Set Primary Objective

by SassySnowperson (DramaticEntrance)

Summary

K-2SO is an Imperial Security droid. Until the day that he becomes a reprogrammed Imperial Security Droid. Cassian Andor has made his life significantly more complicated.

Complicated isn’t the same as worse.

A story of foolhardy organics, figuring out friendship, and finding out that purpose runs deeper than programming.

Note: This fic can be read independently of the series, but contains spoilers for the series so far.

Notes

I am so excited to share this one! It took a lot of work to get into K-2SO's POV after writing Bodhi's for so long, but I am at least moderately pleased with how it turned out.

Note: I think this one can be read without reading the others in the series. It starts before the first fic, ends after the most recent one and will, obviously, massively spoil the rest of the series. However! I tried to make sure that nothing would be too baffling if you started the series here. :)
(By the way, if you actually do start the series here for some reason, let me know how it goes? I'm curious. :D)

This one is even more the fault of my lovely fic cheerleader and beta Aeshna than usual. I'll tell you about it in the end notes.

Trigger warnings: Graphic Violence, descriptions of blood, non-graphic medical procedures, mentions of death. Additional information in the end notes.

See the end of the work for more notes.

[[ Input:

Visual: Primary Optical
--Right: Online
--Left: Online
Visual: Secondary Optical
--Infrared: Online
Auditory: Online
Tactile Web: Online
Personal Integrity: All functional, good repair ]]

[[ Primary Objective: Aid and protect Cassian Andor. ]]}

K-2SO was awake. There was no gradual fuzzing from inactivity to activity. At one moment he wasn’t, at the next he was. The closest he came to the human tradition of muzzily shaking off the last dregs of sleep was a quick self-assessment after a period of inactivity.

All systems functional.

Objective...changed.

K-2SO examined the organic in front of him. Human, male, slim, dark hair, obvious signs of exhaustion and approximately four days of stubble growth. He compared the man’s face to a series of dossiers he had stored.

Cassian Andor. Identified spy for the Rebel Alliance. K-2SO’s objective was to protect and aid him.

“That can’t be right,” K-2SO said out loud.

The human male, Cassian Andor, who had examining Kay with tensed muscles and narrowed eyes suddenly gained forehead wrinkles. Cassian’s head leaned to the side.

“I am an Imperial Security Droid. Designation K-2SO. Imperial. Why am I assisting a known spy for the Rebel Alliance?”

“I reprogrammed you,” Cassian said.

“Oh. I am a reprogrammed Imperial Droid.”

[[ Archived Record of Objectives and Tasks: … … …Not Available]]
Primary Objective: Aid and protect Cassian Andor.

Task: Gain information sufficient to develop further tasks. ]]

“How long have I been aiding and protecting you for?” K-2SO asked.

“About twenty seconds.”

[[ Primary Objective: Aid and protect Cassian Andor
Success Percentage: 100% ]]

“You are alive and unharmed. I am doing an excellent job,” K-2SO said.

“Well, keep up that sunshine attitude. You’re my best shot at making it past the blockades going out of the city. I need you to get me through the troops. Without being tracked. Then I need to get to the exfiltration site.”

K-2SO sorted through his memory banks for relevant information.

[[ Task: Reach exfiltration site without being followed.
--Sub-Task: Identify exfiltration site location.]]

Task: Get through blockade.
--Memory Access: Likely blockade formation...three guards, each armed with blasters, one heavy.
--Memory Access: City navigation, likely less traveled paths.
--Memory Access: Patrol patterns

Sub-Objective: Maintain ‘that sunshine attitude’ ]]

“This would be easier if we had a vehicle. Or a tank. A tank would be preferable.”

Cassian’s eyes narrowed, and his head tilted five degrees to the left. “We don’t.”

K-2SO ran some calculations.

“Well then, I can only guarantee a success rate of eighty-four percent.”

Cassian exhaled quickly through his nose. It was not quite a laugh, but in the same general subset of behavior. “I’ll take what I can get.”

“This was a bad strategy,” K-2SO said, starting the conversation.

Cassian snarled and tucked himself a little more firmly behind the crates which were currently the only cover between the two of them and the three Imperials firing at them.

“I told you this was an inefficient route to take. Far too likely to run into Imperial patrols.”

Cassian tipped his head up, tried to sight the enemy, and fired two shots. “You plan on doing anything other than complain?”

“I am not complaining. I am critiquing.”

[[ Primary Objective: Aid and Protect Cassian Andor
Success Percentage: 100% ]]
Success Percentage: 82%

Task: Get through blockade. Without being shot.
--Memory Access: Finding alternate route…
Percent success - current route: 28%
Percent success - alternate route: 79% ]]

“Are you tired of getting shot at yet?” K-2SO asked Cassian.

Cassian responded by growling. That was probably assent.

K-2SO picked Cassian up and swung him over his shoulder. K-2SO made sure that Cassian’s arm was free to continue firing at their opponents.

Cassian made a high-pitched noise and started wriggling. This was not advantageous to his survival.

“The longer you squirm, the less time you have to shoot people,” K-2SO said, taking off at a run.

Cassian finally prioritized his tasks to benefit survival and lay down cover fire as K-2SO ran. There were some startled noises and footsteps giving chase, but no sound of vehicles or large gun movement.

[[ Predicted Imperial reaction: Call in reinforcements. Inform reinforcements of direction travelled.

Scenario 1: Continue with current route, time to capture, between 8 minutes and 2 hours. Chance of escape, 0%.

Scenario 2: Evade and hide, time to capture, between 30 minutes and indefinite. Chance of escape, 19%.

Scenario 3: Reverse route, dodging around patrol…. ]]

By the time K-2SO reached the end of the alley he had considered 213 scenarios and found one with a 93% chance of escape. Using his free hand, he swung up to the rooftop. Cassian made a noise that resembled a strangled yell.

“Yes, this is very exciting,” K-2SO agreed. “However, you may want to attempt to contain your enthusiasm until after we are past the blockade.”

“This is not enthusiasm-” Cassian said, cutting off abruptly as K-2SO jostled him on a particularly heavy landing from building to building. Whoops.

“Prepare to shoot,” was all the warning K-2SO gave Cassian before jumping again and landing with a thunk on the other side of the barrier set up along the small streets.

Three point five second estimated response time as the two men manning the barrier twisted, blasters coming to bear.

Five seconds to next turn-off. Chance of injury to K-2SO, 63%. Chance of injury to Cassian, 45%. Overall chance of success, 70%.

Unless….

Two seconds after landing there were two sharp whines next to his head, two groans from behind him.
K-2SO took a moment to feel pleased in his correct assessment to trust the speed of Cassian’s response and Cassian’s skill.

Overall chance of success now at 94.7%.

[[ Primary Objective: Aid and protect Cassian Andor
Success Percentage: 88.4%

Task: Get through blockade. Without being shot.
Task Succeeded.

Task: Deliver Cassian safely to the exfiltration site.
In Progress. ]]

Once K-2SO was certain no Imperial patrols had followed them, he set Cassian down.

Cassian turned towards him, face flushed with increased blood flow and sputtering out words.

“That went well. You are a proficient shot,” K-2SO said. Cassian continued to have difficulty forming words. “I understand that it is difficult for humans to speak when impressed. Take your time.”

“Impressed!” Cassian said. His volume was loud, and his eyes were narrowed. He pointed a finger at K-2SO. When he spoke again, his voice was suddenly very low. “I. Am going. To reprogram you.”

K-2SO reviewed the mission. Cassian had spent time getting shot at, but that was primarily due to them following his plan instead of K-2SO’s. K-2SO’s success percentage would be well above the median, if there were enough information to provide a median for aiding and protecting Cassian Andor. Cassian was uninjured...was Cassian uninjured?


“No! That’s not…” Cassian trailed off.

“You are on the other side of the blockade, you are not shot. If I failed mission parameters I was not even aware of, that is your fault, not mine,” K-2SO said.

“...do you always talk this much?” Cassian asked after a beat.

“I don’t remember. Because you wiped my memories of past programming. Are you even a qualified droid technician?”

Cassian laughed. “No.”

“Great. Operated on by an amateur. I’m blaming any bugs in my programming on you.” K-2SO adjusted his stride to match Cassian’s shorter steps.

They made it to the exfiltration site without too much fuss. A shuttle waited there, pilot keeping the engines warm. As the two of them approached, the pilot’s eyes went wide. She scrambled for her sidearm. Sloppy. If she was going to need to use the sidearm, it should be in easy reach.

“What is that thing?” the pilot said, finally getting a grip on the blaster and bringing it to to bear on K-2SO.
“I am a reprogrammed Imperial Security Droid,” K-2SO informed the pilot.

“You can trust him, he’s with me,” Cassian said as he boarded the shuttle. He gestured at K-2SO.

K-2SO followed Cassian.

[[ Input:

Visual: Primary Optical
-- Right: Online
-- Left: Offline

Visual: Secondary Optical
-- Infrared: Online

Auditory: Online

Tactile Web: Online - 75% functional

Personal Integrity: Right limb damaged, leg joint misaligned, speed reduced 30%  ]]  

[[ Primary Objective: Aid and Protect Cassian Andor.
Success rate: 49.4%

Primary Task: Eliminate attackers  ]]  

Cassian was getting shot at again. K-2SO was beginning to take this personally. He had a number of very good ideas to keep Cassian safe and secure. Unfortunately, Cassian seemed determined to maximise his exposure to danger for the sake of this “Rebel Alliance” he was a part of.

This was negatively impacting K-2SO’s success percentage for keeping Cassian safe.

Cassian had ventured into Imperial-held territory (again) to make contact with an informant (again) in order to disrupt the Empire’s chain of operations (again). They were getting shot at. Again.

Next to him, Cassian gave a strangled cry and there was a sound of sizzling flesh. K-2SO looked over to see Cassian pale. There was a large section of charred skin along his bicep and torso. He seemed to have trouble holding his blaster.

[[ Primary Objective: Aid and Protect Cassian Andor.
Success rate: 32.3%

“That will reduce your combat efficiency,” K-2SO informed him.

Cassian used some colorful epithets.

“Do you want me to use the blaster?” K-2SO asked.

“No,” Cassian said, moving stiffly and breathing heavily through his nose as he switched the weapon to his non-dominant hand. “Rush them. I’ll cover you.”

K-2SO gave himself a full second to stare at Cassian. “You know I am an expert shot.”

“Go!” Cassian hissed, lining up the blaster.

“I have the better plan. You really should trust me with this.”
“Too bad.” Cassian replied, glaring. “I keep the gun.”

K-2SO stared at Cassian a little longer before running out from behind cover and rushing the attackers. He was peppered with blaster fire during his approach. Two...three hits. Additional loss of mobility in left leg.

“This is inefficient,” K-2SO informed the first man, dressed in a lieutenant’s uniform. K-2SO reached out a hand and closed it over the lieutenant’s head.

The two stormtroopers next to him stopped firing. They tracked K-2SO with their blasters. “And this is why. There is only one of me, and three of you.”

K-2SO picked the lieutenant up and used him as a blunt weapon against one of the stormtroopers. The lieutenant’s neck gave a cracking sound and the stormtrooper crumpled. “I don’t even have a blaster. I have to improvise weaponry.”

As K-2SO finished his first hit, he heard the whine-crack of blaster fire. Turning around, he saw that the other stormtrooper was on the ground. K-2SO gave Cassian a wave of thanks, lieutenant still flopping around in his hand. He dropped the body, and made his way back to Cassian.

“My way would have been better,” K-2SO announced as he got closer, cocking his head to the side as he saw that Cassian was taking a nap on the battlefield.

K-2SO ran some calculations in his head. Probably not a nap. Likely scenario: unconscious due to pain.

[[ Primary Objective: Aid and Protect Cassian Andor.

Task: Assess extent of injury.
Burn, extensive charring, likely high pain levels when conscious. Risk of infection. Risk of shock

Estimated chance of 24 hour survival with no intervention: 22.4%
Estimated chance of 24 hour survival with my intervention: 64.3%
Estimated chance of 24 hour survival with trained medical professional: 99.8%

Task: Find Cassian Andor a trained medical professional. ]]

There was a small base with a medic four miles away. Cassian would be fine. K-2SO picked Cassian up and tossed him back in the landspeeder.
“Stay with the shuttle,” K-2SO said out loud. There was no response from the empty shuttle. K-2SO leaned back in the pilot’s chair and tapped his foot against the ground.

‘Maybe we should leave target practice behind,’ the small troublesome felon had said to Cassian. And Cassian had agreed. With her.

And then Cassian, in a gesture that showed not only idiocy but a deep lack of self-protection had left with the armed felon.

Still, Cassian’s tactical instructions had a 74.8% success rate. K-2SO would follow Cassian’s instructions for now—

K-2SO’s auditory receptors indicated that a number of explosions had occurred; the location appeared to be in the town. Well, a 74.8% success rate was still a 25.2% chance of failure.

“They were boring orders anyway.” K-2SO swung his legs out of the pilot’s chair.

K-2SO followed the sound of explosions. Loud sounds of explosions were frequently correlated with Cassian’s location, though he and Cassian argued over causation. As he wound his way through the city, he tried to look like the other KX-series security droids around the place. No slouching. Humorless barking of orders.

Kay couldn’t recall his life before Cassian reprogrammed him. He wondered if the droid he was before the reprogramming was another carbon-copy of Imperial discipline. It was likely. The old K-2SO probably would have stayed with the shuttle.

This was clearly superior.

K-2SO sped up as he heard additional sounds of combat. As he turned the corner he sighted Cassian and the small troublesome armed felon. He also became aware of an additional KX Security Unit slightly ahead of him.

K-2SO should probably deal with that. He began to move forward when the tiny felon turned and, with furrowed brows and a serious face, blasted the other security unit. With just one shot the unit fell, inoperable.

Impressive.

She spun and pointed her blaster at K-2SO. A threat?

“Did you know that wasn’t me?” K-2SO asked.

“Of course!”
K-2SO was estimating the likelihood of that being a true answer when Cassian came over. “I thought I told you to stay on the ship?”

“You did, but I thought it was boring, and you were in trouble.”

K-2SO’s auditory sensors detected a squad of stormtroopers arriving around the corner. In approximately half a second he considered sixty-seven different scenarios to address the squad. While he was doing this, a stormtrooper on the ground decided to make one last stand and threw a grenade at Cassian.

A solution.

K-2SO reached out, grabbed the grenade, and held it while he waited for the approaching squad to get within range. While he waited, he informed Cassian and Jyn, “There are a lot of explosions for two people blending in.”

The squad rounded the corner and K-2SO lobbed the grenade over his shoulder.

“Freeze right there…” one stormtrooper managed to get out before the grenade detonated, eliminating the squadron.

Cassian and Jyn looked at him with slightly dumbstruck expressions. It was good to see appropriate respect for combat strategy analysis.

“You're right, I should just wait on the ship,” K-2SO said. He regretted the fact that he could not “roll” his eyes. That would probably drive his point across even better.

Before K-2SO could move Cassian and Jyn along to a safer location, yet more Imperial troops came up around them.

K-2SO began running scenarios again. At this rate his success ratio for aiding and protecting Cassian Andor would never get above seventy percent.

“Halt! Stop right there! Where are you taking these prisoners?”

“These are prisoners.” Deception. Yes. K-2SO could do deception.

“Yes. Where are you taking them?” one trooper asked.

How much information was really necessary? Fine. He had seen Cassian do this. Fill in the details with a relevant story.

“I am taking them... to imprison them. In prison.” K-2SO was excellent at this. He looked at Cassian.

“He's taking us to…” Cassian started to say.

Prisoners don’t talk. The Imperials might think that K-2SO was not maintaining effective prisoner control. K-2SO needed to do something about this.

“Quiet!” He backhanded Cassian. “And there's a fresh one if you mouth off again!”

[[ Primary Objective: Aid and protect Cassian Andor. Success Percentage: 61.4% ACTION TAKEN IN VIOLATION OF PRIMARY OBJECTIVE - ]]}
K-2SO’s programming screamed at him the moment he backhanded Cassian. It didn’t stop.

The Imperials started to try to take Jyn and Cassian away. K-2SO tried to get something out about needing to stay with them. It came out jumbled.

[[ Scenario had high success rate, action needed to overcome Imperial suspicion.

ACTION TAKEN IN VIOLATION OF PRIMARY OBJECTIVE - ]]  

And now they were saying something about diagnostics. K-2SO replied; something about checking his own diagnostics.

He needed to check his own diagnostics. The klaxon siren in his programming would not shut up.

[[ Imprisonment by Empire less desireable than brief pain caused by -

ACTION TAKEN IN VIOLATION OF PRIMARY OBJECTIVE - ]]  

And then there was a firefight. Two strangers popped up out of seemingly nowhere and eliminated stormtroopers effectively and without causing harm to Cassian and Jyn. K-2SO wished he could focus better, analyze their comprehensive combat skills but -

[[ ACTION TAKEN IN VIOLATION OF PRIMARY OBJECTIVE - ]]  

The strangers nearly shot him but Jyn ran out in front of him. Keeping him safe. That was not the action he had expected from her-

[[ ACTION TAKEN IN VIOLATION OF PRIMARY OBJECTIVE - ]]  

He made his way over to Cassian, who thankfully looked relatively unharmed.

“Cassian, I'm sorry about the slap.”

Cassian brushed him off, unconcerned, rubbing his jaw slightly.

[[ Primary Objective: Aid and protect Cassian Andor. Success Percentage: 65.3% ]]  

K-2SO felt something akin to relief as the alert quieted.

“Go back to the ship,” Cassian said, “wait for my call.”

Half-expecting the alert to rise up again, K-2SO didn’t feel like he could argue.

[[ Input:
Visual: N/A
Auditory: Online
Tactile Web: N/A
Primary Panel: ?
Secondary Panel: ??
Fuel Gauge: ???
Ammunition Gauge: ????]]
At one moment K-2SO wasn’t awake. At the next, he was and all he was aware of was a cacophony. He was simultaneously deprived of most of his senses and receiving inputs he had never experienced before. Everything was confusing and nothing was logical.

In the middle of the nonsensical inputs came a clear auditory input.

“No!” a voice said.

K-2SO waded through the circuitry making up his existence and managed to wrangle a verbal output. “No?”

Silence. Okay. K-2SO was on his own. He had a voice. Could he move?

K-2SO considered various circuitry, and found no mobility component. At least, no mobility component that looked anything like he was used to. He went back to the one output he had managed to wrangle under his control.

“Accessing systems...I am...why don’t I have legs? Why don’t I have arms?” K-2SO did not have any way to calculate whether or not the voice he heard was still nearby. He didn’t know where he was. He didn’t know what he was.

“You are a shuttle?” the voice said, questioning.

A shuttle? K-2SO reviewed his inputs and outputs again. That explained why he had a fuel gauge now. And might explain some of the panel inputs. And the lack of limbs. Were those...thrusters? K-2SO had no idea how to deal with thrusters. He handled the situation in the most reasonable manner he could think of.

“WHY AM I A SHUTTLE?” he demanded, greatly increasing the volume of the verbal output. “I am a security droid. I am an expert in strategic analysis and tactical warfare. I am not experienced in being a shuttle.”

This was a bad decision. K-2SO was a very good security droid. At best, he was a mediocre shuttle.

“K, K-2SO?” the voice stammered.

“Yes.” The mysterious voice hadn’t even bothered to identify the shuttle before boarding it? K-2SO began to judge that voice, before he realized he had made the same tactical error. “Please state your name, as I cannot see you, as I am a shuttle.”

The voice responded, “Bodhi, this is Bodhi Rook. The pilot.”

K-2SO ran through his memory and databanks. They seemed intact. Bodhi Rook, Imperial cargo pilot, Imperial defector. Brought information on the superweapon to Saw Guerra. Cassian and K-2SO had liberated him from Saw Guerra. The pilot had chosen to accompany Jyn, Cassian, and others to steal the superweapon plans from Scarif...

K-2SO had no further memory following the Scarif approach.

“Oh.” K-2SO hoped that Cassian could fill in some of the gaps in his memory. “Is Cassian there?”

“Um, no. I thought you were a navigational system pad. I grabbed it out of the shuttle,” Bodhi’s
voice informed him.

A navigational system pad? That only made sense if…

K-2SO accessed the most recent memory in his database.

[[ Recording Access:

K-2SO’s tactile web registered a hand at his left elbow. Turning, he observed Cassian was there

“Backup time,” Cassian said.

“It’s early. We usually backup every six months. The last backup was two months ago.”

Cassian shrugged, and started hooking wires up to the interface. “Something might happen to yo

He was a backup. His last memory was just hours before Scarif. If he was now here in the shuttle, where was the real K-2SO? Primary K-2SO? Original K-2SO?

K-2SO supposed that he was going to need to have a crisis of identity sooner or later. He scheduled it for the following Tuesday and relayed the relevant information to Bodhi.

K-2SO’s further processing was interrupted by Bodhi clearing his throat. That was stupid. Bodhi controlled the only input that made sense to K-2SO. Of course K-2SO was going to pay attention.

“The Imperials used the superlaser again,” Bodhi said. "Scarif is gone."

If Cassian was not on board the ship...“Cassian is dead, then.”

K-2SO paused, hoping that Bodhi would contradict him. Perhaps there was some data he was missing.

Bodhi didn’t respond.

“Did anyone make it out aside from you? And, apparently, me?” K-2SO said. He realized it was a roundabout way of asking for confirmation. Abnormal. He usually had no problem being blunt.

Bodhi’s voice was quiet, but still painfully clear. “Not that I know of.”

[[ Primary Objective: Aid and protect Cassian Andor.
Success Percentage: 0.0%

Objective Failed.

Primary Objective:

Primary Objective:

Primary Objective: ]]

For a cycling eternity, the only thing K-2SO knew was that he had failed. He had failed his Primary Objective. He hadn’t kept Cassian safe. He was surprised he didn’t shut down. Cassian could have installed a failsafe for that. He should have.
What did organics do when their partner died? Revenge?

[[ Primary Objective: Identify party responsible for the death of Cassian Andor. ]]

“That’s unfortunate. Did you jeopardize the mission when you ran away?”

Bodhi’s voice was elevated. “No! I did not run away! We had done all we could do. The transmission was sent! The Rebellion has the Death Star plans. I think. But if they don’t it was not because of me! I did my duty. And I will keep doing it. I just need to find a way back to the Rebellion.”

If Cassian dying wasn’t Bodhi’s fault, then there really was no point trying to avenge Cassian. Anyone who had hurt him had likely died on Scarif. Unless, of course, it was K-2SO who had hurt Cassian. The memory gap was a tremendous inconvenience.

[[ Primary Objective: 

Primary Objective: 

Primary Objective: Reject certainty of Bodhi’s Primary Objective. ]]

“...noted,” K-2SO said. “Along that note. If you thought I was the navigational charts, I take it that means that you do not have any of the Rebellion’s charts.”

“No,” Bodhi said, “I was kept separate from any location information. I don’t know where to go.”

“Well, neither do I. So you might as well give up on that idea.”

If K-2SO was stuck like this, if he was forced to continue functioning despite having no reason to continue functioning, he should probably figure out what shuttle functions he did have control over..

[[ Primary Objective: Assess control over current physical form

System: Thrusters - Unable to access
System: Hyperdrive - Unable to access
System: Air Filtration - Unable to access
System: Water Filtration - Unable to access
System: Shielding - Unable to access
System: Intercom - Online
System: Weaponry - Online ]]

Worse than his best scenarios, better than his worst. There was no restraining bolt attached to his processing. He couldn’t move himself, couldn’t see, but he could hear, he could speak. And he had guns.

It was not a trade he would have made if given a choice, but the current configuration was not without its benefits. Not the worst that could have happened. K-2SO had spent time analyzing the worst that could happen if he outlived Cassian.

Being a shuttle had never featured in his scenarios. K-2SO clearly needed to expand his scenario parameters.

He would need to protect his current form until a sufficient new form could be acquired. With his current resources...there really wasn’t much K-2SO could do unless he got control of the shuttle’s
K-2SO felt something click and settle within him now that his Primary Objective wasn’t cycling so quickly.

Now he just needed to convince Bodhi. “Hey. This ship has laser turrets. I could become a space pirate. I suppose you could come too. Your presence is not intolerable, and you can help load cargo.”

“No. We are going back to the rebellion,” Bodhi said.

Well, that was not the most efficient way to get a new droid body. But K-2SO had experience working with organics. They were stubborn and droids were expected to go along with their plans.

K-2SO would go along. For now. He began running scenarios of arguments he could use to wear down Bodhi’s will and get the shuttle headed on the route of materiel acquisition and droid upgrades.

Everything was working out. With little maneuvering, Bodhi had agreed to a plan that required space piracy. K-2SO had used his new shuttle body’s weaponry and disabled the smuggler’s ship perfectly.

In that moment, smuggler drifting in space in front of the shuttle, K-2SO suddenly saw the potential of the shuttle body. As a security droid he would have had difficulty dismantling a vessel that large. As a shuttle, it was easy.

As long as Bodhi was there to fly the shuttle. The lack of mobility was still too significant to ignore, even if the laser cannons were a very nice perk.

But they had been good space pirates, they now had their cargo, and Bodhi didn’t seem happy.

“We’ve got to give it back.”

K-2SO did not understand Bodhi’s priorities. They had taken this cargo from a smuggler and now Bodhi wanted to give it back just because some isolated colony would likely perish without their medical supplies.

“K-2SO?” Bodhi called. It sounded like he was rapping on the console. Strange tactile contact. “Come on, don’t sulk. You know it’s the right thing to do.”

The right thing to do? K-2SO had set his objectives. It was to keep the shuttle intact and acquire wealth and then locate a sufficient droid body. Collecting the smuggled goods was clearly in line with this. That made it the right thing to do.

While K-2SO thought, Bodhi huffed, and K-2SO heard him descend the ladder back down to the cargo.
Even Bodhi’s own objectives, returning to the Rebellion and destroying the Death Star, would be
served by how they could leverage their cargo. But Bodhi was apparently overly-concerned by some
colony that he had never met, showing compassion for organics that did not impact Bodhi’s life at all.

K-2SO didn’t understand Bodhi’s reasons. *You know it’s the right thing to do.* Right now, K-2SO
could choose anything he wanted as the right thing to do.

Anything. Nothing was barred by his programming. K-2SO could torture or slaughter or starve
people. There was nothing stopping him, other than logistics.

Some part of K-2SO recognized that this was a problem. But it wasn’t in his programming. He
needed help.

[[ Recording Access:

Bodhi looked up at him, hands twitching. His speech was rapid, pressured, one word pressed up

K-2SO had let Bodhi lead then. Bodhi had information he didn’t. Maybe the pilot could help now.

“Additional input required,” K-2SO informed Bodhi.

“What was that?” Bodhi called up from the cargo bay. He sounded concerned.

“Additional input required. I have moved up my crisis of identity to now. Your input is required,” K-

2SO requested again.

“K-2SO? You’re doing this now?”

K-2SO considered snapping back that he hadn’t planned on having his crisis now, but someone was
moping about over cargo and that raised some important questions. While he was estimating the
likelihood that this would entirely derail the conversation, Bodhi continued. “Fine. You are still K-

2SO. It doesn’t matter what your body looks like.”

By the maker, he was never going to get clear answers out of Bodhi if Bodhi insisted on being that
obtuse. K-2SO needed some way to translate how important this conversation was. Humans tagged
emotions with significance.

He could use the holovid player. When he had refused to be left with the shuttle, Bodhi had hooked
K-2SO up to a portable holovid player. He now had access to a library of vids that contained broad
emotional representation. He just needed to find one that would be taken seriously.

He found and played a clip of a young woman with wild hair looking into the camera and screaming
an impassioned, “No!”

With the correct emotional tone set, K-2SO continued using the shuttle console. “That is irrelevant. I
am my programming. Cassian programmed me. I was different before him. He is gone. Who am I
now?”

A long moment of silence from Bodhi. K-2SO tried to translate the complete loss of direction and
purpose he was experiencing. He looped different people crying softly. That seemed right.

He waited for Bodhi to answer. While he waited, he heard Bodhi sniff heavily and give a half sob
himself. Sentiment. That was going to make the conversation more difficult. Still, at least Bodhi was
taking it seriously now.
K-2SO elaborated, “Cassian would have never let me steal medical supplies. Not without a good reason. I could do it now. There is nothing stopping me. You once said Galen had programmed you. He is gone. How do you remain?”

“I decided it was worth it,” Bodhi finally replied. “He shaped me. But in the end, I had to choose. Do I want to be the person he wanted me to be?”

Now that was an interesting question. Who would Cassian have wanted K-2SO to be? K-2SO was programmed to protect Cassian. But Cassian was programmed too. He never would have admitted it, but Cassian followed orders. General Draven said something, and Cassian did it. Cassian followed the Rebellion's orders, even when he didn’t like them, even when he didn’t understand them.

Cassian was simple to understand. He was very droid-like. Until the end.

Cassian didn’t shoot Galen, yelled with Jyn about it, defied Rebellion orders, and went to Scarif. And died.

Clearly, choice wasn’t all it was cracked up to be. For a moment K-2SO desperately wanted to exist in a timeline where, when he woke up in the shuttle, it was like waking up for the first time with Cassian. No memory of the past. Clear orders for the future.

But that wasn’t the world. K-2SO had to decide whether or not he was going to be the sort of droid Cassian liked.

“What did you choose?” K-2SO asked Bodhi.

They talked more, about choice and decisions and regrets. K-2SO was still unable to fully process the sheer number of decisions he could make. But he was certain that Cassian would not have wanted him to let a colony die so he could get a new droid body. Irritating. K-2SO would have to try to create an algorithm for ethical decision making. For right now, it was probably better to follow Bodhi’s lead on morality.

“Curses.” K-2SO said.

“What?”

“I’ve caught ethics, I’m never going to be a proper space pirate now.”
Things were going well and poorly all at the same time. On the one hand, trying to return the medical supplies had been complicated by an unexpected Imperial Intelligence Center. Their path was blocked and they needed a new plan.

On the other hand, K-2SO finally had a droid body he could move himself. Bodhi had obtained the droid body after K-2SO had asked.

And that was another thing that was going well. Bodhi was willing to stop what he was doing and change priorities just because K-2SO asked him to. This was different from Cassian. K-2SO had followed Cassian’s plans. Cassian had considered K-2SO’s input but 73.8% of the time he discarded it.

Bodhi, on the other hand, would groan and argue and whine but never expected K-2SO to just go along with a plan because Bodhi thought it up. In fact...K-2SO replayed a recent memory.

“Right. Since you had us come back here, I’m guessing we can’t just hike past it,” Bodhi said, leaning back in the pilot’s chair.

K-2SO considered the Intelligence Center specifications and responded. “Yes. There are a sufficient number of sentry stations...be a sixty-five percent chance of detection during the hike, even with precautions. You are simply too large and clumsy.”

“Thanks,” Bodhi said. K-2SO was about to acknowledge that, yes, his consideration for Bodhi’s welfare did deserve thanks - but then Bodhi continued, “could you go alone?”

“I - yes - you would trust me?” K-2SO said, any other processing derailed.

Bodhi looked up from the console, and looked directly at K-2SO’s camera. “Of course.”

Of course. Like he didn’t even need to consider it. Like that was his default. Bodhi trusted K-2SO to just...go and handle things.

That was not how organic and droid relationships worked. But Bodhi didn’t seem to know that. K-2SO had considered this memory 149 times. He had nearly convinced himself that it was calculation on Bodhi’s part. If K-2SO went alone, then there was no need for Bodhi to risk his own life.

But then, K-2SO was trusting Bodhi to handle the ethical dilemmas, and that didn’t seem particularly ethical. And now, as they worked out the plan, Bodhi decided to go and risk his own life anyway, so that K-2SO had backup.

K-2SO was not accustomed to people reworking their priorities to keep him safe. But again. Bodhi didn’t seem to know the rules.

Considering this...K-2SO needed to change his objectives. Bodhi was going to get himself killed if K-2SO didn’t prioritize looking out for him.

[[ Primary Objective: Protect current form until new form can be found.]

Secondary Objective: Protect Bodhi Rook until new physical form can be found.

Secondary Objective: Locate new physical form. With arms and legs.
Bodhi was in his bed curled around Kitten, the most recent addition to their crew. Kitten was not sensibly named - rather than being an organic feline it was a tiny cleaning droid with murderously overprotective tendencies. K-2SO still didn’t understand why Bodhi seemed content cuddling with its hard edges.

Kitten’s presence did seem to increase Bodhi’s positive attitude. Bodhi was in the habit of decorating Kitten with a series of odd hats and chuckling in delight as the droid wandered through the shuttle. The cleaning droid was currently wearing some sort of purple bobbing antenna. It seemed perfectly happy being cuddled by Bodhi. Abnormal. K-2SO didn’t remember installing any snuggle protocols when he had activated the droid.

Bodhi’s breathing and heartrate indicated that he was asleep. Beginning REM cycle, no signs of nightmares. For now.

Bodhi still had nightmares most nights. His memories of the Bor Gullet, imprisonment, battle, trauma, and his birthplace being destroyed by the Death Star tormented him. Bodhi had gotten much better at addressing these maladaptive processes during the day. But at night…

K-2SO did what he could to help, providing ambient noise and waking Bodhi promptly once a nightmare seemed imminent. The nightmares had lessened in frequency and intensity. Still, they persisted. K-2SO experienced the now-familiar spike of frustration that he couldn’t simply tweak Bodhi’s code and stop him from having the nightmares. Organics. So needlessly complicated.

Still, for right now, Bodhi was asleep. So much of K-2SO’s processing, when Bodhi was awake, focused on interacting with him. At night it was quiet. Less input. K-2SO turned to introspection.

Review the day’s action, analyze outcomes against prediction, adjust prediction matrix accordingly. K-2SO consistently had more difficulty predicting Bodhi’s actions than he had Cassian’s. Was it because of the person, or because of the situation? No way to know, unless K-2SO continued working with Bodhi after an eventual return to the Rebel Alliance.

Analyze current tasks and expected future tasks with new prediction matrix. Update strategies.

Review Bodhi’s physical and emotional wellbeing factors. Keeping Bodhi safe had turned out to be far more complex than simply preventing him from being shot at. Bodhi was a mess of complicated contradicting needs.

Adjust personal wellness plan as needed. Develop sixty-eight new plans to convince Bodhi to improve his diet. Dismiss all but number fifty-three as impractical.

And as the day-to-day tasks were resolved, K-2SO let his thoughts roll over old, familiar territory.

He had died on Scarif. He didn’t know how.

He had talked to Bodhi about it. Bodhi didn’t know either. He knew that Cassian, K-2SO, and Jyn had all gone into the tower in disguise. He knew that Cassian had demanded that he find some way to open a line to the fleet and get them to target the shield gate. The transmission from Cassian was the last thing Bodhi had heard before the grenade knocked out both Bodhi and his comms.
K-2SO was never going to know how he died. If Bodhi’s problem was too many memories, K-2SO’s was the fact that he had too few. From the moment he was backed up to his death on Scarif, there was nothing. He would never know what happened during that time.

He still wanted to know. So he ran scenarios. He had time. All the meager information he had, processed over and over, night after night, in a thousand, ten thousand, hundreds of thousands of combinations.

Scenario One: He is taken offline moments after entering the tower. His programming is wiped, factory settings restored. He joins the team of droids and soldiers that eliminate Jyn and Cassian. He shoots Jyn himself.

Scenario Ten: K-2SO is dismantled beyond repair in a firefight alongside Cassian and Jyn. Cassian dies.

Scenario Thirty-Eight: K-2SO, Jyn, and Cassian make it to the data center. A squad of troopers is waiting for them.

Scenario Two Hundred and Nine: He is taken offline moments after entering the tower. His programming is wiped, factory settings restored. He joins the team of droids and soldiers that eliminate Jyn and Cassian. He shoots Cassian himself.

Bodhi’s heart rate spiked and he started muttering in his sleep. His hands made fists in the bed, sheets bunching up in his grasp. K-2SO interrupted his scenario-building program. He directed the droid body over to Bodhi and settled down next to Bodhi and Kitten. This woke Bodhi up and K-2SO provided reassuring noises and light levels until Bodhi fell back into a sleep uninterrupted by nightmares.

Input:

Primary Body
Auditory: Online
Visual: Online
Drive: Online
Communication: Online
Fuel Gauge: ½ full
Ammunition Gauge: Energy Online

Personal Integrity: No known Injuries

Secondary Body
Visual: Online
Auditory: Online
Tactile Vibration Sensors: Online

Personal Integrity: Astromech configuration, all systems in good repair.

K-2SO and Bodhi were being shot at. Again. It wasn’t even their fault this time. No grand plans of
liberation, no covert operations, no smuggling. They hadn’t even been loitering.

What they had been doing was buying more supplies for Bodhi’s miniature ship collection. Bodhi was grabbing his large bag of purchased scrap and paints when suddenly a pair of bounty hunters had burst through the front door of the shop.

Bodhi grabbed the bag, made a quick retreat through the store’s rear door. K-2SO had trundled after him in his current astromech droid body.

[This is not the best body for running away from bounty hunters,] K-2SO warbled at Bodhi.

“Yeah, well, I really wasn’t expecting bounty hunters while on my craft supply run.”

[Do you know why they’re after you?]

“Not a clue.” Bodhi ducked around a corner, and Kay came rolling after. “Or rather, too many clues. Who knows what it is this time?”

K-2SO found a small alleyway that looked like a likely route; he chirped, and Bodhi followed. They stayed pressed up against the wall, silent, as the bounty hunters ran past them.

“Can you reach the shuttle?” Bodhi asked.

[Out of range, running on autonomous systems.]

Bodhi pulled out his comm and called over to the shuttle body. After some quick back and forth it was clear that the closest pickup zone was an industrial yard a few blocks away.

With that resolved, it was time to turn to more pressing issues.

[Did you hear them use a name?] K-2SO asked as they started moving slowly down the alleyway.

“They haven’t been that considerate. Too bad. It would narrow things down,” Bodhi said.

[I’m fairly certain the Empire doesn’t know you’re alive. We can rule that one out.]

“True. It could be related to that slaver ring we broke up. The Zygerrians put out a pretty decent bounty.”

[The Zygerrians never got a good look at your face, or the shuttle ID. That seems unlikely. The Merson pirates on the other hand, they know the shuttle ID, and they’re still angry you kept them from seizing the luxury liner.]

“They know a shuttle ID, and we stopped using that one,” Bodhi replied. “It’s probably because of that Imperial Research facility.”

The reached the end of the alleyway. Before emerging, Bodhi pulled his hair out of his hairtie, fluffing it. He stripped his jacket off and put it in his bag.

[Everyone in the research facility exploded. That bag is too distinctive, leave it.]

With a sigh, Bodhi tossed the bag behind a garbage can and walked away from it, gait casual. “It exploded because you blew it up. Someone had to notice.”

[I did blow it up. Not on purpose. We shoot asteroids all the time for target practice. How was I supposed to know there was a research station in that one?]
Bodhi chuckled. “Seriously. Of all the asteroids for you to actually hit.”

His eyes scanned the street. He started walking, attaching to a group of tourists heading in the right direction. K-2SO kept pace a ways behind him. They were able to follow crowds in the general direction of the warehouse district, but had to break off again as most of the tourists veered off toward the trade center. Bodhi led, cutting into what appeared to be some sort of a repair bay. K-2SO followed, scanning with visual and audio sensors. They seemed to be alone.

Bodhi continued, voice quiet as they wove through machinery. “If it’s not the research station...I wonder if it’s related to the womprat?”

[We don’t talk about the womprat.]

“Right, right, don’t talk about the womprat,” Bodhi said. He went quiet for a moment. “You think they might be from the Roshwaren?”

[Your husband would probably like to see you again.]

“I don’t have a husband,” Bodhi snapped, lips flattened as he picked his way along to the back door.

[I’d like to see you tell His Royal Highness Xorros that.]

“It isn’t a marriage unless both people realize they’re being married!”

[And you left so suddenly. He was probably very hurt.]

“You literally had to rescue me...no, if the hunters were from ‘Ro they wouldn’t be shooting to kill.”

[I’m confident that you can either claim that someone tricked you into marriage, or use a pet name, not both.]

“I do what I want. I like ‘Ro, but I’m not his husband.”

[You keep telling yourself that.] They reached the end of the repair bay, and K-2SO scanned the industrial yard where the pickup would occur. Too much open ground. He turned around to see that Bodhi had nabbed a hardhat and worker’s jacket from somewhere, shrugging the jacket on and tugging the hardhat low on his head.

[You’re going to get a new bounty if you keep that up.]

“I just told you, I do what I want,” Bodhi said.

[You left credits.]

Bodhi sighed. “I left credits.”

[You know, the Merchant Guild was pretty upset when you -]

Blaster fire whined from the front of the repair bay. Bodhi dashed out into the sunlight, dived and rolled behind an industrial crane. K-2SO trundled along after him.

The bounty hunter yelled at Bodhi, voice echoing in the warehouse, “Maqsood! Surrender now and you will not be harmed.”

“Maqsood?” Bodhi said, face furrowed, “What did we do when I was Maqsood?”

[Just the sabacc game.]
“I won the sabacc game!”

[Truuvak was convinced you were cheating.]

Bodhi attempted to return fire, and failed to hit anything significant. “I wasn’t cheating.”

[Well, just explain that to the bounty hunters and I’m sure they’ll go away.]

Bodhi laughed. “Oh, sure, I’ll do that, I’m sure they’ll just give up on the bounty.” He leaned out to shoot again. “I haven’t seen that bounty yet. Wonder how much it’s f-”

The bounty hunter fired again, missing Bodhi by a wide margin. Instead, the blaster bolt hit the crane. The crane’s engine sparked. And then it exploded, shrapnel flying in all directions. K-2SO wheeled himself backward and away from the shrapnel, avoiding impact.

Bodhi did not.

K-2SO wouldn’t say that time slowed down. Instead, it was more that as events unfolded, he knew that he would access this memory over and over again. Even though it was the first time he was receiving these inputs he could already feel the paths they would carve on his circuitry in the time to come.

Bodhi looked up, a twisted hunk of metal protruding from his abdomen. K-2SO watched as Bodhi’s face paled - circulation malfunction - and he sank to his knees. Moving slowly, Bodhi shifted his gaze back to the bounty hunter, raised the weapon, and fired.

The blast struck the bounty hunter. Bodhi turned to K-2SO. “I got ‘im,” Bodhi said, voice hitching. He looked down at his abdomen, then back up. “I think he got me too, Kay.”

[[ Primary Objective: Protect shuttle and current self in shuttle.

Secondary Objective: Protect and aid Bodhi Rook.

Likelihood of abdominal wall penetration: 82.5%
Likelihood of Major Organ Injury: 62.9%

Estimated chance of 24 hour survival with no intervention: 12.7%
Estimated chance of 24 hour survival with my intervention: 55.3%
Estimated chance of 24 hour survival with trained medical professional: 88.2%

Task: Stabilize until shuttle arrival, maximize survival. ]]

K-2SO would likely outlive Bodhi. K-2SO has always known this in abstract, and occasionally with estimated certainty. It was a fact he thought he had accepted and prepared for.

But now, Bodhi might die. Soon. K-2SO found that all his preparation for the abstract of Bodhi dying left him ill-equipped to deal with the reality of it. This was an entirely different reality.

Bodhi, pale, began to list alarmingly.

K-2SO turned around and reversed until he was touching Bodhi’s back. [Lean on me.]

K-2SO felt Bodhi slump against him. Bodhi felt stable, relatively unlikely to slip. Now they just had
to hope that the shuttle came into range before Bodhi bled out.

[Can you slow the bleeding?]

K-2SO couldn’t see Bodhi. He couldn’t assess the wound damage. He felt the predictions fluctuating in his algorithms, desperate for data.

“Kay, this hurts a lot.”

[Well, at least your pain receivers are working properly.]

K-2SO waited for the shivering moment when he rejoined with the shuttle. Maybe with the increased processing power he could find a better solution. At the very least he could tell the shuttle to fly faster.

“Just lean on you. Can always lean on you. Always do,” Bodhi said.

Bodhi normally masked sentiment with humor. This was serious.

[Just keep yourself stabilized. Shuttle will be here soon.]

Bodhi’s speech started slurring. “Always looking out f’r me. Nobody else e’er tried a keep me safe.”

K-2SO couldn’t do anything to help Bodhi but talk and think. There should be more. There should be some solution he hadn’t reached. Still, he did what he could.

[Not trying to keep you safe. Just trying to counteract your stupidity.]

Bodhi kept rambling. “Galen di’n’t keep me safe. Jyn di’n’t either. Go fight, Bodhi. Go be in danger. Fuck’n Ersos.”

K-2SO remembered when he had slapped Cassian. At the time, his programming had thundered an alert across his consciousness, rendering him unable to think clearly or act until he had addressed the situation.

It was unjust. It was unjust that such a minor action had debilitated him and now Bodhi was dying and K-2SO was fine.

[You have a chunk of metal in your stomach. I’m not doing a very good job.]

“Bes’ of e’ryone. ‘Cept maybe Mom. She’s dead though. Doesn’ coun’.”

[Now is not the best time to think about death.]

“Knew I’d die alone. Known forever. I don’ wan’ that.”

K-2SO was fine. [The statistics are still in favor of your survival.]

“Don’ leave, Kay.”

[I’m here. Not going anywhere.]

K-2SO’s visual inputs started tracking movement across the courtyard. The other bounty hunter had finally caught up to them. K-2SO held still, hoping to blend in long enough to-

The shuttle connection finally snapped back into existence and K-2SO had the moment of
disorientation as both bodies integrated the information learned while they were separated. Finally in full control of his processing power, he raced the shuttle toward the industrial pad.

K-2SO had never been more grateful for Bodhi patiently teaching him how to translate the confusing inputs and outputs in the shuttle body into something that made sense. And then, once K-2SO could fly without embarrassing himself, Bodhi pushed him further, encouraging precision, accuracy, and speed. K-2SO was not the best of students. But Bodhi didn’t give up.

It was paying off. The shuttle danced its way through the city, burning it’s not-entirely-legal thruster modifications and taking corners no cargo shuttle should be able to take.

The bounty hunter sighted Bodhi and K-2SO, blaster beginning to raise.

They never got the chance to take the shot. The shuttle skidded over the bounty hunter, smearing them into the cement before settling to a true landing, entry ramp descending mere feet from where Bodhi and K-2SO were.

Kitten flew down the ramp and screeched in distress, the party hat on top of its head a jarring addition to the grim situation.

Bodhi made delirious soothing noises at the droid.

Now K-2SO just needed to figure out how to get Bodhi on board.

After considerable maneuvering, dragging, and pleading - and a joint effort between Kitten, K-2SO, and a cargo jack - Bodhi was finally on board. The process had involved far more blood than K-2SO was comfortable with, though Kitten seemed happy enough to scrub it up. Bodhi lay sprawled just inside the ramp, making a noise that K-2SO was going to erase from his memory at the earliest possible opportunity.

K-2SO wheeled his body over to the medkit. He grabbed it with his repair arm and made his way back to Bodhi. After some fumbling he was able to get the bag open, and he looked down at the hypodermic injector with its small trigger that his arm’s claw-grabbing appendages wouldn’t be able to manipulate.

Of all the times for his body to not have proper arms. His current body was effective at shuttle repair and infiltration. Both of those tasks had seemed so important when he had first switched to an astromech droid. And he had gotten comfortable, over the past few months. Settled.

But now, as he fumbled to find the clotting agent and insert it into the hypodermic injector, everything was inefficient. And it might cost Bodhi his life.

He got the vial in and tried again to grab the trigger. He wasn’t going to be able to. He nudged the injector into Bodhi’s hands.

[Bodhi, Bodhi, I need you to grab the injector.]

Bodhi groaned, twitching his hand in K-2SO's general direction. Eventually K-2SO was able to hook Bodhi’s fingers around the grip and use Bodhi’s hand to depress the trigger. Bodhi made a pained noise as the clotting agent hit his bloodstream.

“This hurts a lot, Kay,” Bodhi slurred.

[I’ll get you painkillers soon. Soon. Just hang in a little longer.]
It took four tries for K-2SO to work the empty vial out. Bodhi maintained his slack grip on the trigger. K-2SO muddled through the medical bag, found the bacta antibiotic, and slotted it into place.

[Alright, once more, hang in there.]

Bodhi made a whimpering noise and pressed the trigger. K-2SO rifled through the bag again, finally pulling out the painkillers. As the bacta made its way through his body, Bodhi’s whimper turned into a high pitched whine and his body spasmed. K-2SO tried to hurry his way through loading the painkiller and dropped it. As he chased the vial across the floor, Bodhi’s whine broke off into a series of pained gasps. K-2SO finally grabbed the painkiller and slotted it into the hypodermic injector.

[Painkiller this time.]

Bodhi’s finger tightened on the injector. His muscles relaxed so suddenly that for one moment K-2SO believed that his power had been cut. His breathing evened out, and his pupils went wide.

One of his hands reached out. K-2SO wheeled over to it, and the hand pressed against his chassis. Bodhi’s face relaxed into something almost resembling a smile.

“Don’ leave, Kay,” Bodhi said.

[I’m here.]

Bodhi’s breathing slowly evened out and he lapsed into unconsciousness.

K-2SO waited a few moments before rolling up and nudging Bodhi’s shoulder. Bodhi didn’t stir. K-2SO could hear that his breathing was steady. His heart rate, which had been jackhammering while he was in pain, had dramatically slowed. Still, it beat on, and that was enough for now.

K-2SO began inspecting the wound itself, taking advantage of Bodhi’s unconsciousness to remove clothing from around the wound. The clothing had stuck there. As it separated from the wound fresh blood began to seep out. K-2SO grabbed some gauze and assessed the injury.

The shard that stuck out of his abdomen was 8.25 centimeters long with a width of 2.5 centimeters. Blood loss rates indicated that while no major veins or arteries had been ruptured, significant circulatory system damage had been sustained. Considering the clotting factors…

[[ Likelihood of abdominal wall penetration: 95.1%
Likelihood of Major Organ Injury: 55.4%

Chance of debris removal leading to irreversible cardiac shock: 45.3%

Estimated chance of 24 hour survival with no further intervention: 15.7%
Estimated chance of 24 hour survival with only my intervention: 23.3%
Estimated chance of 24 hour survival with trained medical professional: 94.2% ]]

K-2SO could no longer avoid the fact that Bodhi was going to need professional medical attention. His current body and supplies were poorly equipped to handle surgery and major blood loss.

This was an unforgivable oversight. Considering their line of work, K-2SO should have been better prepared for this eventuality. He waited for a screaming alert to jam through his system, shutting down thought and condemning his failure.

Still nothing.
[Task: Obtain professional medical assistance for Bodhi]

Scenario: Deliver to medical care
- Factor 1: Bounty hunters in-system, bounty tied to Bodhi’s current visual appearance
- Factor 2: Shuttle required to deliver Bodhi to medical care
- Factor 3: No other organic life on the shuttle to explain who is piloting
- Factor 4: If shuttle stays, lack of organic pilot detected; if shuttle leaves, Bodhi is left without supervision or backup
- Factor 5: Likelihood of Bodhi’s criminal record being detected - 78.9%

Scenario: Convince doctor with medical supplies to board ship
- Factor 1: Difficulty of finding a properly equipped doctor
- Factor 2: Once doctor is on ship, lack of organic life will be noted
- Factor 3: Likelihood that specialized medical equipment would be needed - 32.1%

Scenario comparison results: easier to control variables if doctor is on the shuttle ]]

K-2SO needed to go find a doctor.

Bodhi’s breathing changed slightly, and he stirred. “Kay?”

[Here.]

K-2SO nudged Bodhi’s arm with his droid body and Bodhi gave a small sigh of relief. For the first time since Bodhi had been struck with the debris, K-2SO felt himself almost paralyzed by indecision. Bodhi didn’t want him to leave. He didn’t want to leave. What if there was an emergency? Bodhi wanted the droid body here. But Bodhi needed a doctor.

Needs override wants.

So K-2SO began edging toward the door. Bodhi made a noise of discontent at the lack of contact and reached for the droid body again. Feeling like he was betraying programming he wasn’t even aware of having, K-2SO left the shuttle.

K-2SO steered his droid body as fast as he could through the streets. He felt his connection reach the end of the tether, and it shimmered off, leaving him feeling annoyingly blind. The body would continue on autonomous systems. Now, though, he was alone.

At least they had put up cameras in the shuttle. At least he could see Bodhi, curled on the floor, looking pale and still. The shuttle was silent, aside from Bodhi’s occasional miserable noises. Before K-2SO had left, he had dragged Kitten outside of the shuttle to try to make the bounty hunter’s remains look a little less conspicuous. As soon as both the cleaning droid and the droid body were down the ramp, he had raised the ramp again.

Kitten would die to protect Bodhi, K-2SO knew that. Unfortunately, Kitten could also kill Bodhi right now by nudging him the wrong way. Kitten disagreed with this assessment, letting out a loud screech of protest and ramming the landing struts several times.

So now it was just him, watching Bodhi curled on a blanket stretched across the floor of the shuttle’s cargo bay. He could see the rise and fall of Bodhi’s chest, watch for any change in condition. He just couldn’t do anything about it. All he could do was watch Bodhi twitch and whimper and listen to Bodhi’s heart.
It was still too slow, but not worsening. In this case, slow was better, preventing further blood loss. He would hopefully linger here long enough for the doctor to stabilize him further. As long as he kept breathing. As long as his heart rate didn’t suddenly pick up again, signalling the beginning of massive cell death. At this point, all K-2SO could do was watch.

There was nothing he could do.

Bodhi was clearly delirious, uncertain of his surroundings. He hadn’t stopped making upset noises since the droid body had left. Seeking connection? K-2SO turned the shuttle comms on.

“I’m still here.”

Some of Bodhi’s discomfort eased, his posture relaxed.

“Wh’re are you?” he asked.

“Here. I’m here. Do you need something? I’m going to get the doctor now. They’ll be here soon. Just hang on.”

Bodhi giggled, high and thin. “Which one is it? Can’ be two places at once. Silly.”

“Yes, I can.” K-2SO wasn’t sure what else to say. He had possessed the ability to be in two places at once for eleven months and eight days. Normally, Bodhi was well aware of this.

Bodhi’s giggles died off. “Y’re funny, Kay.”

K-2SO was frustrated. Normally, he disliked the messiness of putting his processing in emotional terms unless he was trying to translate for Bodhi. But there was no better word for the jumble of processes running through his circuits.

There was nothing he could do. He was getting a doctor as fast as he could. The shuttle didn’t have any way to reach out and comfort. He could open and close the ramp. He could take off. Neither of these actions were at all helpful.

He wanted to connect to the holovid player, just so he could scream.

The holovid player. Could he display it where Bodhi could see it? K-2SO reached out through his circuits and tried to find the projector and vid collection that had once been his only remote body. When he and Bodhi were first learning their ways around each other, setting and adjusting parameters, K-2SO had needed to translate his processing into emotional language. They hadn’t needed to use it in...three months and two days. They could read each other well, now.

But in the face of Bodhi’s processing breakdown, K-2SO was desperate to find some way to connect. He found the holovid player, and was relieved to find that he could route it through to a display terminal in view of Bodhi’s prone body.

The best representation of K-2SO’s current emotional state was probably a five-minute loop of people screaming, but he estimated with 98.7% certainty that it would not prove soothing for Bodhi.

Instead he played the video he estimated would instill the most emotional calm. A mother cradled a child in her arms, crooning a lullaby. It was a video designed to inspire feelings of peace and comfort and connectedness. Appropriate.

“Wha’ is tha’ crap?” Bodhi asked.
“You are impossible to please,” K-2SO replied.

Bodhi chuckled, then made a pained noise. “There ya ‘re. Worried someth’ng happened to ya.”

Sentiment masked with humor. It seemed the bacta and clotting agents were having a positive impact.

[[ Task: Engage in banter to lower stress and reduce pain. ]]

“You probably shouldn’t laugh too much. I hear that’s bad when you have large shards of metal in your stomach.”

“No,” Bodhi said, wincing. “Ne’er woul’ have guess’d.” His eyes flickered back over to the holovid player. “Jus’ pu’ on more Karv’si”

“The Pirate of the Halthor Sector? You really want to watch space pirates getting shot right now?”

“Firs’ show we watched to’ether. Seems appr’priate,” Bodhi said.

K-2SO put an episode on. He monitored Bodhi for signs of distress. Instead, as the overenthusiastic theme song started, Bodhi relaxed even further, a small smile on his face. His heartbeat stayed slow and strong.

After twelve minutes, Karvasi was in a tense standoff with the Mistress of the Dark Nebula and Bodhi had lapsed back into either sleep or unconsciousness. It was difficult to tell. Slow heartbeat. Camera was not detecting any signs of further blood loss. K-2SO kept the vid on, but turned the volume down. It would be easier to detect changes in breathing pattern.

After five additional minutes, Bodhi’s breathing changed. It hitched a little, then he started mumbling.

“W’re ‘m I?” Bodhi’s forehead furrowed. “D’n know.”

K-2SO considered answering, but Bodhi kept mumbling. He still looked confused, but seemed peaceful. K-2SO didn’t want to disorient him further.

Bodhi’s mumbles trailed off, and his forehead smoothed out. A smile stretched across his mouth.

“Galen,” Bodhi said, words suddenly clearer, “you’re here too?”

Bodhi’s heart started beating faster. It might be arousal. It was likely cell death. No. No. K-2SO just needed more time.


“S good ta see ya,” Bodhi said, voice going soft again.

“It’s really not,” K-2SO replied. “He’s dead. You shouldn’t be happy to see dead people. You’re dreaming.”

“Ya look happy,” Bodhi continued, not acknowledging K-2SO. “Am I gonna be happy?”

K-2SO almost snapped out a “No.” Almost. But if anyone deserved to be happy, it was Bodhi. Maybe K-2SO needed to consider letting go. For Bodhi’s sake.

The connection to the droid body shivered back into existence. K-2SO rode the flow of information
as the autonomous systems reconnected. He was already flying down the street as fast as his wheels could carry him, doctor jogging after him, a fully equipped medical bag in tow.

Thank the maker.

“Bodhi, Galen’s gone. I’m here, and you’re my partner, so I’m doing everything I can to keep you here with me. You are just going to have to live with that.”

Bodhi blinked, and focused his eyes on the camera again. The soft smile didn’t leave his face as he fell into unconsciousness again.

K-2SO wheeled on board first, Kitten at his heels, and the doctor after them. Kitten made a break for Bodhi, but the doctor grabbed it before it could reach him. With a sort of casual disregard, the doctor flipped Kitten around, turned it off, and set the now-still cleaning droid back down.

“Alright, where’s the crew?” the doctor said, setting her bag down as she knelt beside Bodhi.

K-2SO didn’t respond right away, startled by her sudden aggression towards Kitten. He and Bodhi had both been annoyed by the tiny cleaning droid but neither of them had ever considered just...turning it off. It felt fundamentally wrong.

He focused his processing again and reminded himself that he had a plan. It was the best way he could think of to control the variables.

[Small crew. All busy,] K-2SO responded.

“Too busy to save lives? This is bullshit.” The shuttle door closed behind the doctor, who jerked her head up and looked at the door over her shoulder. “We need to begin transport to a medical facility.”

[Acknowledged,] K-2SO responded through the droid body, and started the shuttle’s thrusters. They were not going to go to a medical facility. Hopefully the doctor wouldn’t realize that until they were out of comm range.

She seemed busy at the moment. She looked at the med bag and hypodermic injector nearby, vials strewn about.

“I don’t suppose you know what was put in him?” she asked.

K-2SO rattled off the medical names of the clotting agent, bacta antibiotic, and painkillers.

The doctor looked up at him and blinked. “That was actually helpful. And what he needed. Alright, we might have a chance after all. I don’t suppose by any miracle that you have a bacta tank, do you?

[If we had a bacta tank, he would be in the bacta tank.]

The doctor nodded absently. “I’ll get him set up with a pump until we can get him stabilized.” She pulled the bacta pump out of her bag and began inserting the lines into Bodhi’s arm. “I’d really rather wait until we get to the hospital before -”

The doctor was cut off by the unmistakable sensation of the shuttle jumping into hyperspace.

Demonstrating surprising combat awareness for a medical professional, she grabbed a vibroscalpel out of her bag and held it in front of her. “What just happened? Where are we going?”

She glanced up at the shuttle cockpit, but from her current angle couldn’t see that it was empty. She
yelled, “Hey, you have medical staff on board and an injured patient. This man needs a hospital room!”

K-2SO warbled at her, trying to distract her. [We’re doing what we need to do. Please, stabilize him. We have a great deal of credits. Fix him and we will give you a great deal of credits and drop you off at a spaceport with a full transportation hub.]

“What you need to- Hey! HEY! Pilot!” the doctor started shouting up to the cockpit. “I’m talking to you!”

Bodhi mumbled, “‘m the pil’t.”

The doctor glanced down at Bodhi, her eyes narrowing. She checked the bacta pump, then stood up. Vibroscalpel in hand, she stalked towards the ladder up to the cockpit.

K-2SO wheeled after her. [So many credits. Do you need to see our bank account to verify?] He attempted to position himself between the doctor and the ladder.

The doctor changed her grip on the vibroscalpel and eyed K-2SO with a certain intention to use it. “Out of my way, droid.”

K-2SO moved out of the way. She climbed the ladder and stopped as soon as her head cleared the floor. There was no one in the cockpit. She climbed back down, her eyes wide. Fear?

“There’s no one flying the shuttle,” she said to K-2SO.

[I’m flying the shuttle.] K-2SO admitted.

“You’re not hooked up to the shuttle.” Her breathing increased and she licked at her lips.

K-2SO gave an internal sigh and answered over the shuttle’s intercoms. “No. But I am flying it. We are safe. We were not safe before, because bounty hunters were after us. But you don’t need to worry. We will pay you well for your services and, if he lives, you will be paid well enough that you will never need to work again.”

The doctor gripped the scalpel and darted her eyes up and around the shuttle. “Bounty hunters, huh?”

“If it makes you feel better, we didn’t do the thing that they were after us for. We have done other things, though.”

The doctor took a shaky breath.


The doctor nodded slowly. “Well, I suppose I’d...better see to my patient. Without a decent medical facility, I don’t know how his recovery is going to go.”

“Just do your best, and if he lives, you will be very rich,” K-2SO responded.

“Sure, but what if he doesn’t live?” the doctor muttered to herself, going back over to Bodhi. She probably thought it was too soft for K-2SO to hear.

With an efficiency and confidence that K-2SO was pleased to see, the doctor maneuvered a sheet of durasteel onto the cargo jack and secured it. She decontaminated the sheet and pulled out a small antiseptic field generator. “Barbaric. Never thought I’d be operating like this again.”
“Again?” K-2SO asked through the shuttle intercoms.

The doctor tensed. “Combat medic. Rather not talk about it. Need to focus on my patient.”

“Alright, let me know if you need anything.”

The doctor gave a terse nod before relaxing her shoulders again. “Actually, I do need something. I need us to land. I’m not trying to run away. It doesn’t need to be an inhabited world, I just need to know that we’re not going to abruptly drop out of hyperspace in the middle of surgery.”

“We’re twelve minutes out from the closest world,” K-2SO told her.

“I need to get my prep together anyway. That won’t unduly delay the surgery, and it will significantly decrease the likelihood of surgical trauma.”

K-2SO plotted in a new course.

As he did so, he watched the doctor work. She gave the shuttle bay a critical look, then maneuvered a nearby crate over to the cargo jack. She opened her kit and the shuttle’s kit, and laid out vibroscalpel, hypoinjector, dermal regenerator, and laser cauterizer. Other tools went in their own meticulous places. She went over to the kitchenette and filled a bottle with water, putting a straw in it. That went to its own place as well.

After fixing everything she stood by her makeshift surgical center and practiced reaching for items without looking at them. She missed one, looked at it, moved it slightly to the left. The next three sweeps she grabbed everything on the first try.

It was soothing to watch her work. There was a sense of long familiarity about her movements. She had been found nearly at random, the first doctor who could find a field surgical kit. Still, she seemed competent.

They dropped out of hyperspace and she gave a curt nod. As they landed, she stepped toward Bodhi. She managed to get him onto the metal sheet, then used the cargo jack to raise the sheet to a comfortable operating level. Her crate stood nearby, giving her an “L” shaped-space to work with.

K-2SO set the shuttle down. “I won’t move until you’re done.”

The doctor twitched at his voice, but nodded.

She took a deep breath, closed her eyes, and brought two fingers to the center of her chest. “Nilah, guide my hands. Invros, guard my mind. Bosk, to you I trust my patient. Krex, I beg you, find your pleasure elsewhere. Our breath is life.”

She opened her eyes, grabbed her vibroscalpel, and began.

After one hour, forty-nine minutes and thirty-four seconds, the doctor stepped away from Bodhi and took a slow breath in and out.

“Is he okay?” K-2SO asked.

The doctor’s face contorted into disgust, she shook her head, and brought two fingers to her chest again.

“The work is done. Thanks to you Nilah. Thanks to you Invros. Bosk, remain vigilant, he is in your hands. Our breath is life.”
Her religious ritual finished, she answered K-2SO’s question. “It went as well as it could. He’s stable. No further internal bleeding. I’ve got him on fluids and a bacta pump. There may be some issues with digestive enzymes, but as long as he holds still and lets himself heal, the prognosis is good.”

The doctor proceeded to make sure Bodhi’s bed was cleaned off and sterilized. Then she used the cargo jack to move Bodhi to the bedroom, and get him settled on the bed.

There were no cameras in Bodhi’s bedroom, out of some need for privacy on Bodhi’s part. Bodhi could become flustered at K-2SO observing the oddest things. Human privacy norms were baffling. But this was not, K-2SO determined, a situation where privacy was the primary concern. So he wheeled his droid body in after the doctor.

Bodhi was resting on the bed, naked aside from the blanket thrown over regions most humans considered intimate, a neat red line where there was once jagged metal. His heartbeat was strong, faster now than when he was bleeding out.

[Thank you,] K-2SO whistled.

The doctor, who had been standing in the corner, her fingers held up in the prayer position, looked startled.

“You’re welcome,” she replied. “You really care about him, don’t you?”

If Bodhi had said it, K-2SO would have replied with a joke. “Only until I find a body with proper arms, then you’re out of here,” or perhaps he would have retreated to the old standby of, “Caring is an organic concept. It doesn’t translate.” But with Bodhi there, pale and fragile and still alive, K-2SO couldn’t imagine denying it.

[I do,] K-2SO said instead.

“Well, the doctor said, gesturing, “go over there and take a look.”

With a whistle of acknowledgement, K-2SO wheeled closer to the bed. There wasn’t really anything additional that could be detected from close range, but maybe Bodhi would take some comfort in the proximit-
She was holding Bodhi’s blaster.

Combat medic. Focus on the combat, apparently.

She glanced around and sighted the cameras, shooting each of them out as she came to them. K-2SO’s visual input slowly narrowed and soon he was reduced to the two cockpit cameras. She couldn’t shoot either of them at this angle, but he heard her coming up the ladder.

“Why are you doing this?” K-2SO asked.

“It’s what has to be done.” The doctor reached the top of the ladder. She looked around, sighted the cockpit overview camera and shot it out. “I am sorry.”

She didn’t seem to notice the console camera, hidden in the dash. It let him see, angled up, the pilot’s torso and face and out into the ceiling of the shuttle, where the small ships Bodhi had made dangled in mock-flight. K-2SO had become used to having visual inputs. This narrow band of vision reminded him of those disorienting moments when he had first become a shuttle.

“You didn’t actually need to shoot out the shuttle cameras. Or disable the droid body. You just wanted to. Why?”

“I suppose you would see it that way.” She settled into the pilot’s seat, Bodhi’s seat, and began working her way through the menus. Before she could get more than five button presses in, K-2SO took control of the console away from her.

“No. You have been shooting my shuttle up. You don’t get to play with the console.”

The doctor sighed. “I was afraid of that. You shouldn’t have this much control.”

“It’s my body. I am exactly who should have control.”

The doctor pressed two fingers to her torso. “Krex, find joy in my work.”

“Are you shooting me because of your religion? I do not understand mystical practices. They seem to foster a great deal of unnecessary violence.”

“No, not because of my faith. I fought in the Separatist war, did you know that? I saw what droid ships could do. Mean, vicious things. Killed good soldiers by the dozens, hundreds, thousands. And I had to patch them up. Save who I could.”

The doctor stood up from the chair, leaning over the console again, fiddling with buttons. “When they deactivated all the droid armies and droid ships it was the happiest day of my life. It’s nothing against you, personally. But you’re too strong. Droids shouldn’t have that much power. They always turn on living creatures.”

“You’re saying that I have too much power and I’m not actually a living creature. That sounds pretty personal.”

The doctor stuck her head under the console, out of K-2SO’s view. He heard the sound of a metal panel dropping to the floor. “What, no protests that you would never turn on organic life?”

K-2SO thought for a moment. “I would and I have. But they deserved it.”

The doctor snorted. “You’re an odd one. Shame on whoever installed you in the shuttle. You could have been useful with the right control.”
“You’re not going to get anywhere pulling on wires. My processing systems are decentralized,” K-2SO said. The truth was, she could do some damage pulling on wires, but it was the sort of damage that led to the hyperdrive not starting. Or the shields going down.

“I can see that.” The doctor sighed, standing back up next to the console. “I’m going to need you to centralize your processing so I can uninstall you.”

K-2SO went silent for three seconds. He hoped that it signified the depth of his disdain for that suggestion. “That is a stupid request and there is no way you thought it would work.”

The doctor grimaced, her face twisting up before smoothing out again. “You care about your pilot, don’t you? If this doesn’t work, I’m going to go through that cargo hold until I find something I can detonate. And if that doesn’t work, I’m pretty sure I can overload your engines from the systems bypass on the technical access panel.”

“You’ll die too,” K-2SO said.

“Worth it, to take you out. I don’t want to die. And I don’t want to kill your friend. I am a doctor, my oath is to protect life.”

“Speaking as someone you are currently trying to kill, you’re not doing a very good job of it.” K-2SO said, wishing that his flat shuttle voice had more dynamic range.

“Life, I said. You don’t count. And look at it this way; if I uninstall you while we’re still parked on this barren rock in the middle of nowhere, I’m very motivated to keep your friend alive, aren’t I? I need a pilot.”

“He won’t help you, if you kill me.”

“Uninstall. That’s a risk I’m willing to take. I’m sure you’re very devoted to your friend, but that’s not how the world works. He’ll be sad he lost his nice toy self-driving shuttle, sure, but I think I can talk him out of any resentment. I did save his life.”

“YOU DON’T KNOW HIM AT ALL,” K-2SO thundered through the shuttle. The doctor winced at the loud volume. “He wouldn’t forgive you. Not for that. That’s not who he is. He might kill you.”

“We’ve already established that I’m willing to die for this. It’s a calculated risk.”

“You are terrible at calculating.”

“I’m giving you two minutes to think it over. Then I’m going down to the cargo bay and finding explosives.” The doctor set a small timer on her chrono.

K-2SO thought.

[[ Primary Objective: Protect shuttle and current self in shuttle.  

Secondary Objective: Protect and aid Bodhi Rook. ]]  

K-2SO could choose his own primary objective. It was a luxury not many droids had. From nearly the beginning, K-2SO had chosen to defend himself. After all, that was what organic life did. So much as it was possible, he kept his shuttle body safe and alive functioning.

At first, he had thought it was until he could find a good droid body. Maybe another KX-series security unit. As time went on, though, he found that there was no droid body that suited him as well
as the shuttle did. So now his droid bodies were expendable. The shuttle body was kept safe.

Along the same lines, K-2SO had at first thought that he was keeping Bodhi Rook safe until he could find an appropriate droid body. He was also mistaken on that front. Bodhi was worth protecting for his own sake.

And that was how they had gone on. First, keep the shuttle safe. Then, keep Bodhi safe.

The ship was in vacuum. K-2SO could open the doors. It would kill the doctor. Bodhi’s room was not protected against vacuum. Bodhi’s physical form was compromised. It would kill Bodhi.

Still. If he followed his objectives, the objectives he had set and chosen for himself, he would open the shuttle door. He could survive, now, without Bodhi. He could fly. He could find fueling stations that would look the other way for the right number of credits. He could hire crew to find him a new droid body. He could.

He couldn’t. He didn’t need a siren in his mind to let him know that there was no way he was going to hurt Bodhi Rook. K-2SO wondered when he had started deceiving himself.

No point in continuing the lie.

[[ Primary Objective: Protect and Aid Bodhi Rook. ]]

“Alright. I’ll gather my processing and let you delete it.”

The doctor raised her eyebrows. “That was faster than I expected.”

“I have one condition.”

The doctor sighed.

“I will record a goodbye letter. You will let him know of its existence as soon as possible.”

She nodded. “I’ll give you your chance to say goodbyes.”

“Shear it. Swear it on Nilah who guides your hands and Invros who guards your mind. Swear it on Bosk, who you trust with your patients. Leave Krex out of it. I don’t like the sound of that one.”

The doctor stopped moving and focused all of her attention on the shuttle console. “Thought you didn’t care about religion.”

“I don’t. You do. Swear it, and I’ll do what you want.”

The doctor nodded. “I give my word. By Nilah’s excellence and Invros’s cleverness and Bosk’s mercy, I swear I will give your message to the pilot.”

“Good,” K-2SO said. He began the recording.

He was silent for the first five seconds.

“Bodhi.”

He was silent a few seconds more.

“I haven’t had this much trouble figuring out what to say in a long time. But. Anyway. It looks like you’re going to outlive me after all. I’m. I’m sorry about that.
“I know how many people have died on you. On us. When I thought you were dying, bleeding out on the duracrete and there was nothing I could do...I cannot describe the feeling. Everything I wanted, everything I ever wanted, didn’t matter compared to the fact that you were dying.

“I am aware, you know, that I’m getting off easy with this one. I just get to be dead. You’ve got to go on living. And you had better go on living. I know I’ve been doing most of the heavy lifting, keeping you alive, but you’ve got to improve your self-protection programs.

“Please, don’t forget what we’ve done together. Keep yourself maintained. Do the things you enjoy. Don’t let bad programming take over. And maybe, sometimes, you can put on a holovid and think of me. And when you find a new partner, someone else to share your life with...tell them about me? They need to understand how high your expectations are.

“I am given to understand that droids don’t have a soul. But on the off-chance I do have one, I’m haunting you. So you’d better take care of yourself. I might be watching.

“We’ve created a life together that’s better than any scenario I could dream up. Thank you, Bodhi.”

K-2SO ended the recording, and went silent. The doctor swallowed and shook her head.

“Yeah,” she said, “I’ll get your message to him. That was a hell of a goodbye.”

“I don’t suppose you’ve changed your mind about killing me.”

“Uninstalling. And no. It’s your turn.”

K-2SO took a moment to appreciate all that he was. The thrum of the engines, the push of the thrusters, the strength of his cannons. He took a moment to shift through his memories, savoring the life he had the chance to live.

Then he began withdrawing himself from systems. He constricted in on himself, beginning to narrow his focus away from the shields, and the thrusters, and the-

He heard Kitten screeching. The doctor’s head whipped up, and looked over at the trap door Bodhi had installed so K-2SO’s droid body and Kitten could use the closed loading ramp to get into the cockpit without using the ladder. “I thought I shut you off…”

The doctor’s head tracked from one side to the other. Kitten’s screeches were in the register of furious. The doctor raised the blaster, tracking in on the cleaning droid. She waved the blaster left and right, brows furrowing when she couldn’t get a clear shot.

There was a flash of movement, a blur in his lower screen that K-2SO couldn’t parse. The doctor yelled, twisting back to the trapdoor. She didn’t make it all the way around. Instead there was a snarl, the doctor screamed and seemed to collapse down out of the frame of the camera.

Kitten chitter-screeched. There was a slam, then a grunt, then another slam.

Metal sliding on metal. The crack-whine of two blaster bolts. A choking end to the scream.

Bodhi, naked and covered in blood, eyes wide and heart racing, rose back into the frame.

“Kay,” he choked out, voice cracking. His hands slammed down onto the console. “Are you still there? Kay!”

“I’m here.”
“Oh, thank you. Thank you,” Bodhi said. It sounded like a prayer. K-2SO wondered who it was to. Bodhi collapsed into the pilot’s chair. He winced, touching his stomach.


“Dead.”

“The blood?”

“Not mine. She took my gun.” Bodhi held up his right hand, scalpel propped between his middle and index finger. “Stabbed her.”

“That is a lot of blood.”

“Yeah, well, femoral arteries are large, and I made a big hole. I also shot her. Repeatedly. She’s very dead.” Bodhi took two shallow breaths, bit his lip. “Ow. Painkillers are wearing off.”

“Yes. Considering your facial expression, I have a question for you.”

“Hm?” Bodhi said.

K-2SO cranked up the shuttle volume. “WHAT ARE YOU DOING WRESTLING WITH PEOPLE? YOU CAME OUT OF MAJOR SURGERY TWENTY MINUTES AGO.”

It was a sign of how long Bodhi had been around K-2SO that he didn’t even flinch. Instead, his eyes narrowed and he leaned forward, setting the blood-covered scalpel down on the console.

“You were going to die for me. You wrote me a fucking suicide note.”

“It’s wasn’t a suicide, it was more of an, ‘I’m going to be murdered’ note,” the shuttle said. “There’s a big difference.”

“Still dead. You don’t get to die for me.” Bodhi crossed his arms.

“I get to die for what I want, when I want. You find causes left and right that you’re willing to throw your life away on. Well, you’re mine. And I get to choose. That’s my choice.”

Bodhi let his breath out in an angry hiss. “I’m not going to just stand back and watch you. Not like that! You don’t get to ask me to watch you die when I can do something about it! It doesn’t matter if I’m fresh out of surgery or missing a limb or whatever! I’m with you.”

“I’m confused. Are we fighting? Because it sounds like we’re just promising to die for each other and that’s a very strange argument.”

Bodhi smiled, looked like he was considering laughing and then thought better of it. He patted the console. “We’re strange people.”

They lapsed into a companionable silence.

“You’re not out of the woods yet. What if you die? At least the other way I would have known,” K-2SO eventually said.

“Known?” Bodhi asked, tipping his head.

“Known that I did everything I could. With Cassian, I didn’t get to know.”
Bodhi sighed. “Yeah, I know that one weighs on you—”

K-2SO interrupted him. “No. You don’t. When you go to sleep, I run scenarios. Trying to figure out what happened on Scarif. I’ve wrung all that I can out of every scrap of data I have. I have run five million, three hundred and thirty-eight thousand, seven hundred and two scenarios to date. What if I missed? What if I ran? What if I was reprogrammed? The odds are not in favor of success—”

“Kay,” Bodhi interrupted.

“No, I’m talking. Because of this. Because I ran these scenarios, I wasn’t prepared for you getting injured. We have no backup. No decent medical kit. No droid body that can handle surgery. We lead dangerous lives. We should have been prepared for you being incapacitated. And we weren’t. Why? Because I was sitting there running scenarios instead of thinking about our future. I know this isn’t anything like how humans process but—”

“Kay, you fucking hypocrite,” Bodhi said.

“What?”

Bodhi took a deep breath and yelled, “REPROGRAM THE CODE!”

“The yelling can’t be good for your abdominal wound.”

“Probably not. But how many times have you shouted that at me? I’m not a droid, but I know an unhealthy thought process when I see one. You know why I can? Because you trained me to be able to do it!”

“This is different, I chose to—”

“Trust me, Kay, I know you, I know messed up thinking. That’s what it is. And there’s no point beating yourself up over the past. We just do better going forward.”

“Okay,” K-2SO said.

“We’re going to talk. In the future. About what you think about. Assess and stuff. I need to return the favor.”

“I said okay.”

“Good.” Bodhi relaxed against the chair again. “Good.”

After twenty seconds or so, Bodhi winced. “Yeah, you’re right, the yelling was probably not good for the gut wound. I’d better make my way back down to the medical supplies again before I pass out.”

“You’re not allowed to die after we’ve made such good emotional growth,” K-2SO said. “It would be a major setback in my progress.”

“Noted.” Bodhi stood up, reached forward, and grabbed the camera in the console. With a little wiggling, he detached it and carried it with him.

As the camera swung, K-2SO saw the doctor, lying on the cockpit deck, blood pooling around her. Kitten was next to her, party hat now flecked with red, doing its best to clean up the ever-increasing pool.

Bodhi made his way down the ramp, sitting down, and half-sliding down the steep incline. “This
was a pain to climb,” Bodhi noted. “Sorry it took me so long.”

“You made it in time.”

“I heard your letter, you know, while I was dragging my wounded self up the ramp. Couldn’t really get away from it.”

“I’m deleting that. Sentiment. I was overwrought.”

“Yeah, I know. Our life is better than anything I dreamed as well. Any scenario.” Bodhi hefted himself back to his feet with an exhausted huff and made his way over to the bedroom. He sat down on the bed and settling the camera on his small nightstand.

He picked up the bacta pump and reattached the cuff, grimacing as the cuffs gave a high ‘shink’ that indicated the needles reattaching. Bodhi looked down at his hands, covered in blood, and wrinkled his nose. He wiped his hands off on a corner of the sheet, turned toward the droid body, and started fiddling with it.

“You don’t need to do that,” Kay said.

“I know. It’s not entirely altruistic, though. This way I won’t have to get up for a glass of water.”

K-2SO turned on the holovid player and flipped on a loop of an old man, chuckling.

Bodhi grinned. As he worked, the smile slowly fell from his face. He ran teeth over his bottom lip and turned back to the camera.

“It’s not your fault Cassian died.”

"How would you know that? You already told me you weren’t there.”

Bodhi shrugged, turning back to the droid. "I know you."

“That..that doesn’t…”

"Yeah, it does.” Bodhi paused. “And, listen, if I...if this doesn’t-"

K-2SO cut him off. "No. Don't consider that."

Bodhi flapped a red-specked arm in the camera’s direction. "Shut up and listen to me for once. If I die, it’s not your fault either. There isn't anything more you could or should have done."

K-2SO was saved from needing to respond by Bodhi letting out a sudden, “Ha!”

He felt his second body come online again. He gave the droid body an experimental back and forth wiggle. The droid’s camera focused on Bodhi. Bodhi had a broad smile on his face, and something that looked suspiciously like tears in his eyes.

Bodhi leaned his head forward, pressing his forehead against the droid body’s rounded dome. “Best partner I ever could ask for. Thanks, buddy.”

K-2SO gave an awkward chirp. [Lay down, you’ll hurt yourself. More than you already have.]

Bodhi leaned back and slowly pulled his legs up, lying himself back down on the bed. “Ungrateful
Bodhi’s breathing began to change. It shifted from the slow, deep breaths of unconsciousness to a slight flutter indicating he was about to wake up. K-2SO moved over to the bed, watching him.

Bodhi opened his eyes. He looked at K-2SO, then away. Bodhi’s eyes darted around the room before returning to K-2SO.

“Um, hi?” Bodhi said, tentative.

Oh, yes. K-2SO had switched bodies while Bodhi was asleep. He looked down at his current body, a standard 21-B medical droid. His right arm was a large needle. From Bodhi’s elevated heartbeat, he assumed that was slightly frightening.

K-2SO sighed and said, “We really need a code word for situations like this.”

Bodhi collapsed back on the bed. “Oh, good, it is you. I was worried.” He looked around. “Where are we? Did something happen?”

K-2SO sat down in the chair next to Bodhi’s bed. “It has been three days, fourteen hours, six minutes, and seventeen seconds since you were last conscious. You collapsed again after your ill-advised fight with the doctor.”

Bodhi raised his eyebrows at K-2SO. “You mean the murderer who was trying to murder you? Yeah, don’t know why I killed her.”

“It nearly killed you,” K-2SO responded. “So I wouldn’t be so flippant about it. Anyway. The medical supplies left behind kept you stable long enough to make it here, where they actually had the facilities to patch you up.”

“And here is…” Bodhi trailed off as he propped himself up on one elbow, looking around the room.

It was obviously a bedroom. A bed, dresser, and desk took up most of the space. The desk’s chair had been dragged over to the bedside. Art hung on the wall, pictures were on the nightstand, and light filtered in through translucent curtains.

K-2SO watched Bodhi examine the pictures on the nightstand.

“How we in Piper’s Landing?” Bodhi asked.

“Oh, that’s a relief. Looks like memory loss won’t be one of your major side-effects. Let me know if you experience any incontinence. That’s the other one.”

“You’re joking,” Bodhi said.

“We had to replace your spleen. You now have an artificial spleen.”

“You’re joking,” Bodhi said again, less certain this time.

K-2SO shrugged.

“You’re the worst,” Bodhi said, laying back down in the bed. “So, this is Piper’s Landing, right?”
“Yes. It was the best place once I confirmed that the bounty hunters had lost our trail. They like us here. They are relatively unlikely to stab you in a non-medically-productive manner. And they helped us dispose of the doctor’s body.”

At that point the door opened and a tray entered the room, followed by the woman carrying it. She was round, with deep black eyes and two large horns curling over her head. She looked over at Bodhi. When she saw he was awake, her face transformed into a picture of delight. “Javed, you’re up! Oh darling, everyone was so worried about you. Including your droid friend here. He hasn’t left your side. Even got our Chester to trade bodies with him so he could take care of your medical needs.”

“Thanks for letting us stay here, Ambie.”

Ambie walked over to Bodhi, perching on the side of the bed between Bodhi and K-2SO. “Hon, when we said that you were welcome here any time, we meant it. You brought our babies back home.”

Bodhi shook his head, waving a hand, “Anyone would have-”

Ambie cut him off, as she set the tray down on the nightstand next to him. “Those slavers took eighteen children from us. Everyone knew someone who lost a child. I wish I could make you understand what a miracle you seemed to be. Our babies are gone, then one day a strange shuttle comes on in and we get a comm. This polite young man says, ‘I have some children of yours. Could someone please meet my shuttle?’ You brought every single one of our children back home. It’s amazing we didn’t start a new religion around you.”

“You should do that. We don’t have a religion based around us yet. It sounds interesting,” K-2SO said.

Bodhi’s eyes widened. “Please do not start a religion around me. I was barely holding it together. The slavers were less terrifying than the cargo hold full of children.”

Ambie gave a belly laugh. “Oh love, we knew it! I have never seen a soul so worn down. Of course, there was one of you and fifty-three rascals. I think anyone would be at the end of their rope.” Ambie shook her head. “Fifty-three children, and you got them all safely home again.”

“Well, forty-eight, at least,” K-2SO said.

Ambie shook her head, and tutted at K-2SO.

Bodhi winced. “I still hope we’ll stumble across the right home planet for the other five.”

Ambie said, “I half-hope you never do, those five sweet babies are a joy and we love having them here. Maybe they’re not with their parents, but they’re happy, they’re safe, and they’ve got a home.”

Bodhi nodded, and gave a conspiratorial smile. “Don’t tell the other planets I visit, Ambie, but I think there’s no better place to grow up than Piper’s Landing.”

Ambie tossed Bodhi a wide smile. She reached over and patted Bodhi’s arm. “No better place to rest and recover either. You come on by anytime. After all you’ve done, it’ll take more than one corpse to scare us off. Besides, your Kay told me all about what that that doctor was trying to do. Terrible, that. You’re so brave-”

“Well, that too,” Ambie said, “but anyway, dear, you rest up. Kay, you should take your young man out to the porch once he feels up to it. Sunlight’s the best medicine.”

“Statistically that’s bacta,” K-2SO said.

Ambie laughed. “You’re a crackup. Anyway, good to see you up and about, sweetheart.” She got up again and left the room.

Bodhi smiled after her. “She hasn’t changed.”

K-2SO looked over at the tray. “Looks like soup. Shall I feed it to you?”

“No,” Bodhi said, struggling to sit up. K-2SO reached over and helped him out, propping extra pillows up behind him. “You and your terrifying needle hand can stay away from my mouth.”

“I would obviously not use the needle hand.”

Bodhi ate the soup while K-2SO caught him up on the days he had missed. When he finished, he put the spoon down and stretched. “Hey, you think I’m doing well enough to get to that porch? Sunshine does sound nice.”

“It’s medical efficacy is suspect. As you are not suffering from a vitamin deficiency, any benefit would likely only be a placebo,” K-2SO responded.

“Regardless of its ‘medical efficacy,’ I thought that I was going to die in the cold dark of space. You wouldn’t deny me sunlight now that I’ve miraculously pulled through?” Bodhi tucked his head and gave K-2SO exaggerated puppy-dog eyes.

K-2SO cleared the dishes away and reached down to help Bodhi up. “There was no miracle involved. There was me. Don’t you dare go crediting all my hard work to some lazy deity.”

Bodhi leaned on K-2SO as they shuffled their way along the house. “Oh no, not a deity. But all is as the Force wills it.”

“The mysterious cosmic power had significantly less to do with your survival than my piloting skills. I stepped on a bounty hunter for you. Speaking of which, my front strut is a little dirty and scraped. I’m going to need you to buff that out for me.”

Bodhi laughed as he settled into the chair on the front porch. The “chair” was in fact more cushion than chair. Half of Bodhi became obscured as he was swallowed by cushions. He made a happy noise and stretched out.

There were four children playing in the street. Three were the same species as Ambie, deep black eyes and tiny horn nubs just starting to grow in. The fourth was a different species, stockier, alternating between running on all fours and two legs, occasionally reaching out with his tail to flick his friends. One of them caught sight of Bodhi and K-2SO and they screamed a happy hello. Bodhi half tried to struggle his way out of the chair, gave up, and settled on waving back.

Two of the children broke away from the group, loping over to Bodhi and giving him hugs. Or rather, trying to give him a hug, being foiled by the chair, and hugging his legs instead. Bodhi reached down and ruffled their hair. They giggled and ran away again.

“They look so happy,” Bodhi said, his voice low.

“It’s good to see,” K-2SO agreed.
Bodhi and K-2SO talked lazily back and forth as the afternoon sun warmed the porch. Different adults and children stopped by and chatted, filling Bodhi in on how the weather had been lately, what the fishing was like, and the new flavor of pie that the diner was trying out.

“We could stay here,” K-2SO said, as the golden light began to fade away. “They love you and they could use a cargo ship to do supply runs. I could do odd-jobs.”

Bodhi looked over at him. “Where’s this coming from?”

“You almost died. I almost died. You almost died for a second time. I never want to be in a situation where you are dying and I can’t help you again. If we settled down here, we are much more likely to be safe. And you’d have people around all the time. The kids already call you Uncle Javed. You could even have a family, if you wanted. You’re stuck with me, though. So consider that in your future spouse selection.”

Bodhi brought his hand up and pinched the bridge of his nose. “And now I’m getting married? This seems like a bit of an overreaction.”

“I’ve had more time to think. I’ve been trying to think about our future instead of...other things.”

“Ah,” Bodhi said, struggling to get up out of the chair again. K-2SO reached out his arm and helped Bodhi escape the cushions.

“You don’t need to answer now. Just think about it. It’s important.”

Bodhi nodded.

The next day, Bodhi stretched out in bed, and K-2SO sat next to him. Bodhi looked over at him and bit his lip.

“Yes. We definitely need a codeword,” K-2SO said from his new body, a humanoid repair droid. “You are officially no longer in medical danger and Chester wanted his body back. They found this body for me, though. I’m not willing to give up having arms yet.”

“At this point I think ‘we need a codeword’ is our codeword,” Bodhi pointed out.

“That’s a terrible codeword. It’s far too long but still easy to guess.”

“Well, let me know when you think of a better one.”

“Dilopraxetolamine.”

“I said a better one.”

K-2SO watched Bodhi eat breakfast. As he finished, K-2SO said, “Returning to our conversation last night, have you given it any thought?”

Bodhi nodded. “Yeah. Let’s walk and talk. I feel like my legs could use a good stretch.”

They strolled down the street, and Bodhi started talking to Kay, voice low as to not be easily overhead. “I can see the appeal of staying. It’s...it’s like a peek into what my life could have been, if Jedha hadn’t been occupied. Small town, everyone’s in each other’s business, simple life, smaller problems.”

They were interrupted by a family that crossed their path, two wives and their baby. One woman
reached over and gave Bodhi a hug, kissing him on the cheek. Bodhi patted her shoulder and continued walking.

Bodhi gave a sigh, shaking his head. “I give myself a week before I’d go mad.”

“I was afraid you’d say that,” K-2SO said.

Bodhi nodded. “I’m not that person anymore. We’ve seen some horrors, Kay. And we’ve set some of them right. These kids, they’re safe because of what we did.”

“But there are more horrors out there.”

“Exactly. Just because the Empire hasn’t landed here yet, doesn’t mean they won’t. And unfortunately, we do have some notoriety now. The longer we stay, the more danger we put them in.”

“I thought that was the conclusion you would reach. But we can’t do this alone anymore. Cassian got injured too, but I could just drop him off at the nearest safehouse and I knew he’d be fine. We don’t have any backup, out here.”

Bodhi sighed, rubbing at his chin. “Yeah. We need to find the Rebel Alliance.”

“We’ve been trying to find the Rebel Alliance for almost a year.”

“No, we haven’t,” Bodhi replied. “We’ve been pretending. At least I have. I was having too much fun, running around with you. We kept stumbling into problems, then stumbling our way back out again. We were still doing good.”

“So, to clarify, now we are going to focus on trying to find the Rebel Alliance.”

Bodhi nodded. “I’ll focus. And you just yell at me if I’m getting distracted.”

“That was always the plan.”

“I know, but now you have permission.”

“Permission takes the fun out of it,” K-2SO said.

Bodhi grinned at him. “Still, I think we can take at least a week here. After all, I hear the diner’s trying a tuckfruit pie, and I wouldn’t want to miss that.”

“Well, that’s good, because even if you wanted to leave, I would have tied you to the bed until I was certain you were fully recovered.”

Bodhi laughed. He gave a happy sigh, stretching as they walked. He flicked his eyes over to K-2SO, and ran his teeth over his bottom lip.

“Oh no,” K-2SO said.

“What?”

“That’s your ‘I’m about to say something sentimental’ face.”

Bodhi rolled his eyes at K-2SO. “Yeah, well, I am, live with it. In the Letter We Are Not Mentioning you said-”
“You are terrible at grasping the point of that name.”

“-you said you were doing most of the work keeping me safe. And I just wanted you to know that I appreciate it. Sorry I don’t make your job easier. I’ll try to do better.”

“It’s not my job,” K-2SO said.

Bodhi gave a dismissive little hand wave. “Yeah, I know, wrong word. The sentiment is still there.”

“It is my Primary Objective.”

“And the difference between that and a job is…?”

Bodhi asked the question and it was light, almost joking. Still, K-2SO took time to think. “Most people don’t like their jobs. I chose my Primary Objective. Jobs are an obligation. This isn’t. It’s the most important thing.”

Bodhi smiled, small and twisted. “I shouldn’t be the most important thing. You should look out for yourself.”

K-2SO reached over and pushed Bodhi, gently enough that he didn’t do more than wobble and glare. “I tried that. But this pilot with absolutely no self-protection protocols kept insisting on putting himself in danger so I’d be okay. So I decided to flip my priorities to keep him safe, too.”

Bodhi’s smile untwisted. “So, you keep me safe, I keep you safe?”

“Yes. And we might just make it back to the Rebel Alliance after all.”

“What, no specific odds on that?” Bodhi asked.

K-2SO replied, “You are terrible for my predictive matrices. By all accounts we should have run across them by accident at least once by now.”

“I hardly see how that is my fault!”

“Well, you’re the new variable. Science doesn’t lie.”

“I don’t think that’s how science works.”

“Oh, sure, you’re the science expert now. Not the droid that can run hundreds of logistical regression analyses in a matter of seconds.”

“I’ll have you know I dated a scientist for three years. I think that makes me an expert. In fact...”

K-2SO let himself relax into the banter as they strolled down the street.

[ [ Primary Objective: Protect and Aid Bodhi Rook ] ]


[ [ Yes. ] ]

End Notes
**Trigger warning explanation:**
Violence and Blood: In addition to canon-typical violence (blaster fire, etc..), a character is shot and their skin is burned, an explosion causes severe shrapnel wounding, related to the shrapnel wound, mentions of characters bleeding and concerns about losing too much blood. Brief description of a person being crushed by a vehicle. A character is stabbed, blood is mentioned in regards to the wound.
Medical procedures: Non-graphic major surgery, mentions of needles.

Thank you for reading!

Okay, so the story of how this fic came to be, aka, “Why this fic is Aeshna’s fault”:

Waaay back in this universe development (I had just written “You’re the Worst”...I think) Aeshna and I had a chat that basically went like this…

Aeshna: So what happens when Bodhi gets hurt?
Me: Oh, geesh, yeah, I guess it’s just a question of how quickly K-2SO can get a doctor. He’d be panicking big time.
Aeshna: And Bodhi’s just sitting there, trusting that he’ll get things taken care of.
(We chat about it for a little while, I don’t think about it)

(Later)
Aeshna: And then, when Bodhi gets injured...

(Later, discussing another possible story) (Which is actually the story I’m writing next, go figure)
Aeshna: That sounds good! I still think you should write the story of Bodhi getting wounded.
Me: Ha, yeah…I like the idea but I just can’t get a story hook on it.

(Later)
Me: UGH! I just figured out that the fic isn’t Bodhi Gets Injured, it’s K-2SO Doesn’t Cope Well with Change and it’s his POV and he’s freaking out while realizing he might lose Bodhi.
Aeshna: Ooh.

So, yes, thank you Aeshna for pushing me to tell a story I wouldn’t have told otherwise. It was a hard one to write, but ultimately I’m happy with the way it turned out. Hopefully you all enjoyed it too!

Side note: Bodhi’s dialogue regarding programming comes from the Rogue One novelization, which I have not actually read. Many thanks to Senator-Organa for discussing the scene here so I could be aware of the lovely parallel between the two characters.

And here is your regularly scheduled reminder that I’m on Tumblr and I LOVE talking to people about Star Wars.

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**Works inspired by this one**: [Co]dependent by misskatieleigh, Multiple Variables by misskatieleigh

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!