

Legorii's shoulder hit the dirt as he rolled under the first blow, a tentative strike. As he came to his feet, his palms open, he smirked.

"Forty-nine more, just like that one. Forty-nine more, and then I'll pocket your head."

Legorii ducked again, his opponent's katana sailing over his head. The Arconan took his eyes briefly from the nicked blade to meet his burly foe's dim-witted gaze, his arrogant smirk unchanged. The man looked to be some kind of ugly alien hybrid, with scaly skin and a porcine jaw. There were even patches of wispy fur, graying and grimy with the dust of combat.

*I...what...what is that thing?*

The Pontifex sidestepped another blow, and then another, as he turned his gaze skyward. It wasn't his first time in a cartel arena, nor did he expect it to be his last. The man he searched for would be here, but Legorii knew that he would not allow himself to be seen. *No, he's far too clever for that.* The Proconsul knew that his best chance of bringing in the Exile was to win a more regular place in the arena, and impress the man enough to be approached by him.

The blows kept coming, sluggish and off-kilter. Adopting a bored lilt, the Anzat counted the misses aloud. "...eleven, twelve...oh, close, thirteen..." The Arconan would have expected the creature to grow enraged at the taunting, but instead there was no discernible reaction.

*Maybe he doesn't understand Basic?*

Legorii's thoughts returned to the Exile as he passed the time, ticking off the strikes before he could finally kill the creature with whom he shared the arena. He knew that the Exile had Brotherhood ties; it was believed that he had last served with Taldryan, and was well-acquainted with the power structures in that unit. He possessed intelligence that would be useful to Arcona, with war looming ever-larger on the horizon.

The Anzat swore under his breath as the whistling katana came within centimeters of his scalp, forcing him to awkwardly dive to the side. *Focus.* His opponent's chest was heaving, fetid spittle spraying from his cleft lip, veins bulging in his sizable forearms. As he brushed dust from his combat robes, avoiding yet another strike, the Proconsul's smirk widened into a white-toothed grin.

"Just five more. Five more and I'll free you from that horrendous cage of a body."

The beast's cross-eyed stare narrowed, and with a guttural roar, he launched himself anew. The crowd around them, fairly thin for a lower-stakes fight between a newcomer and a barely-sentient insult to life everywhere, hushed. The worn katana, wielded like a hammer in the beefy hands of the nearly-dead mutt, cut through the stale air, but not through the Anzat's flesh. Legorii spread his arms wide, pirouetting as the blows sailed wide.

Legorii finished spinning, his heels digging back into the packed dirt of the arena. "That's fifty. Time's up." Growling, the Wookiee-Gamorrean-Human-whatever swung wildly with the katana, but the Pontifex was already sliding beneath the strikes. Letting his momentum carry him, and coming up to the creature's side, Legorii grasped both of its wrists and pulled up hard. Off-balance, the combatant stumbled.

Twisting, Legorii cartwheeled, the Force infusing his movement with a fluidity and grace that he could not have otherwise mustered. There were two identical cracks, audible even to the crowd above, as the beast's radii snapped. He howled in pain, dropping his katana, and fell to his knees. With his left hand, the Pontifex snatched the blade, and yanked his opponent's head back by a tuft of hair on his head.

Placing the cool steel to the beast's throat, Legorii leaned down. "Normally, I would tell you about how I'm going to wear your face like a mask, but there's no way I'm ever looking at your filthy visage again, let alone subjecting anyone else to it."

Legorii paused. *Too many big words. He didn't understand any of that.* Shrugging, the Proconsul thrust the blade up through the beast's chin and soft tissues, embedding its tip in his brain matter. He jerked for a few seconds, convulsing, and then fell still. Letting the corpse fall to the dust, the Arconan turned to find his prospective sponsor, sitting in one of the first rows.

"I did as you asked, Lord Hutt. Of course, I expected to be fighting an opponent, not an *animal*," Legorii spat the word, "but I submit to your judgement. Who is the next to die?"