*Taldryan Encampment
Surface of Korriban*

Howlader rubbed at his eyes and scratched at his beard, the dust and grime of Korriban had taken its toll on the old master. He was a Sith master, an Admiral of the Imperial Remnant – he was trained for combat on the bridge of a starship or at least that of a starfighter’s cockpit. In short, ground combat was not his strong suit – and this lack of forte was manifesting itself physically. Every part of him hurt. Perhaps it was the weeks of combat and physical exertion on this forsaken world – or perhaps it was simply sleeping on the hard ground – or maybe, Howlader thought, it was simply his age. The reason, he decided, did not really matter one way or the other – the other things that mattered were the pain he felt, his desire to eliminate (or at least mitigate) that pain and who to blame for this whole mess. The blame was easy, Howlader realized, as he started towards the command post, there was only one man.

"You, Cantor!" Howlader yelled, as he strode into the command post (which was in reality, just a slightly larger tent). "This is all your fault! I am hot, I am tired, every part of hurts, and I have to wear pants, and it is all because of you. I do not leave the ship – and yet here I am, on this forsaken world. Hell, I did not even complain this time – I recognized the importance of all this – and I thought, probably stupidly, that I could do some good."

In an uncharacteristic show of civility (or perhaps it was just exhaustion playing its part), Taldryan’s Proconsul did not say a word – he merely let Howlader get it all out.

"Not going to interrupt? Great. Okay – so here’s what I’m going to do. I am going to walk out of this hellhole of a camp and go get loaded. If I am not back tomorrow morning? Wait longer. If I am not back the next morning? Send somebody to find me."

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*Dreshdae, Korriban
Anonymous tavern
Three hours later*

Howlader examined the scene in front of him in the bar. There were at least a half tall glasses in front of him, all of which used to contain some sort of local intoxicating liquid – it tasted vaguely like Corellian whiskey – except with some sort of subtle change to the flavour. No matter. Even after this many drinks, Howlader was still angry at his lot in life, stuck on this worthless world against an enemy that would ruin everything he held dear, and angry at the person that had brought him here. He needed something else, so he turned towards the bartender and asked for something stronger.
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*Thirty minutes later*

Howlader, evidently rejuvenated by whatever it was the bartender had given him, had been joined by quite the boisterous crowd – who took great joy in shaking the thin walls of the tavern with their singing: “then we turned and shook as we had a look!" Howlader was in a much better mood now. Even in his exhausted state, he was just self-aware enough to realize (or at least ponder the notion of) either the alcohol or the comradery lifting his spirits. In the end, Howlader realized that the reason for his jovial mood did not really matter, and he continued to drink, and dance and sing: "…in the room where the dead men lay!"

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*Two hours later*

How he had arrived in this backroom, Howlader was not entirely sure. It was possible, he considered, that the power of whatever final concoction that the bartender had provided was too much – and that Howlader had blacked out the last few hours. He was currently sitting on an uncomfortable chair a smoke filled room – and there was a large stack of credits on the table immediately in front of him. Evidently, Howlader surmised, he was involved in some sort of game of chance – perhaps it was sabacc? Whatever the game was, it was not his turn – so he had a moment to figure out his next move – which would hopefully involve continuing his winning hands.

Howlader looked around the table, trying to size up the seven members of the opposition. There was one Rodian to his left – and he was not doing well, the stack of credits in front of him looked precariously small. A Bith and a Bothan were sitting to his right, and their stacks of credits were smaller than Howlader’s own, though not by much. There was an Ewok immediately opposite Howlader…whose state of intoxication was even worse than Howlader’s own, as evidenced by…and there, the Ewok had collapsed onto the floor. The remaining players were human, or at least near-human (as far as he could tell just by visuals). Howlader tried to reach out with the Force to get a better read on the opponents…but the alcohol was dulling his senses, the only thing he could ascertain was that there was a Force sensitive in the room – and he was sure it was the fellow with the very bright blonde hair. No matter, he decided, his main goal was defeat these opponents and get out of this room alive.

Howlader’s luck at the sabacc table continued for another four hands – while his opponents’ luck continued to dwindle. After another hour and seemingly dozens of hands, Howlader was only left with one opponent – the blonde haired human. Howlader did not expect this one on one match of sabacc to by the final hand of the night – but his opponent continued to raise and bet more and more until he was out of credits.

The blonde fellow cleared his throat, as if to make a final point: "I have one more thing I can offer," and then he threw a leather satchel on the table. "I’m not entirely sure what this is, but I found it buried way outside of town – so it must be valuable."

Howlader was intrigued – and the latent Force sensitivity of his opponent made him think it was worth continuing the hand. Howlader paused for a few more moments as if to suggest deep contemplation, and then grumbled one word: "agreed."

The two players through down their cards on the table…

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*Taldryan Encampment
Eleven hours later*

Howlader, still hungover, awoke in his tent with a groan – and then shook himself awake. He looked around the state of his makeshift home (really, just a tent) – and noticed the leather satchel in the corner. He rolled over to it, as the idea of being upright did not yet interest him, and shook it open – revealing its contents. Genuinely shocked, Howlader forced himself upright and started towards the command post.

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*Five minutes later*

Keirdagh Cantor shook his head as Howlader entered the command tent and tried to dismiss him: "Howie, not now. I am in no mood to hear your hungover….or going by your smell, drunken ramblings, I have work to do."

Howlader said nothing – merely grunted, threw the satchel on the table nearest to Cantor, and walked back out.

Howlader
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Clan Taldryan