

# Purple Dino

By: Digital Doom

Gunshots echoed down the alley, there was a scream, then an unnatural silence. The lack of sirens is the normal reaction to this area, a garbage filled street that has multiple burned out cars in the middle. There are potholes from people throwing grenades. The smell of refuse and death hangs in the air.

In this lawless barrens that is the remainder of the Redmond district of Seattle, the west coast port for the United Canadian American States (UCAS). This part of the megaplex is so lawless that Knight Errant, (The police contractors for the area), will not enter the area unless they are rolling with two heavy response teams.

In this desolate place, there is a single sign that hums and glows a neon purple. It reads "The Purple Dino," and is hanging on a cracked brick building that has bars on the windows that are also blacked out with what looks like the hood of a truck. A large iron gate is covering the door, which is currently propped open and ancient music blaring through the door.

As one of the only buildings in the area with electricity, there is a group of people hanging out on the street, charging their wireless devices while listening to the classical music the owner prefers. Right now the laughing intro to "Crazy Train" starts blaring through the old speakers.

Entering this bar, it is dimly lit, smoke filled, with the overpowering odor of sweat, smoke, and vomit. The large troll behind the counter is standing watch over the place, wiping a mug with a semi-clean towel. This troll is HUGE, just over 9 feet tall and a little over 450 pounds. He has horns that roll back like rams horns and has bright purple hair that flows down over his shoulders. His toothy grin is a little unnerving, but friendly. This giant is wearing a long brown trench coat and has a pistol on his hip in plain sight.

A small orc hollars out from the end of the bar, "Barney, another?"

The large troll puts the mug down, pours a black ale from the tap, and brings it over to the orc. "Last one for the night." the large troll states in a deep and gravelly voice. He then yells out to the ten or so people in the bar, "Last Call!"

He then fills a few orders, cashes out some tabs, and goes back to cleaning the glasses with the same semi-clean towel. A few minutes later he escorts most of the people out of the bar, locking the iron gate and then the door behind them. He then turns to the only table that has three people around it. All looking at a paper map.

There was a tall, hairy ear elf who's dark hair resembled the fur of a large, black cat. He was studying the map intently and didn't notice Barney moving toward them. The dwarven decker did. "Shade," was all she said.

The elf, Shade, looked at Barney and smiled. "Doctor Jones, how are you this morning?" his grin was going from ear to ear. He almost looked like a smug cat.

"Watch it kitten," Barney growled. He looked at the people at the table. "You wanna introduce me to your team?"

Shade points at the dwarf, "That's Short Pixel." Then he points to a thin, wiry human with a black leather jacket with crystals embedded in it, "That is Sparks. He's small for a human, but he is good with the mojo."

Barney says, "Nice to meet you. I am Barney, owner of the Purple Dino." The joke goes over the heads of all but Shade who had heard it before.

They both just look at Barney with blank stares. "I am also your Johnson." Shade almost laughs out loud as the eyes of both Spark and Short Pixel grew much bigger.

It quickly became all business. Barney turned on a white noise generator. He knew it wouldn't be necessary as he already turned off the power charge feature for his property so no one was outside anymore. He waved at his AR starting up his bar's defenses. Four autocannons with Armor Piercing Incendiary (API) rounds designed to punch a hole in armor then burst into flame. He then shuts down his Matrix connection, turning this bar into a digital black hole.

The dwarf shook her head. "I feel naked."

"It's now safe to talk." Barney replied. "As I said, I am your Johnson. I am hiring you for a job that has already failed once. The team that did it has not been heard from. Their timeline was shot as of 0400 yesterday. The window for this job is still open for the next two days." Barney looks at each one as he talks, weighing them for the upcoming job.

"This job is a tough one. In two days your target will be in Seattle and will be vulnerable." Barney tossed a file at them in AR while putting a physical one on the table for Shade. "The target is a young elf who has been taken from his family three years ago. His name is Endo Silver. His father is the CFO for an Tír na nÓg corporation. The boy was located last week and an extraction team went in to get him. They failed and no one has heard from them."

He continued to watch the team, "That team did do something right, they got the RFID tag planted on the target, so we know where he is."

“We also know he will be on a low earth orbital in two days, leaving from Seattle International. We need him recovered so we can get him back to his parents.” Barney pulls out the physical photo from the file, it shows a picture of a teen boy with a screen embedded in his skull.

“We don’t know what that screen is, but we do know that there is a wireless cranial bomb. It is a wireless setup.” Barney looks at the team, focusing on Shade, “This job is an emergency run, so the pay is being offered at the maximum amount. I am even cutting my fees in half to make sure Shade and his team,” stressing the word his, “accepts the job. We are offering 55K ¥ each.” There was a murmur of realization on the amount of the payout.

“That is a lot of money.” Spark said. “Do we know what kind of security?”

“Everything is in this packet. I will give you guys privacy to figure out how you are doing the run. I just need to know, will you take the job?”

Shade looks at his team, then back at Barney, “Yes.”

Barney shook Shades hand and turned and walked out, stopping at the back office door, “Shade, remember how to get out when everything is armed?”

“I do.”

Then Barney moved through the office door, locking it as he left.

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The next morning there was a loud explosion, not too far away from the bar. Barney woke up and listened. There were small pops ringing off from the west side of the bar. The sound of small arms fire ringing across the morning air.

He laid on his cot, listening to the popping and now farther away explosions. The fight was moving away from the bar. Sighing, he stood up and stretched. He then checked the defences, nothing was amiss. He then walked out of his office and checked everything.

Barney got the power back online, turned on his lights, swepted the floor, ran all his dishes through a sanitizer then turned off his defences and opened the door. Before he could even turn around a large troll, almost as big as Barney was, wearing black and orange gang colors pushed his way into the bar.

"You run diz hole?" the ganger asked, his orange mohawk and face paint glistening in the midmorning sun.

Barney looks at him, "Yeah, why?"

The ganger pulled a pistol, "Because I needs urz money and booze."

Barney looked him over, then turned away from him while turning on his turrets wirelessly. "You might want to put that away. In a few seconds you will be ventilated."

"Huh?"

"You will be filled with holes." Barney explained so any fool ganger could understand. "You have about," there was a whering as the auto cannons dropped out of the ceiling and two off of the floor, all turning to aim at the ganger, "10 seconds from now." He smiled.

A countdown timer started talking, a digitized voice of someone long dead started, "Put your weapon away or else in 9, 8, 7..." the kid dropped the Ares Predator II and ran out the door. Barney laughed out loud as he walked over and picked up the pistol. It wasn't in the best shape, it was a little old and didn't have any of the tech in the newer ones, but he could get a few new Yen for it.

The 6 auto cannons that were activated dropped and pulled up out of sight. He put the pistol in a locked container that had at least a few others. He really needed to get rid of these.

He moved behind the bar to work as people started coming in. Today would be a busy day. He just hoped the new bartender would show up today. He had some things to take care of.

The morning shift went by with nothing out of the ordinary. The dwarven bartender and orc bouncer that works when Barney has things to do both showed up at the same time. Barney was starting to believe that they were a couple. The female orc was cute, for an orc, and seemed to be interested in the dwarf.

Barney looked them over as they went to their places. The dwarf, he was called Whiskey, brought out a soap box to stand on behind the bar. He looks at Barney and says, "I got this boss."

"Ok. See you in a few hours. I need to resupply our stocks." Barney says.

"Kay."

Barney walks to the door, glances at the orc and says, "Daisy, we had some trog from the Halloweeners try and rob the place again. Keep your eyes open. I am giving you control of both front turrets for tonight. It seems like a good idea to keep watch on things."

She smiles a toothy grin. "Thank you sir. Will do."

"And Daisy," Barney glances back at Whiskey, "keep an eye on him. I think the Halloweeners are still trying to get to him."

She looks at him and blushes. Yea, they are a thing.

Barney goes out and jumps on his bike.

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A few hours after Barney left, the bar's door bangs open. A bloody elf is being carried in between a dwarf and human. The awkward trio struggle to make it to the bar. Before they could get in, Daisy saw who it was and moved to help the trio.

Whiskey moved over and opened the back office door, ushering them in. "Shade ok?" he asked. Shade moans a response.

Whiskey calls the boss, letting him know what is going on, then calls for a last call a few hours early. No one does anything more than grumbles. As soon as the last customer leaves he triggers the defenses of the bar.

Daisy pulls out the med kit and starts working on Shade.

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Barney entered the bar, turning the defenses back on as he entered. He moved into the safe room and noticed both Whiskey and Daisy sitting in chairs in the front room. They both stood as Barney entered. "What is his status?"

Daisy spoke first, "He is stable. From what we can gather they had the package when they were hit by a few HRT's. They fought their way through, but the package took a few rounds through the dome."

Frag. No payday on this one. "Ok. I will have to get some things tied up because of the failure. Do whatever we have to for these runners. I will be back."

"Yes Barney," they both said in unison.

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Barney moved into his office, shut and locked the door which automatically turned on some electronic countermeasure fields. He moved over to his desk and sat down, dialing into a vid call.

A few moments later, the call was answered. The picture showed a cartoon character as masking was initiated. His own showed a character from an old kids show from the 1990's.

"Sammy, I have some bad news. The second team also failed. They were extracting the package when they got hit by multiple HRT's. The package was killed." Barney stated.

Sam sat silently for a moment, "Ok." a brash sounding voice said, "Keep your finders fee, but wire the team's money back. I have to give it back to the customer." he lied. Barney knew he would keep the money and not tell the customer.

"Ok. I will get it done shortly." Barney ends the call. He then pulls some of the money out of the escrow account for his 'finders fee' and pulls some out as 'up front' money for Shade and his team. He put the up front money on a cred stick and sent the remainder back to his employer.

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The auto-doc dinged and buzzed as it monitored Shade's condition. It started beeping wildly as Shade passed out. Within a minute he started shifting, his body growing a short black hair, his face scrunching up. His body morphed as he shifted into his Bobcat form, his natural form.

The auto-doc screams as it was never made to monitor the lifesigns of a cat. Just as Barney walked in, both Daisy and Whiskey jumped up. They were freaking out as they didn't know Shade was a cat.

“Get that crap off of him.” Barney said, “Daisy, can you heal him. I need him awake asap.”

Daisy walks over and lays her hands on the unconscious cat. She starts chanting. A few moments later there is a glow under her hands. She swoons and almost passes out.

“Whoa, there girly.” Barney catches her and walks her over to a chair to rest. “I don’t want you killing yourself for this.” He smiles at the toothy orc. “Thank you.”

She smiles weakly.

Shade’s eyes flutter open. He looks around then shifts back into his elvish self. He looks pale and weak. He smiles up at Barney and looks around the room. “Hey,” he says horsley.

“Hey kitty,” Barney says in a warm rumble. “Glad you made it.”

“Huph.” he replied. “We failed,” he said.

“I know, I already let the customer know. Before I sent his money back, I took a bit for you and your team to make up for your losses. It’s not much, just 10K upfront money, but it is something.”

Shade smiles again, “Thanks chummer.”

Barney moves out and leaves the team to recoup in his safe room. He could charge them for the use of the room, healing, and use of his people, but he wouldn’t. He knows the leader of this team. They were runners together a long time ago. He shakes his head, no time to reminisce. He had to open the bar back up and make it seem like nothing was going on. That is one of the perks of his safe room. It is an open business, who would ever put a safehouse in an open business.

The door chimes as a customer walks in. “Welcome to the Purple Dino, I’m Barney. What can I get you tonight?”