The sound of the weapons fire and exploding ordinance was nearly deafening to Howlader, making it near impossible to coordinate with his partner in crime (well, Howlader thought to himself, not an actual crime, more of a metaphorical crime). From his position, Howlader was able to see Chaosrain’s facial expressions – it was the same look that the Warlord had on his whenever something had gone not according to plan – usually disastrously so. Howlader needed to hear what Chaos was saying – and they needed to get a move on. Howlader reached out with the Force to get inside of Chaos’ mind and was able to discern what those facial expressions meant:

"What do you mean 45 seconds?" Howlader shouted in surprise, seemingly forgetting the near deafening sounds of combat that surrounded him.

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"Wait. What? You’re insane. You’re not sending me on this," Howlader shouted at the bearded Consul.

Keirdagh Cantor had strolled into the Proconsul’s office half an hour beforehand to outline the latest developments with Sphinxian Satellite Technologies and their continued cold (and not so cold, at times) war against Clan Taldryan and its Expansionary Force. Cantor explained that new information sourced from Yveret Biabru’s signals intelligence division had led Deputy Director Anan to produce a finding – that either the Expansionary Force, the Intelligence Directorate, or both had been penetrated – and the most likely scenario was an internal to Taldryan traitor – who was supplying Sphinxian with information.

"Yes, I am. This person is a traitor to Taldryan – and I have no idea if it goes beyond this one person, whomever they are. I don’t know if there’s a conspiracy or how far or deep that conspiracy might go. I need someone I can trust to route out this problem and I need it to happen now. Besides, it’s not like I’m telling you to infiltrate a fortified enemy position, or hell, even leave your office – just find out who or what this traitor is and make it go away. He’s still somewhere in the Great Hall – or at least that’s what this report says."

Howlader knew that once Cantor went off on one of his terse rants, there was no real way to convince him of reality, so he merely sighed and began to read the documentation from the Directorate in order to plan out his next steps.

Within a few moments of research and analysis of the background information, Howlader came to the conclusion that the Consul had lied – or at least misconstrued the truth. He would have to leave his office, as there’s no way the traitor would still be in the Great Hall. Furthermore, it was looking pretty likely that there would be a need to infiltrate a fortified enemy position – and he could not do it alone.

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*Two hours later*

Howlader strode into the recreation room of the Home, the facility of the former (and perhaps one day, future) Battleteam Old Folks’ Home. In the last few years, this testament to the gluttony of a cadre of Taldryan’s elders had become a ghost of its former self, as its members had moved to the Dark Council, the Clan Summit, or off on special projects away from Karufr. Howlader did not expect to find any life – but instead found one former member of the team still enjoy the luxuries of the Home. Chaosrain Taldrya, former Consul and Taldryan Veteran sat slumped in a chair, drool rolling down his face.

Howlader sighed, but at the same time, was still happy to at least have the possibility of an assistant on this traitor tracking task. It was obvious to Howlader that the Warlord had succumbed to one of the nurse’s more rigorous exercise regimens, and under normal circumstances, disturbing someone in the midst of such a recovery would not be appropriate – but desperate times called for desperate measures.

Howlader strode behind the comfortable looking chair that Chaos was sitting in, took a moment to examine it, then lifted it off the ground with the Force. Pondering the situation further, Howlader reached out with his right arm and spun the chair clockwise, and then counter clockwise, in the hope of jarring the drooling Taldrya awake.

Chaos continued to drool and snore. Howlader sighed, and turned the chair upside down with some force, flinging its former occupant to the ground, who landed with a loud thud.

Obviously less than pleased to be awakened in such a discourteous manner, Chaos shouted: "Oh what the hell, Howie."

Howlader walked over to where Chaos had landed and stood over him with a grin: "Good morning Chaos. Would you like to help me with something?"

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*Present day*

Chaosrain shouted his reply: "Yes! 45 seconds, that’s the default! I thought the timer was going to be set for longer, but apparently someone forgot to bring along the mechanism that allows for changes!"

Howlader retorted: "By someone…you mean you?"

"Well whatever. That means we’ve got two options. We can either set the timer and run like hell through all those Sphinxian soldiers shooting at us, and hope that they don’t manage to stop the bomb that destroys all the evidence that this guy," as Chaos motioned to the dark grey jacketed Taldryan Intelligence Branch Leader with the rather large hole in his chest, "managed to deliver. Or…" Chaosrain stopped mid-sentence.

"Or?” Howlader shouted as he threw another piece of rubble with the Force against the ever closing enemy forces.

"Well we might not actually have another option…oh look at that, 44 seconds to go! Let’s get out of here!"

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As explosions rocked the Sphinxian facility, Howlader had one final comment: "See, this is what happens when you forget the fans and the blonde wig."