

Vanished
Amanda Cobb

“This is your captain speaking. Please tighten your restraints, we are about to begin our descent onto the Planet designated HD 40307 g.”

The large spacecraft rumbled loudly as it entered the thick atmosphere of the planet. From the surface, its mirrored surface gave the appearance that a chunk of the sky was closing in on the landing pad. On the ground, two limousines waited for the three passengers on the craft. The drivers stood next to each other in silence. Watching, and fuming, the younger of the two had her arms folded.

“You need to be pleasant, Shiller.” The older driver said, his voice gruff and tone harsh. “You will give away the entire plan if you look as though you would rather eat manure than drive the brats.”

Camden Shiller looked at the man beside her. Her face suddenly transformed into a vapid, sunny smile. “Do not worry so much, Eldrich. I remember what to do.”

The ground beneath them shook as the spacecraft finally touched down. Eldrich shook his head. His own anger at their life was not as close to the surface as Camden’s, but it was still there. Paid pennies an hour, the Working Class had to serve the Echelon. But Eldrich was old. He had accepted his life, and how it would end.

Three figures emerged from the craft, bathed in artificial light from behind them. Camden could easily make out the figures of the children she was supposed to transport. She maintained her smile and opened the door. For the plan to work, she could not speak in the presence of their father. He would mark her right away as being Classicus. Instead she allowed Eldrich to speak for her.

“Welcome home, Governor.” Eldrich bowed to the skinny man who preceded his children. Camden also bowed, slightly.

“I see I have lost yet another driver to Classicus.” The Governor replied, his eyes raking over Camden.

“No Sir. This time it was Senator Garcia that retired Jones.”

“So this one must be Davis.” The governor said no more as he got into his limo. He had accepted the explanation and made his assumptions, the truth of the matter was not important at all.

Camden recited the laws of teleportation to maintain her composure as she loaded the luggage of the children into the trunk, children that had crawled into their own car without even a glance in their driver’s direction. She took an inordinate amount of satisfaction from their startled screams as she slammed the trunk lid.

Every instinct she had screamed for her to simply enact the plan, but she decided to dawdle. She took her time pretending to write in the logbook provided by her employers as Eldrich drove the Governor out of the landing zone.

“Excuse me, Davis!” The cracking voice of Evan Windsor-Thorp III sang out of the intercom.

“Yes?” Camden smiled as she played along. Her true name did not matter to her charges. Their father had called her Davis.

“Yes, Sir!” The boy corrected petulantly. “You should have left by now. Father is out of site! And you are supposed to call me Sir!”

Taking note of the fact that the boy was correct, their father was long gone, Camden’s smile grew. She turned the key in the ignition and the seats of the limousine

began to glow. The children shrieked again as they found themselves suddenly in a house.

“What have you done, Davis?” Juliet demanded.

“I am not called Davis.” Camden replied with a growl, “My name is Camden Shiller. I am Classicus and you are kidnapped.”

She had no sooner finished the sentence than the Governor’s children found themselves surrounded. They were hustled off to a side room with only one door and one window. The window was nothing but a hand sized hole in the metal wall. The door slammed and locked behind them.

“Why are you doing this?” Juliet shouted through the door. The gang outside ignored her.

Camden covered her face in the Classicus colors and stood in front of a blank wall.

“I am ready, Aeron.” She called out. The rest of the gang filtered outside as a lanky young man held up a camera.

“Remember no names, Camden.” He said as he pressed the button to record.

“Classicus has the children of the Governor. Our demands are simple and pure. Release Jordine Shiller. Or we kill the boy. Raise the wages of the Working by a whole dollar. Or the girl will vanish forever.”

Aeron stopped recording and removed the storage device. He put it in his pocket as the other gang members returned to the house. Five of them jumped him. When they finished, he could barely stand. Camden offered a small smile of gratitude and activated his personal teleport. Her brother was gone, on a mission to free their father.

As an aide to the Governor, Aeron's personal teleport sent him directly to the man himself. As planned, he handed the security officer the recording device and lost consciousness. The Governor snatched the device out of the officer's hand and motioned for him to remove the young man from his office.

Juliet Windsor-Thorp had never been accused of being foolish. She had known right away who was waiting for her at the landing pad. They had been friends in primary school. Before her Grandfather had made her Father the governor. She checked on Evan to make sure he was asleep. When she was certain it would not wake him, Juliet knocked on the metal door to their room. Twice, once, pause, then thrice.

Two knocks, Camden spared little of her attention to the door. The third knock and the pause made her look up from her book. The subsequent three knocks had her standing up from her position on the floor and responding. Three knocks, one, pause, and two. Camden smiled a genuine smile when Juliet proved she remembered by knocking again, five times in a row. She eased open the door, just enough to slip inside. Her illegal personal teleport in her pocket allowed her to feel safe.

"Juliet." She greeted.

"Camden. What are you doing?"

"Freeing my father. And getting higher wages for the working class."

"It won't work. Father does not care about us. Not like Grandfather did."

"If he does not comply, your brother dies and you will never go home." Camden could not look into the stricken eyes of the other girl and activated her teleport.

Aeron woke in the medical wing of the Mansion. He found himself chained to the bed. The Governor stood in the doorway.

“Your accomplice, Eldrich, is dead. I shot him myself. He should never have helped you. Which of your members posed as Davis?”

Aeron remained silent.

“Very well. I can assume that Classicus meant their threats. You can assume I am genuine in my response.” He walked slowly over to the restrained man, and pinned a paper to his shirt. Then he shot Aeron in the head, and activated the personal transport to send him home.

Camden was eating her dinner when her brother’s body materialized in the kitchen. She swallowed her shock and rage and retrieved the letter.

Classicus,

Your demands will be met. I will return Jordine tomorrow in exchange for my son.

As for the wages of the Working class, keep the girl. She is useless

Governor Windsor-Thorp II