silver pistol. There was a crumpled up note inside the box as well. He grabbed it and smoothed the paper out.

"You know what to do. You know what will happen if you don't. You will obey the will of the four horsemen," Brewster read aloud.

He heard footsteps approaching and quickly crumpled the note and tossed it inside. He spun around and grabbed Doug. Vicky was standing in the open doorway with a puzzled look on her face.

"What are you doing in the Dean's office?"

"We were looking for Professor Fay," Doug offered up.

"Well I am right here," Fay said as he stepped up behind Vicky. "So you can stop wasting all of our time and tell me what this terribly inconvenient interruption is all about."

Brewster almost smiled at the sight of the shrewd little man who just months earlier had hired him, Lenny, and a group of dark bounty hunters to track down a man for him. He didn't like the professor at all with his pretentious attitude.

Fay stepped around and stood directly in front of Brewster. The smaller man looked up a bit to look into Brewster's face.

"I don't know you Doctor Brackenbridge and I don't have an appointment with you. So please go on and tell me what you want before I call the authorities, and have you and that child arrested," Fay said in an annoyed tone.

"Oh I think you do know me Gordon and I'm here to pay you back," Brewster said.

Fay scrunched up his face after hearing the voice. He seemed to recognize it but couldn't place it. After a few more moments of awkward silence Brewster brought his hand up to cover only the top half of his face.

"Now do you remember who I am?" Brewster asked in a darker tone.

Fay let out a yelp while jumping backwards, crashing into Vicky. As the secretary stumbled he sprinted past her, out the door and into the hallway.

Brewster stepped forward and steadied the off balance secretary.

"Doug, stay here with the secretary and explain the whole tracking device thing in the box. We've got to make sure this dean guy knows that thing can be tracked anywhere in the galaxy," Brewster said.

He let go of the secretary's arm and took off after the scrawny man. Fay was halfway down the hallway but he quickly closed the gap. The two men flew faster

and faster down the empty hallways. Taking turns left and right through the large building.

Fay looked back and saw how close his pursuer was. He gave a shout and pushed harder. Brewster matched his speed and was almost within reaching distance.

"Come back here you little rat!" Brewster growled.

Just as he got a handful of Fay's shirt, Fay grabbed a hold of the door handle to a classroom. Brewster tried to pull the professor back but he clung to the door.

"Charles!" Fay yelled.

Brewster tried to spin Fay around but the smaller man wouldn't let go of the handle.

"Let go of the door you idiot. All I want is to pay you back," Brewster said.

He continued pulling on the man until finally he came loose. He let go of Fay's shirt and took a deep breath to calm down.

Out of nowhere Fay spun around and punched Brewster hard in the arm.

"What the hell was that?" Brewster asked.

"I know how to defend myself. Don't think because I choose flight first that I don't know how to fight," Fay responded with a shaky confidence.

"You punched me in the arm."

"I am well aware of that. Now are you aware it will only be a few seconds before the police make their rounds on this hallway?"

"Then I better make this quick. As you know you hired me, my cousin Lenny and our team of dark bounty hunters to do a job for you. You were there and you know just how bad that turned out. After that me and Lenny decided it was time to change the direction of our lives. As we tried to leave the planet we stumbled upon a way to break free from the life of dark bounty hunting and we grabbed a hold of it. I decided then that we would use our unique talents to try and do the right thing."

"What exactly is the right thing you're trying to do here?" Fay asked.

"I felt the best way to begin my new life was by paying back the ten thousand credits you gave us upfront on the job," Brewster said.

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a cred stick and held it out. Fay took it from him and stared at it for a moment before looking back up.

"You seriously came here just to give back the money I paid you?"

"Yes. It was the right thing to do. I'm starting over with my life and this is my clean slate," Brewster said.

The sound of footsteps drew both of their attention. Coming around the corner was Charles Bryant, the renowned bounty hunting professor. Brewster began scanning the area and formulating plans. Finally he took a deep breath as Charles approached.

"Hello gentlemen, is everything alright?" Charles asked.

"Yes I suppose everything is alright," Fay said.

Charles nodded then turned to Brewster. The two men silently assessed one another. After a tense moment Charles smiled, then extended his hand and spoke.

"I'm Charles Bryant."

"Brewster."

"You the same Brewster that flew my IM-40 freighter in to the space dock this morning?"

"I did fly an IM-40 freighter in but I didn't know it was yours," Brewster replied.

"That's not important. What is important is your new direction in life," Charles said.

"What? Were you around the corner the whole time?" Fay whined.

"I was there long enough to overhear what was going on," Charles said.

"This is an outrage Charles. I can't believe..."

"Fay get a hold of yourself," Charles said then looked back to Brewster. "I wish you, your cousin Lenny and whoever the young kid is that's hiding around the corner down there the best of luck."

Brewster turned around to see Doug's head peeking out. He waved the kid over.

"Thank you Professor Bryant. I appreciate your understanding," Brewster said.

"I understand way more than you'll ever know, Brewster. Don't give up on your new path. Even if at times it leads you a little backwards don't stop moving in the right direction. The second you do, that darkness will erase all the progress you've made. Now let me get you an escort out of the school and back to your freighter," Charles said.

"Thanks, but don't you mean your freighter?" Brewster asked.

"No. You can have it and I've already had the dock manager switch everything over to you."

"So that was it huh? You just walked in, found Fay and paid the money back." Lenny asked.

"That was pretty much it Lenny. We're ready to start over now," Brewster said.

"Did you find out what it was that Skandlen's tracking device picked up?"

"It was a silver pistol that the dean of the university had on his desk. Doug explained to the nice secretary that she needed to make sure and warn the dean to get rid of that thing, unless he wants Skandlen's thugs showing up to look for it."

"So where do we go now?" Doug asked from the back of the cockpit.

"First we'll head back to clean up our own little tracking mess so no one can find us," Brewster said.

He looked out the window as the stars whipped past. He took a deep breath and released it.

"From there the galaxy is the limit."

The End for now

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