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## Chapter 24: Exception to the Rule

MUSIC: (FADE IN) BLIZZARD OF OSBORN THEME

### NARRATOR

You're listening to The Blizzard of Osborn by Michael Sheen Cuddy.  
Chapter 24: Exception to the Rule.

MUSIC: BLIZZARD OF OSBORN THEME (FADE OUT)

**Scene One: Int. Pinnacle of Aspire Regional Detention Center. Day.**

SOUND: fluorescent light buzz, whispering, footsteps  
approaching

### NARRATOR

A gentleman approached Memyselfandi offering his business card, a flash of white embossed with elegant gold script which said, Valdor Extancious, Chairman of the Cognoscenti.

### VALDOR EXTANCIOUS

Allow me to introduce myself.

### MEMYSELFANDI

Hm?

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**VALDOR EXTANCIOUS**

Before we begin, I must tell you that you and your fellow travellers are being held for several reasons, some of them exceedingly grave. Since you were apprehended by the Imperial Navy the Emperor's Intel Services have launched a full-scale investigation of all of you. In the course of our inquiries we have discovered that you appear to be the outlier of the group, the exception to the rule, as it were.

**MEMYSELFANDI** (secretly flattered)

Oh?

**VALDOR EXTANCIOUS**

And when you were seized in the coastal waters of Aspire the dark child with whom you arrived had in her possession an encrypted data transfer module. Now exactly how a child came to acquire a device of such sensitivity is the question we must answer.

**NARRATOR**

Memyselfandi's instincts warned him.

**MEMYSELFANDI** (whispering - internal)

*Say nothing that may be used against you later.*

**NARRATOR** (cont.)

The Chairman glanced at the other tribunal members then turned back to Memyselfandi.

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**VALDOR EXTANCIOUS**

There is also the matter of the ass. Forgive me, but you do not appear to be the type of gentleman accustomed to travel in the company of common barnyard animals.

**MEMYSELFANDI**

Indeed I am not!

**VALDOR EXTANCIOUS**

And the snake—he—*it?*—positively reeks of untrustworthiness.

**MEMYSELFANDI**

Indeed. I must say I never felt right about that one myself.

**VALDOR EXTANCIOUS**

As a courtesy, I will let you know that the snake has aroused deep suspicion among the Emperor's advisory council. There are many here who have had unpleasant experiences with snakes in the past, so I assure you that a talking snake is NOT a welcome addition to Aspire!

**MEMYSELFANDI**

Why yes, of course! Personally, I abhor snakes—

**VALDOR EXTANCIOUS**

Furthermore, let me tell you what one of our emissaries said when he learned of your arrival. Quote: 'If an enemy gathered an invading force with the sole intent of striking fear and revulsion into the hearts of all Aspirants he could not have assembled a more repugnant

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menagerie: a blackened child with a grotesque 4-legged black incubus attached to her, a talking snake and a talking ass!' End quote.

**MEMYSELFANDI** (faltering)

Well ... I uh ... I assure you sir....

**VALDOR EXTANCIOUS**

However, I call your attention to the fact that the emissary did *not* name you among the others.

**MEMYSELFANDI**

Oh? Well, that's a relief!

**VALDOR EXTANCIOUS**

In fact, in the course of our investigation we discovered that Count Thelio of the Narsies speaks very highly of you.

**MEMYSELFANDI**

Oh really? Do tell!

**VALDOR EXTANCIOUS**

That is why a number of us—myself included—suspect that you may not be so closely aligned with that motley band of freaks.

**MEMYSELFANDI**

Ah! You are very perceptive sir. It is true that I have always been careful to maintain a distance between myself and those others.

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**VALDOR EXTANCIOUS**

So why, exactly, did you end up traveling with them?

**MEMYSELFANDI**

Oh, you've no idea how many times I've asked myself that very question.

MUSIC: (Memyselfandi's theme)

**NARRATOR**

So Memyselfandi told the story of how he came to be stranded on top of The Great Barrier's stone wall, and how one day Cassie, Jet and Sly discovered him there.

MUSIC: (Memyselfandi's theme w/Memyselfandi prattling on in background)

**VALDOR EXTANCIOUS**

Hmmm...still, once they helped you down from the stone wall you had no obligation to join them. What made you decide to take up with a strange dark child, her stranger black pet and a talking snake, of all things?

**MEMYSELFANDI**

Well, believe me, I certainly had my doubts! But when they told me of their plan to meet with the Emperor I thought, perhaps the Emperor could help me too! After all, everyone knows that the Emperor can do everything, solve all problems, accomplish the impossible!

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**TRIBUNAL** (call & *chorus response*)

Hear! Hear! All hail the Emperor! *All hail the Emperor!*

**VALDOR EXTANCIOUS** (with incrimination)

I see. So you have *no* knowledge of the dark girl's assassination of the Crow's brother?

**MEMYSELFANDI** (aghast)

What—?

SOUND: gasping hubbub among tribunal

MUSIC: Blizzard Theme (FADE IN)

**NARRATOR**

Next: When Sly is brought before the tribunal the second phase of divide-and-conquer is set in motion.

MUSIC: Blizzard Theme (FADE OUT)

[ end Chapter 24 ]