*Scholars, Rogues, and Gamblers*

The mid autumn warmth permeated the Judecca air on the evening of the festivities at Petitor Umbrarum. The Dante family estates were regal in their design and majestic in their scope. Set along a vast track of land it was a pristine oasis for the Adept and his people. Commander Fenn got the sense that he was about to peek behind the curtain and enter into the proverbial ivory tower of the inner sanctum of the fabled Scholae Palatinae. The human was familiar with military formality to be sure, but how to engage personally a Sith superior would be a troubling task even in such a joyful setting.

“Welcome commander, glad you could attend” came the booming and controlled voice of the Adept. Walking through the main entry way of the villa, Fenn could see the local dancers entertaining guests, smell the aroma of sweet meats and pastries, and hear the sound of a string band. All things considered, it was a far more lively and colorful event than he anticipated.

Dante led the small group of invited guests, Scholae Palatinae all, to his private study for cocktail hour and to make use of the vast quantities of ales and smoking apparatus that were luxuriously displayed. Despite such majestic trappings, it struck Fenn as poignant this display was done with no fanfare or trumpeting but in a dignified and meticulous manner.

Ushered to their seats, Fenn found himself with the Quarren Lexiconus, the mercenary Chrome, his own Battle Team Leader Delak, amongst a handful of others. Pushing the awkwardness aside and painfully aware of his dress armor being out of place with the robes and finery of the assorted Sith, Fenn thanked his host. “Adept Dante, I humbly appreciate your offering invitation to attend such a fine festivity. I have not had an occasion to take out my full dress kit in many years what with the constant warfare raging within the Empire.”

Dante nodded, and several of the guests verbally agreed while languishing their pipes and tumblers of ale. He feared he made a critical breach of decorum, speaking of military matters in a liberty call environment amongst his peers and superiors. This was not a working meeting.

“Your welcome, Commander Fenn. It has been awhile since many of our brave soldiery and naval officers have gathered here. For too long the Empire’s Sith brethren some may say ruled the roost. More inclusion and joint operability is the key to our success and good fortune. A toast to our military far and wide, and the Sith leadership that guides them.” Dante stated the toast in a somber tone yet one could clearly hear the pride and approval in his words.

After cocktail hour concluded, many of the guests made their way to the banquet tables and gathered for the feast that was to be spread throughout the evening in a leisurely pace coupled with copious amounts of imbibing and more smoking. A tour of the grounds was promised as well. Before long Commander Fenn was overcome with the fraternal bonds of the night, and retained memories of it long after returning to duty on the *Warspite*.