*Another Round Please*

The smoke wafting off of dozens of pipes and the odors of stale alcohol and desperation was palpable inside the *Broken Spur Cantina* of Ohmen City. The tavern was a holdover of better times; the city was once a booming star port supporting the shipping trade of raw materials off world and receiving the finished goods from across the Outer Rim. The establishment, like the city, was a corroded shell ready to buckle under decay and disrepair. Sitting in his usual corner booth Zagro Fenn smiled to himself with his back to the general populace. His bottle was empty and illegal narcotics were currently dulling his senses, helping the Hapan forget his past.

He did not hear his holo-vid chime on. Silence was as welcome as a state of perception as it was a function on this device. Yet, the Acolyte knew the message came in via his blossoming telekinesis and adroit technical knowledge. The man grew up as a slicer making ends meet any way that he could. ‘Orphans’, generally, have the same upbringing in that regard. From the day his father was taken away by the assassins until his entry to the Hapan Royal Marines Training Center he relied on computers to survive. As to his mother…well she was often on his mind…

She was beautiful, he knew before she entered the cantina. Tall, blonde, with porcelain skin and jade green eyes sitting gently with a fierce gaze adorning her face. Zagro took a large swig of the bottle and placed the needle back into the hidden compartment inside his shoulder holster. No, he did not need to see his holo-vid as he was learning to sense the stored message. Preconception? Force Sight? Zagro did not know and furthermore still did not care. He was as yet more ex-slicer and disgraced officer than he was a Force user of the Krath extraction.

Keeping his back to the crowd and especially to Carmana Tellnos he mustered all of his nascent abilities to pull an additional glass from the bar to his booth. This calculated risk was visible to the crowd, but just yet. Zagro would know his mark if she took interest in him as none of the degenerates played any attention to the regular patron. He continued to smile to himself as he discretely removed the entire content of his holster’s hidden compartment and crushed it into the base of both glasses and watched as it dissipated. “Let me see if my curse is a blessing after all.” Thought Zagro with slight sadness in his heart.

“That was a neat parlor trick…what else can you *do*?”, said the woman as she casually took a seat across from Zagro with her back to the wall and her view to the cantina entrance. Her nanosecond of a glimpse at the door led Zagro to know this was indeed the woman he was to kill. So she has accomplishes waiting to tail us if we depart together, thought Fenn.

Raising his eye ever so slightly and flashing his magnificent Hapan smile he forced a blush to his alcoholically induced reddened cheeks. “That knowledge is only for those who earn it the *hard* way.” At this Carmana blushed genuinely and smiled back casually. “Pour me a drink sailor…your eyes betray you. Do I know you from somewhere?”

*Cursed bitch*. Yes, Carmana did resemble his mother to the extent that he remembered her. No, remembered was the inaccurate term as the image in his mind was the fabrication of the idea of his mother. “I would know if I did, although you look like a woman I once knew.” Zagro let his words trail off as he poured himself a drink and offered the bottle to Carmana.

She poured the bottle slowly, examining the stopper and the seal and examining the contents as discretely as she could before stopping with a half full glass. “I see, someone who hurt you I take it. Pain can be…pleasurable for many reasons that we choose not to think about isn’t it?” Tellnos said the words as playfully as she could while conveying danger with every syllable. “So what brings you here…learning these tricks from some friends of yours?” Zagro could sense the Naga Sadow spy trying to use her Force power to read his mind at a low level as to not spike his defenses.

“Sweetheart, just something I picked up over the years in spaceports and battle-grounds. I worked for some particularly unsociable Hutts long ago and somehow ended up with a commission for it with the Queen Mother’s Field Logistics Regiment…but I have some things to learn from acquaintances of mine nearby.” Zagro let the second hall of his statement come out in torrents as any man who has had a prideful boast to tell a potential paramour has done since time immortal. He took a short drag from the glass, then another greedy pull.

“Training can cause…needs does it not? I am a lost soul myself. I have been going star port to star port for some time now looking for something to feel and to believe again. That smile masks a deep pain. I think you can train me tonight. I leave tomorrow and have found nothing of value on this desolate rock.” Carmana was too clumsy with the delivery. Too forceful and too earnest, she likewise took a small sip and then another gulp.

Zagro could start to feel the effects of the narcotics in his system. This was a slower way to induce the numbing effect of the drugs but it was alarming that he already could feel the onset. “Not enough time, if she catches on before she takes a big enough dose I may need to blast my way out of here and with no intelligence as to how many goons the wench may have in the alley or near the exit.” One thing was certain, something *needed* to happen and happen fast!

“Another time, perhaps, I can’t be out too long…” Zagro got the words out as he felt a hand reach towards his thigh. It was not soft and fleshy but cold and metallic. She was gifted, he had to give her credit for that. “No my handsome friend I think you have all night. Some friends of mine will be back in fifteen minutes with a speeder and a safe house readied for us. We will be going full twelve rounds with you tonight. Your trainers have information I need and you indeed will give it to me. If you make things easy for us may still let things go very easy on you.” Tellnos stated playful and forcibly as ever. He heard the barely audible charge in the barrel of the blaster pick up amplitude.

Zagro did not have to fake the terror he felt as his heart was crushing towards his bowels and the onset of uncertain dread filed his lungs. “Can I at least finish my drink in case it is the last one I have for a long time?”

Carmana eyed the Hapan with genuine surprise and a calm washed over her. She was lifted with the prospects of an expertly conducted operation and held nothing back now. “Go ahead…I think I will finish mine as well. Tell you what friend…we can take the bottle to go I feel we may need it to clean your wounds. Physical, mental, and pride can always use some healing after things like this.”

Taking the glass to his lips Zagro knew the moment of truth was knocking at his door. Not breaking eye contact he drained his glass and slowly put it down on the tabletop. “I am truly sorry…you are uniquely beautiful. I was ready to open up to you about something far darker than you could ever ask me about.”

Carmana smiled now and raised the glass to her lips and paused. “Sorry? Cocky aren’t you? Bravado avails you little with my blaster in your groin. When I die it will not be at your hands.” She spoke the words then emptied her glass as well.

Zagro leaned back in his seat and softly stated “No, you are deadly correct about that fact.” As the last utterance left his lips he saw the blonde head tilt to the side and the jade green seas that were her eyes closed for the final time. Zagro stood up and could feel the narcotics wearing on his system and clouding his mind and slowing his muscle functions.

The Twi’Lek enforcer at the door eyed him ruefully and half blocked the door and put a hand on Zagro’s left shoulder. Instantly the Hapan’s blade thrust into the armpit of his assailant as he used his free hand to both muffle the male’s mouth and push him through the doorway. As he dumped the body in the alley and deposited his vials and needles from the shoulder holster on the body of the Twi’Lek as he bled out Zagro peaked his head back inside the cantina and motioned for the bartender. “Kre’Fel…keep the change.”