Looking Home Campaign – Antenora

Fiction – “Priority: Propaganda”

By SBL Archangel

#7589

SBL Archangel (Sith) / P:FIST-M:HRLD-PROF / Battle Team Caliburnus of House Scholae Palatinae [GMRG: IX] [ACC: Q] [SA: V]

SBx2 / GC-PoDP / SC-SoH / AC-ToSC / DC-PP / GN-AuL / SN-PL / BN-PL / Cr:9R-23A-16S-21E-12T-11Q / PoB-PL / CF-AF / CI-PC / DSS-AuL / SI / SoF-PL / SotM / LS-SL / SoL-BE / S:2D-1Dk-7Rm-9P-14U-7B-15De-28Dec-16Aff-18Rn / LoR

{SA: MVC - MVF - MVL - MVS - DPE - DPV - SGG - SGW - SVLC - SVS - SVTC}

**Taking Action**

“How are they getting this information?!” the Royal Imperial Guard Colonel roared, slamming his fist into the table in front of him. Papers fluttered at the sudden assault, and pencils were sent careening off the edge. The hard wood table had been used for well over a century within the Antenoran Guard headquarters in some way or another, but was not being used as an impromptu map. The city of Suzel had been careful reconstructed through the use of models and strips of colored card. It was good to see that the arts and crafts portion of the childhood of the Antenoran Guard staff officers had not gone to waste.

The officers who lined the other side of the table, the farthest away from the Colonel that was possible for them to be, flinched away at the unwarranted strike. A major bearing the insignia of the 31st Infantry Legion, by dint of having more control over his reactionary movements, had been left alone under the weight of the Colonel’s anger.

“Major Ibek! Explain to me, please, how these backward indigenes can circumvent us at every turn!”

The atmosphere in the room suddenly frosted over. A large portion of the Antenoran Guard legions were drawn from the indigenous population of the planet, in an attempt to create more of a desire to defend the planet from attack. A large portion of the high-ranking officers in the Guard were brought in from other planets and Guard units to supplement the training of the unit, but many of the junior officers and a fair number of the mid-level ones, were Antenoran born. Half a dozen lieutenants, captains, and Major Ibek, suddenly became stone-faced.

“You’ll find, sir, that these… people are better at getting where they need to go than us, simply because they don’t have heavy vehicles and know the terrain,” Major Ibek replied, emphasizing the word ‘people’ as strenuously as possible within the bounds of acceptability. He’d dealt with this racial nonsense from the Colonel in the past, but these were worrying times, and such outbursts were no conducive to the situation.

The Colonel focused his fiery gaze on the Major, his anger and frustration boiling up within him. He slapped a model of an Antenoran clan member from the table, which glanced off a nearby console, smashing to bits.

“We ought to cleanse the clans of these rebels” he muttered, barely under his breath. He knew that everyone in the command room had heard him and he had wanted it that way. A pair of Lieutenants, young and tattooed with tribal markings, stood up as one and began to walk out.

“And where in the hells of Mustafar are you going!?”

One of the Lieutenants, a female human of easy looks and pale complexion, turned to address her superior officer. Her expression was placid and calm, but when she spoke, her voice sounded strained, as if she was holding back the words her mind and heart were trying their best to make known. Major Ibek felt for the girl.

“With all due respect, Colonel Kamling, your conduct is unbecoming and is creating a hostile environment”

It had taken a lot of guts to talk like that to the Colonel. The girl was barely out of the Officers Academy, the shine on the buttons of her uniform still from factory polishing, not from industrious ministrations young officers during their off-time. And in essence, it was unlikely that the buttons will acquire any tarnish, as this officer has signed their own death warrant.

“I tend to agree,” said a voice from the shadows of the hallway the young officers had been heading towards. The voice was warm, deep, and had a slight rasp, giving it an animalistic quality. Though the voice had been relatively quiet, it had been easily heard over the din of the command center. Heads turned to see who had spoken, but the darkness beyond shrouded them.

“Who is that!?” the Colonel replied, his tirade not ebbing in the slightest, “Name and rank, man!”

A large figured dipped its head and right shoulder to get through the doorway into the command center before straightening its back, drawing it to full height. Encased in gleaming crimson armor, the man was over seven feet tall, his barrel like chest adorned with the Aquila of the Imperial Emperor, and a lightsaber clipped to his belt. A large rifle was held easily in his hands, with the rest of his equipment hidden by a shrouded and camouflaged cape which hung from his huge shoulders to the ground.

“You will address me as sir, Colonel,” the man replied, the warmth in his voice dissipating instantly, to be replaced by frozen tibanna gas. A dozen troopers and officers snapped to attention instantly, with perhaps their eyesight or simple recognition ability helping them realize who was in their presence. The rest, seeing the tensed response by their fellows, followed quickly, except for the Colonel, who managed to both sag and straighten in one motion.

“Marshal!” he exclaimed, his hands rising in a consolatory manner, “I was not informed of your arrival!”

Marshal Archangel stared straight in the Colonel’s eyes for a long few seconds, his hard glare speaking volumes more than words might have. The Colonel visibly shrunk back, away from the fearful gaze. Archangel turned to regard Major Ibek, who was one of the few to stand to attention immediately.

“Major Ibek. I have heard good stories about you,” he said, his bass voice warming from its previously icy tones. He nodded his head once, and flashed a brief, mirthless smile at the Major, before turning back to the Colonel. With two long strides he was a bare foot away from the man, who quaked visibly at the sudden advance.

“Colonel Kamling,” Archangel said clearly, loud enough for the entire room to hear, “I have found you in direct violation of the desegregation decree of our lord, the Emperor of Cocytus. Your utter disregard for those under your command has been noted, and you have been found wanting. Your actions speak to an arrogance which has not been earned.”

With a swift action, the Marshal plucked the rank bars from the man’s chest, and flung them to the ground. The bars were soon followed by position tabs, and the 2nd Antenoran Legion badge, forming an untidy heap on the ground. The Colonel’s face, already pale, seemed to drain completely of blood as the man watched his world come apart around him, one uniform adornment at a time.

“Colonel Kamling, you are relieved,” the Marshal said gravely, before taking a short step back. He glared for a long few moments at the petrified man. Natural xenophobia is one thing. It’s the dislike or fear of the unknown, a perfectly natural response to new stimulate. Blatant racism in the face of overwhelming evidence on the side of desegregation was as much a death sentence as charging into a black hole. You trust the man or woman in the fox hole beside yours or you’re in serious trouble.

He swung his heavy arm up, backhanding the man cleanly across the face. Not a small man by any means, Kamling spun on his axis and collapsed to the ground with little more than a groan. No one moved to assist him. No one dared to breathe. The former Colonel wheezed on the floor, little puffs of permacrete dust filling the air with each exhalation.

“Major Ibek… my apologies, Lieutenant Colonel Ibek, you are now in command. I want this command fully operational and quelling riots before dawn. I have four sniper teams, they are at your disposal now. If you need someone dead, deal with them. You know this planet, you know these people, and you are honorable. That’s more than I can say for this slug,”

The last comment was directed at Kamling, whose head had lolled to the side. The Marshal had a punch which could stop a Krayt dragon, or so it was said. Ibek threw a salute to the Marshal, who returned it, and strode out without saying a word. The other staff officers started to breathe again, but didn’t move much more than that.

“Snap to it, ladies and gentlemen!” Lieutenant Colonel Ibek shouted, his voice filled with vigor, “Clean up this mess and get us organized! Captain Japon, I need that black list right now. We have snipers. Let’s quell some riots”