

Love, unconventionally.

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Author's Note: The rank's used in this article are from the Canadian military, except for the Commander rank on which I made a mistake, so it represents the rank of Lt Col.

<http://ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/phoenix-writing>

From Chapter Fourteen

"And who are you?" Jason tried to get some sort of information.

"We're the Tal'Shiar."

Chapter Fifteen

Jason snored, sitting in his wooden chair still. After what seemed like eternity, but was closer to 15 hours, the men let Jason have a little sleep. But only a little.

A bucket of cold water was poured over Jason's head. Jason snapped awake.

"Sleep time is over, Major. Time to ask you again. Who is the Crown Prince's head of security?" the male voice asked. This voice was different from earlier. It had a slight accent to it.

"If you were really the Tal'Shiar, you would know that answer, and wouldn't need me to tell you." Jason spat.

"Wrong answer!" said the man, administering a punch to Jason's gut. Since he had woken up here the first time, about 16 hours ago, he had been asked non stop about his relationship with Keith, in-depth security questions that could compromise the royal family, and what is favourite bowl of soup was. He hadn't figured out why they wanted to know what is favourite soup was for. They hadn't fed him, and he figured he'd be dead by the end of the day. In the end, Jason defied them, and refused to tell them anything.

A door opened, and an alien dressed in white walked in. He looked human, but had a big nose-ring type bone. He looked over at Jason.

“Do you love him?” The man asked Jason simply.

“Love who?” Jason asked, confused.

“Keith” he replied.

“With my dying breath” Jason struggled to say.

“What do you mean I can't see him? He's been by my side, by my bedside every day since I was found.” Keith demanded of his father.

“He went missing, Keith.” The Pharaoh motioned for everyone to leave the room, and when he did, he closed the door, tightly.

“So what are you doing to find him?” Keith demanded. He was furious at this revelation.

“Nothing.” The Pharaoh replied.

“WHAT?!? What do you mean nothing?” Keith demanded.

“He's... meeting... the... Tal'Shiar....” The Pharaoh slowly started to say, knowing his son would likely go into cardiac arrest after the answer was given.

“HE'S WHAT?!? WHY?” Keith was practically screaming, the people outside the door could even hear.

“Keep your voice down, or I can't tell you anything, because you'll attract a crowd.” The Pharaoh replied.

Keith was livid, ready to call out the royal guard to search if necessary.

“Since the time of the first Pharaoh, the Tal'Shiar has been sworn to protect the royal family from all enemies. Those from outside, and those from inside.” The Pharaoh began. “Every... potential royal consort has to be cleared by them before you can get married. They make sure that he won't try to kill you, and so forth. Your mother had to go through this as well. I didn't see her for a month.”

“A MONTH?!?” Keith blew up. “YOU EXPECT ME NOT TO SEE HIM FOR A MONTH?!?”

“I expect you will see him, when you see him, Keith.” The Pharaoh replied. “I heard once that for the thirteenth Pharaoh, her consort Queen Elojoh had been questioned by the Tal'Shiar for six months before he was cleared.”

Keith tried to take a few deep breaths. “What happens if he fails?”

The Pharaoh turned, to look out the window, facing away from his son.

"That has only happened once." The Pharaoh replied. "If he fails, you will never see him again."

Keith looked shocked. "Will they... will they... kill him?" he asked sadly.

"What?" The Pharaoh turned to look at his son. He knew the question was genuine. "No, why would we do such a thing? No, they would simply prevent you and him from ever seeing each other again. Lethal force is only a last resort."

Jason woke up in his bed again. He groaned, wondering if that had been just a dream. He started to sit up in his bed and almost screamed when he saw the man in the white sitting in a chair at the end of his bed.

"Wh... wh... who are you, and why can't you leave me alone?!?" Jason demanded.

"I am Director Richlerds. I am the man who runs the Tal'Shiar, and I am now loyal to you." The director introduced.

"I'm... I'm... I'm afraid I don't understand." Jason looked really confused now.

"You remember speaking to your boss, right? About security checks for your family and close friends?" The man asked.

"Yeah, of course." Jason thought the director had lost his mind.

"Someone had to do your check." The director said, simply. He looked to be in his early fourties by earth standards.

"Did I pass?" Jason asked, curiously.

"If you hadn't, we wouldn't be talking about it right now." The director said with a hint of a smile.

"So what is this... Tal'Shiar? I presume since you said you are now loyal to me, that you can divulge that information." Jason stated.

"The Tal'Shiar is terror... personified." The man said blackly.