***The Legend of Peewa the Small***

“Alright Q,” the gruff fur-ball of a smuggler said as the others took their seats around the table, “it’s your turn this time. You buying drinks or offering entertainment?”

“I’ll take entertainment, Whiskers. I know how much your boys can drink.” The Zeltron’s smirk that crossed over the assemblage made the group of ragamuffins chuckle quietly, save for one young human boy who seemed embarrassed by their manner of speech. “Who’s the new kid? He looks about ready to keel over.”

“New cabin boy; my late brother’s son, if you can believe it.”

“Didn’t know you had a brother.”

“Neither did I!” he laughed through his bushy facial hair. “But enough of that! Come on, Red. You promised entertainment for my purchase o’ the drinks.”

Qyreia threw another smirk at the blushing boy, who clearly misunderstood what was going to happen, before turning her attention back to the group at large. “Alright you lowlifes… Ever heard of Peewa?” A general denial quietly went around the table. “Biggest Jawa ever that lived! He…”

“A Jawa? This oughta be fun,” one of the others said sarcastically.

“You! You’re buying the next round for interrupting. Now… as I was saying…”

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In the burning sands of Tatooine live the diminutive Jawas – creatures who live for the thrill of salvage and profit for their familial clans. When not traversing the dunes and canyons of the arid planet, they shelter themselves within the walls of their clan fortresses, where they raise their young until they too are old enough to join the scavenging parties. One such Jawa was Peewa the Small.

Growing up, Peewa seemed always to be the runt of the clan, his tiny legs pumping hard to keep up with his larger family members. Even when he reached the age of adulthood, he was a full head shorter than the other Jawas, nearly causing his clan to bar him from leaving with the others on the scavenging hunt once the storm season ended. With the ion blaster he carried, however, he was an expert shot, and this at least garnered a place for him on the sandcrawler.

As the new scavenging season started, the lumbering vehicle made its way into the sandy wastes. The days brought air-rippling heat while the nights would at times make clouds of what little breath escaped the Jawas’ heavy robes, and all the while they sent out scout parties, searching for potential salvage. They had come across several small wrecks, but nothing of particular value, often worth more for the material than the functionality.

One day, as the twin suns were beginning to rise over the horizon, the Jawas of the sandcrawler convened to delegate the coming tasks, chief among which was the scouting duty, thanks to their run of poor luck. While the crawler would divert to a nearby moisture farm, the scouts would explore the dune wastes to the north. Peewa had been trying for weeks to get onto the scout parties, but had always been set aside for more menial tasks that would keep him out from under the feet of his larger family.

Not today, though. As the crawler chief called for volunteers for a second time, Peewa pushed and shoved through the mass of robed bodies, at times using his ion blaster as a cudgel on the more resilient bodies. Once at the head of the assembly, the chief had only to look at the lack of volunteers – who did not want the shame of returning empty-handed – to acquiesce to the young Jawa’s request. The sand had not even begun to burn when Peewa, accompanied by a distant cousin, mounted their speeder and took off across the desert as the crawler continued west toward the moisture farm.

The lonely pair tore through the growing light, a furious trail of disturbed sand kicked up behind them, agreeing that speed would be their greatest weapon in finding salvage. Yet dawn became morning, and morning turned to midday, and on into the afternoon without a single sighting of scavengeable materials. One hopeful sighting – a trio of dead Eopie, signaling a defunct caravan – drew their attention, and Peewa disembarked to investigate while his cousin stayed at the helm of their speeder. As he crept up on the bodies, he spotted movement, readying his ion gun as a precaution. It turned out that the movement was a small pack of womp rats feasting on the dead beasts who, upon spotting the Jawa, dashed forth for a fresher kill. Peewa fired off a stinging shot of electricity before turning and dashing back toward the speeder. Despite his size, he outran the larger predators and jumped into the speeder just in time, leaving the rodents in their sandy exhaust.

As the sun burned ever higher, the pair’s hopes drew ever lower of finding proper salvage material. They crossed expanses of sand that appeared to have been undisturbed for decades, save for the winds of Tatooine itself. Hope for this recon appeared to be lost.

Yet when the suns began their downward approach to the horizon, the two Jawas came across a tremendous silhouette jutting from the sands. As they drew nearer, the rippling air gave way to a clearer and clearer image, until the shape materialized fully into an old and battered CR-90 corvette. Even at a distance, they were cheering in their high-pitched tongue, and approached with reckless gaiety.

Once upon their objective, they disembarked and began their examination of the vessel, their glee suppressed by the lust for quality goods. The ship showed clear signs of damage – some from battle, some from entry into the atmosphere – but the crash itself seemed to present only minimal structural issues. The engines looked scorched, but serviceable. If the inside was as well-preserved as the outside, the pair surmised, then the wreck would require several sandcrawlers to carry away; the whole clan would need to get involved.

They were discussing how to mark their claim over some food and drink when they felt a shudder reverberate through the hull beneath them. As they looked down, the sands spilled inward at the base of the hull; not to indicate the ship was sinking, but that something was coming up from beneath. Peewa and cousin had barely taken to their feet when a krayt dragon burst forth from the silicate, bellowing a challenge to the invaders of its territory and the disturbers of its hibernation.

Time in the wastes had clearly had its effects on the beast: it was long, at least fifty meters from snout to tail, but it was lean compared to most of its kind – a clear effect from the scant food in the area. This beast was an ancient ambusher, and clearly a force to fear from its starved ferocity, made more poignant when its head turned abruptly toward the Jawas. It sped toward the buried nose of the ship and began clawing its way up the hull toward the fresh meal with unnatural vivacity, shining teeth bared as it readied to pounce.

The duo wasted no time in running, instead deciding to drop to the ground from their elevated position and hoping for a soft landing. Peewa landed with a soft thud, the wind knocked from his lungs but otherwise none the worse for wear. His cousin, however, had broken his arm in the fall, and any jarring movement strained him immensely. They were about to make a run for the speeder when the dragon, alerted to their movement, slipped over the side and began charging across the sand at the diminutive morsels.

Without the luxury of time to make a plan, Peewa brandished his ion blaster and told his cousin to make for the speeder to tell the clan about the find. The krayt reared at the small Jawa as he fired the close-range weapon full in the beast’s eyes. The weapon, which might otherwise only sting the giant, sent it reeling as the electric burst seared its retinas, allowing Peewa’s cousin to reach the speeder and take off toward the south.

Peewa the Small was now alone against an enormous and enraged krayt dragon. Running as fast as his little legs could carry him, he dashed ahead of the lizard toward the engines, hoping to find a hatch that would let him hide inside where the dragon couldn’t reach him. Yet as he ran, the closest thing to a hatch that he found was a broken seam in the hull, mostly buried by sand and otherwise blocked by wreckage within. The krayt, finally recovered from the ionized blast, made a fast pursuit of the little Jawa as he continued on toward the rear of the ship. The only entrance, it would appear, were the engines themselves.

The hooded being made a sharp turn down one of the engine ports, his small frame allowing him to navigate the compact engineering toward the dead reactor with ease. When the krayt tried to follow, he shot blast after blast of stinging electricity at its face as it tried to crawl into the narrow space. For once, Peewa was happy to be small as he made it all the way to the defunct reactor and engineering chamber of the ship, thinking that he might be safe inside.

Further examination proved him wrong. Littered across the floor were the leavings of bones and strips of cloth, as well as the dragon’s own droppings. Peewa had gone from the krayt’s front yard and into its den.

Not one to give up so easily, he collected some of the cloth and bone fragments – true to his Jawa heritage of salvaging – and made his way toward the fore end of the ship. As he ran, breath panting under his hood, he could hear the lizard’s claws raking the hull as he ran for the bridge. Among some the rubble, he spotted a twisted bar of metal that, with a little quick work, came off at a sharp and sickening point. He took the cloth and bone and made a handle for the metal shaft as he ran, fashioning a crude spear out of the materials. At least this, he thought, might prove useful against the beast.

He arrived at the bridge just at the head of the dragon, who clawed at him from without through a narrow opening in the hull. His small black fingers worked quickly over the consoles, occasionally needing to stand on his toes to see, as he brought the ship to life on its auxiliary power batteries. The fuel indicator showed only a small fraction of a percentage available, meaning the relic wouldn’t even explode if he decided to sacrifice himself to kill the creature.

Perhaps, he thought, that would not be necessary. He fumbled hurriedly through his bandoliers, pulling out a droid restraining bolt and control, along with some other electronic parts, fashioning a remote controlled activator for the ship’s mechanisms. Planting it to the console with a magnetic *thunk*, he made a mad dash back through the ship toward the engines. The krayt had made it inside and chased him relentlessly, tearing through the debris with burning hunger for this impudent snack. It was only slowed by the occasional ion blast that Peewa would send rocketing back as he dashed and vaulted through the dark corridors.

Once within the engineering section, he dove into the same narrow space as before, the dragon following close behind, ripping the metal to shreds as it drew closer and closer to its prey. Peewa hit the control for his restraining bolt, and knew the hastily engineered device was working as he smelled the air fill with the heady scent of starship fuel. The dragon’s claws made brief purchase into his back just as he leapt from the ship and into the sand. The creature was still struggling to get free of the narrow space when the Jawa sent one final ion bolt into the beast, the electricity igniting the fine cloud of fumes from what remained of the ship’s fuel.

For a brief moment, the engines seemed to come to life, the sockets glowing white for a blink as flames gouted from the gap that the lizard had torn. The creature screamed as the fires burned at its flesh, causing it to flail into the ragged metal and causing more damage to its susceptible underside.

The engines went out almost as quickly as they had ignited, the fuel completely used up, while the dragon lay half-exposed, twitching in the throes of near-death. Collecting what was left of his courage, Peewa staggered to his feet and approached the beast. He blinded it with a shot from his blaster then, drawing back the twisted salvage spear, watched the creature’s eyes go blank as he drove the point down.

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“What happened then?” the boy asked as the other leaned in to hear the story’s conclusion.

“It was another four months before the clan could gather its crawlers and return. And when they did, whaddya think they saw?” The audience’s eyes looked at the Zeltron, unblinking. “Peewa, and a giant krayt dragon skeleton hanging out the tail of the ship, its meat hung on long bits of cloth and turned to jerky. The Jawa had taken some of the salvage and made a moisture vaporator for water, and used the corpse for food.”

“So he lived,” Whiskers mused. “I’d never believe it.”

“Well he did, and no one ever called him Peewa the Small again, ‘specially when he wove the dragon’s teeth into his robes. Not only did he survive, but his clan brought back more salvage from that ship than in ten cycles combined. Peewa would go on to run his own sandcrawler and hold an honored place in his clan.”

“How old is this story?” one of the men asked.

Qyreia shrugged. “Dunno. CR-90s aren’t that old compared to other designs from the Old Republic, so it could go back a few hundred years, tops.”

“Did you *meet* Peewa?” the boy asked hurriedly as she took a drink of the captain’s offered liquor. The others seemed just as intent on this question.

“Maybe I did, maybe I didn’t,” she said with a smug, knowing look. “I just know that Jawas don’t live all that long, and they don’t keep a very good history, so that they even have a legend like this means it was either very recent, or very important.” She finished her drink and stared at the boy. “Just remember this, kid: when these Hutt-humpers are looking at you like meat, just remember little Peewa and what he could do when he put his mind to it.”

“Y-yes ma’am. I will.”

“Good lad.” She looked at the captain. “I think you owe me another drink.”