

# Like Old Times

For competition:  
"[Pro Bowl VII: Week One] Fiction"  
Written by: Kah'ri Marru



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## Nar Shaddaa... Unofficial Successor to [The Pazzak Den](#)

“**G**et your boots off the gaming table,” the bartender called from over the counter. Kah’ri, who was sipping on a Juma Juice, held up his hand and put his feet back on the ground.

“Hit me,” he said, looking back at his pazaak hand.

The dealer placed another card on the table for each player. Kah’ri’s hand was now at 19 and Janus Tagerry, a female Weequay known as the best player in this bar, was at 17. Kah’ri winced at his opponent’s misfortune as he played a +1 card.

“Three rounds. Streak’s gotta end *somewhere*,” he jibed.

Kah’ri knew his opponent had already played four low-number cards this game; her two remaining had to be high-number plus card. The 50-credit wager was his for sure. The Weequay tapped the table for the dealer to place the next card. 4. She went bust.

Kah’ri smirked.

“Well, I guess even the undefeated eventually finds defeat,” he said as he reached to gather the credits in the center.

Janus moved toward the center, catching Kah’ri’s attention. He stared in disbelief as he watched the Weequay place a -1 card on the table... She won... For four games in a row, she won.

The overhead light still cast Kah’ri’s shadow over the credits beneath him as the Pazaak Den’s reigning champion claimed her reward. The Force Disciple watched, frozen in place, as his opponent stuffed the credits and left the table. It was only 50 credits, but there was something about losing to *her* that really irritated him.

“Thanks for the game,” he said to the dealer as he grabbed his drink and stood. He felt the sharp kick of the Juma Juice as he downed the rest of it and returned to the bar to pay his tab.

The exit door slid open as Kah’ri approached and the smell of debauchery filled his nostrils. This was the usual smell of Nar Shaddaa. Alcohol, escorts, gambling, and illicit substances were commonplace, but the Firrerreo didn’t often enjoy the activities and took care to not over-indulge himself.

Even so, he found himself here of all places, trying to clear his head from the unusual violent impulses he’d had in the last few months. It wasn’t like he’d never felt a desire to kill or the baser instinct to consume flesh – he was Firrerreon, after all – but this was a bit different than those times. He thought back to the Crannix mission, replaying the events in his head to try and identify when he lost control.

He was with the mission assignees and death troopers and there was an e-web pinning them down. He’d felt the pressure to *do* something but had run out of ideas, so his body just... moved. He even tapped into the Force. It was like being a passenger in his own body, trapped in his own mind.

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Kah'ri shook his head. He was here to have fun. To forget the mission and move on. He was a Savant now. He needed to act like it.

He continued walking and passed an alleyway. He heard growling and turned to look. A filthy and malnourished human was aggressively tearing into garbage bags, clearly looking for food. Kah'ri scrunched his face at the filth on display. It was like watching an animal. Humans were supposed to be the successful ones in the galaxy, and this was less than inspiring, to say the least. Reaching the limit of his disgust, he opted to continue his stroll.

He noted how the image, now burned in his memory, accurately portrayed how he felt on the inside and it was just as appalling. He recalled Feevo Reevo, the rodian lying in the chair, limbless. He remembered seeing his own arms remove the alien's head - the sensation of it all. He closed his eyes to try and block out the memory, but it only made the image clearer. Taking note of a nearby window, Kah'ri stared at himself for a moment, searching his reflection for answers.

"Gah! What is happening to me?" he pleaded to the window.

Receiving no answer, he shook his head.

"Enough of this!" He spoke with authority, holding his shoulders back and his head high.

"I am Kah'ri Marru, of Onderon. Son of the Marru legacy and Force Disciple of Clan Scholae Palatinae. I am regal, I am dignified, and my life will not be determined by one act."

"BAHAHAHA-UUGRH!" a voice burped from behind the Firrerreo.

Catching a glimpse of a man clutching a bottle behind the Palatinean's reflection, Kah'ri turned to look him square in the face. The man, feigning nervousness, raised the bottle to his forehead in a poor attempt at a salute to Kah'ri before bursting out into laughter again. The Force Disciple narrowed his gaze, and his emerald eyes began to glow.

"If you knew who I was, you would mind your behavior around me." He said sharply.

"Ssorry your high-HIC-ness. I dind't meen to upset you, child. You waas just playing dress up and lookd so funnny." The drunk man said.

Kah'ri clenched his jaw. He tightened a grip in fist and the bottle broke over the man's head, showering him in glass and alcohol.

"DOH! Not the boozzee!" he pathetically cried out, completely forgetting everything around him.

The man stuck the drenched part of his shirt in his mouth, trying to salvage the spilled drink. Kah'ri looked down his nose in contempt at the man before striding away from the saturated drunk.

Kah'ri felt justified in his actions. The man didn't know his place and Kah'ri simply showed it to him.

*'As far as my respect... You can demand it like a child all you want... Show me you deserve it.'*

The Force Disciple slowed to a stop as the words of Ellac rang in his head.

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“Oh kriff,” he said aloud, “I *am* acting like a child. Ellac was right.”

His eyes widened and he turned to look back at the drunkard.

“They both were...”

Mortified by the idea that a drunkard knew him better than he knew himself, Kah'ri marched toward the spaceport where the Horizon was docked. He wanted to be alone and there was no better place than open space.

He passed through the streets, ignoring the dross this planet had to offer him. Now on a mission, his intentions were set and his motivation clear. He was a Savant now. He needed to act like one.

“CONGRATULATIONS!” A gaudily dressed woman cheered, jumping in his way. “You are the one hundred-trillionth customer!”

The woman wore a badge on her obnoxious fur cape reading ‘Kora – General Manager’.

A loud cannon sounded, releasing confetti and streamers from the second story of the Big Wiggly! Fantastic Casino, which Kah'ri embarrassingly hadn't noticed until now. Blaring horns drew his attention back to ground level where a dozen or so dancers were now approaching from the entrance staircase. They moved elaborately around him as the manager rattled off whatever promotion she had for the one trillion, billion, hundredth customer or whatever.

“...You'll receive a 3-cycle stay in one of our finest rooms, complete with a complimentary mini bar and a luxurious lounge for those whom you might want to *entertain*. Not only that, but as the hundred-trillionth customer, you'll receive 50,000 credits worth of gaming tokens to use in our galaxy-famous casino! Just sign here and we'll welcome you to the first of three nights you'll never forget!” The manager offered a datapad with a pen to sign the contract on the display.

On instinct, Kah'ri grabbed the pen and the datapad, fully prepared to sign himself into the life of luxury after such a crappy night.

*'...Like a child...'*

*'...Show me you deserve it.'*

Ellac's voice rang in his head again, his heart sinking and filling with anger again. Like hell would he let **Conrat** be right about him.

“On second thought...” He clenched the datapad, breaking it as the flame of fury built inside. “... I'm not interested.”

The woman squeaked as bits of the datapad's screen fell to the ground, astonished at the blatant disregard of her flamboyant offer.

“Ah! Sir, you don't have to do anything! This contract simply ensures that this offer is valid for you, exclusively.” She said, snapping her fingers. A plainly dressed worker scurried up to her with a new datapad and handed it over.

“I said. Not. Interested.”

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Kah'ri looked at the woman directly as he managed to maintain his composure, his eyes appearing to catch more light as if faintly glowing.

"I'm afraid that's not how this works, sir. You see, you *are* the hundred-trillionth customer, and this offer *must* be accepted. You don't have to participate if you don't want to, but your signature *is* required for tax purposes." The manager explained.

"No. It's not" Kah'ri waved his hand, attempting to reach into the woman's mind.

"Yes, sir. Unfortunately, it is." She insisted, watching his hand quizzically.

The Firrerreo pulled his hand back in disbelief. This woman didn't appear that bright. He looked at his hand, wondering if he was simply too weak.

"You will get no such signature from me." Kah'ri said intently.

"As I said..." She motioned her hand and four Gamorean bouncers encircled Kah'ri, taking the place of the dancers. "... That's not how this works." A smile crept onto her face.

"As of right now, it is."

He grabbed his lightsabers, igniting them in a circular flourish of green and gold light. The bouncers drew their cudgels a moment too late, all of them falling limply to the ground. Kah'ri slowed to a stop and looked at the manager, his eyes flashing bits of yellow. The woman fell back onto the entrance steps, her obnoxious cape falling away from her. Fear engulfed her face as she stared at the Force Disciple.

"She never said *anything* about a Sith!" She squealed to herself.

*Sith?!* Kah'ri became aware of his rage and stood, eyes closed. He took a deep breath and opened them; their color having returned to their default emerald.

"I'm sorry... 'She'?" he asked, his mind now catching up with him.

"Yes! Clover Dazz, the owner of this casino and many others like it. She sent your holo to all the managers and instructed us that if you ever showed up, we were to have you sign the datapad for our *Special Customer* package." She quivered.

"Explain this 'package'." Kah'ri commanded.

"I already have!" The woman began to cry, fearing the Firrerreon's blades. "It's a three day stay in our nicest suite and complimentary casino coins!"

"Why only for me?" He drilled, extinguishing his lightsabers, and re-holstering them. Temporary relief calming the manager enough to give a composed response.

"I don't know. She has some sort of interest in you, but I never asked what it was. She's not so forgiving when it comes to personal inquiries. The last manager of this place was killed for asking her why she didn't like Juma Juice." She explained.

"And the signature?" Kah'ri picked up the datapad and began to read.

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"I've read it over a hundred times and all I can find is that it binds you legally to the establishment, giving you VIP access and a small amount of ownership of the company."

"Ownership?" Kah'ri cocked his head in bewilderment before returning to the datapad.

"Like I said. It's all I could find, and I didn't question her," she looked back at the lifeless bouncers, "She'll kill me for this..."

Kah'ri looked at the bouncers, then back at her. "Not if she doesn't know I was here."

The manager looked up at him, confusion practically written on her forehead.

"Fights happen. Sometimes bouncers die. It's part of the business." He said very matter of fact.

Her expression was unchanged.

"I can allude her and help you stay off her radar. BUT, from this moment forward you work for me. Follow my instructions to the letter and you'll make it out of this alive. Violate one of them, and you won't have to worry about me. Klaire will make sure you suffer before you die."

"Klaire?"

"A former partner of mine, a betrayer, and, apparently, now a gang leader for the Tiure Hutt Clan. Though, it appears that she's ruling her 'empire' under the name Clover." He thought aloud as he clipped the datapad to his belt.

"HUTT CLAN?!" the woman's eyes widened.

"Yes." He replied flatly. He raised a finger over his lips and offered his hand.

"Now then," he said lifting her to her feet, half of her obnoxious cape still on the ground. "Your badge says 'Kora', but when you hear from me, I will address you as 'Agonis'. As for this mess..." He gestured to the corpses and the security cameras. "Delete the footage then dispose of these bodies. It appears you have a bit of hiring to do."

Agonis watched as Kah'ri left, as if none of what happened even occurred in the first place. She stood motionless for a moment before clearing her throat, picking up her fur cape, and climbing the stairs. Adorning her obnoxious attire once more, she pointed to a plainly dressed staff member "You there! Go clean up the mess outside. See to it that our entrance is spotless for our guests." The staff member did as they were instructed as Agonis made her way to her office.

## Nearby Spaceport... Aboard the Horizon

"So, Klaire wants to reconnect, huh?" Kah'ri asked no one as he powered the freighter up. "Well, let's see if she can handle my *new* partners." He said punching in the coordinates for Seraph.

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