

Allies...Allies Always Change.

Xantros

11518

41 ABY, Coronet City, Corellia

Xantros stopped in front of an old, damaged building in one of poor districts of Coronet City. Six years already passed since the Uprising on Corellia, but the capital city of Corellia was still not fully rebuilt. Inhabitants of poor districts did not pay high taxes, so there was little interest in improving their living conditions. As a result, in these areas many buildings that had been damaged during the rebellion against the First Order were still in bad conditions. No one in the government, both local and central, was really interested in revitalizing areas that were contaminated with crime and moral decay. There were more valuable areas from the perspective of politicians.

The Force Adept entered the building. Its interior matched its exterior. Shabby tables and chairs definitely remembered better times and looked like, if they could break at any moment. The owners of that shady bar probably got used to regular brawls and equipment of the bar getting destroyed quite often, so they did not invest into any stuff of a higher quality. He looked at the bar counter and recognized some of extremely cheap alcohol brands. Their only goal was to get drunk for as low price as possible, which definitely suited the needs of clientele of that premise.

Xantros looked around and grinned evilly. It was an excellent place for the meeting. The atmosphere of the shady bar perfectly matched the matter he wanted to discuss with a new contact in Clan Vizsla – killing another high-ranked member of the Dark Brotherhood. Based on the appearance of the place and its reputation, he expected that two guests making an illegal deal would not attract any attention. Xantros did not want to attract attention, so he hoped to be considered as just one more person willing to hire someone to do their dirty work. Ironically, it was exactly what he wanted to do – to hire a mercenary to do the job for him.

While the Duros was scanning the room, he did not only notice its appearance, but he also spotted a familiar person in a far corner of the room, barely visible from the entrance, if someone did not know where to look at. The Force Adept knew that, since he almost immediately sensed man's presence through the Force. He ordered a pint of Corellian ale and casually approached the person he wanted to talk to. He smiled at the muscular Human with golden bronze skin, black hair, dark black hair, pearly white eyes with no iris or pupils and a scar on the right side of man's face, converging from the scalp line down across man's eye and running to man's cheek.

„Mauro! I did not expect you to come here!” spoke Xantros with a wide smile on his green, hairless, earless and noseless face. Though they did not meet before, the Duros was aware of man's service for the Imperial Clan.

„I must admit that I did not expect you either, you seem to be a bit paranoid about your identity” replied Mauro Wynter, a former Proconsul of Clan Scholae Palatinae, currently a member of Clan Vizsla. „Let's get straight down to the business. Your message to my Clan Summit was rather cryptic. What do you want from us?”

„I want to hire someone from your Clan to eliminate a target from the ranks of Dark Brotherhood,” answered the Force Adept. „I can pay very high price, maybe five hundred thousands credits for the assassin and additional two hundred fifty thousands credits for the Clan as a small token of my appreciation.”

„Quite a generous offer for eliminating a single target,” spoke the Augur, though Xantros was aware that his former friend preferred to be referred to as an Archpriest due to his past connection to the Krath Order. „You either really want to see that person that or that person is very well protected...or

both. Who would that be?"

„Kamjin Maverick Lap'lamiz," said the Duros.

„The Consul of Clan Scholae Palatinae?" asked Mauro with a grimace on his face as if he bit an unripe apple.

„Yes, he needs to die and your Clan seems to be the most suitable for this task as its members are highly skilled and Vizsla has no alliance with Scholae Palatinae," explained Xantros. „Plus, a solid payment to support your Clan. Also, imagine benefits of replacing Lap'lamiz with someone favourable towards Vizsla. It might bring you lots of contracts from the Empire."

„Now, your offer does not seem to be as profitable as you might think it is," replied the Human. „The risk is too high for us."

„But you accept contracts for equally powerful and dangerous targets!" growled the Force Adept.

„We do, but only outside the Brotherhood. Assassinating a sitting Consul of a powerful Clan would bring attention and wrath of the Council. We might possibly explain ourselves, if it happened during a tense battle, but infiltrating the headquarters of the Imperial Clan and killing its leader without approval of the Council would be our own demise."

„Is it just your opinion or the official decision of your Clan Summit?" asked the Duros. „Does your past in Clan Scholae Palatinae affect your mind?"

„Just like your hatred towards the Consul of the Imperial Clan affects your own mind," scolded him the Augur. „I speak on behalf of my Clan Summit and I was instructed by them in terms of what contract I can agree on. This one is the one that I need to refuse."

„Sithspawn!" cursed Xantros. Clan Vizsla. Mercenaries. They considered themselves to be brave hired guns, but they turned out to be just mere cowards. Their motto was „Credits not Words", but when it came to a real challenger, they hid themselves behind an armour of words that protected them from taking a risk, when a stake become really high. He had held them in too high esteem, but he now knew their true face.

„Very well, then," spoke the Force Adept angrily after remaining silent for few moments. „You will not get your credits. At least, not from me."

With these words, the Duros took the last sip of his Corellian ale, put the glass away and left the bar. The discussion with the former Proconsul of Clan Scholae Palatinae proved that everything changed with him. Maybe, in a distant past, Mauro was a potential friend, but Xantros was aware that he could no longer trust the former Krath. He no longer had anyone he could count on. It seemed that he had to exact his revenge on his own as there was no one to help him with his quest to punish the Emperor of the Imperial Clan for his betrayal.