

*> Your vitals are past orange – tension, fatigue, anxiety, and stress hormone levels are rising.*

Tense. Yes, tense was the right way to describe the scene. Last he remembered seeing New Tython, it had been nearly tilled under with Mandalorians crawling over every hill. Now, it was a glass sphere hanging, gutted by the Grand Master's assault.

Pravus deserved some respect, it seemed.

When it came down to it, pirates were slavers – and Eiko had faced down enough slavers so far. To some, he might even have been considered a slaver himself, akin to the Dread Lord, a mere instrument of the fulminating darkness that had become Clan Plagueis. But there was one distinct difference, as Eiko straightened his back to lessen the height difference between him and the pirate representative. Even if he were a slaver, Eiko didn't have the oily greed in his eyes that the pirate exhibited.

Nor did he have the starved anger of the other negotiator.

Eiko counted himself lucky. The chances of running into old allies when mixing with the Odan-Urr was a unique challenge to those living in the wake of the Independent Houses. Revan had died on New Tython, and while its desolate state made the business of information even harder for him, it would have been a lie to say that the destruction of Revan's gravemarker, as it were, didn't make him feel at least a little more at ease. He would have hated seeing the face of Daniel Stephens, or the indomitable wall of hair that was Lambow.

*> You are advised to...*

Eiko flicked the side of his mask to silence the medical alerts.

"I don't want to make too fine of a point of it," he cut off the wheedling tone of the pirate, "but I want to remind you of what turning down an offer of this magnitude would do to you – personally, on the small scale, and to your reputation and opportunity to expand."

"You don't have to listen to him," the Jedi spoke up from the other side of the table. Young, smooth-skinned, like Eiko might have been.

Eiko rose abruptly. "If I told you that we were retracting our offer, it wouldn't be without its barbs. Odan-Urr has lost nearly everything. They are holding themselves together with two hairs."

"It's our right to continue to seek the best, err, business opportunities, yes? And from the sounds of the information I've received, perhaps your position is more, em, fragile than you'd have us believe? I have every intent of letting both of you speak, and be reasonable. This gang will persist with or without your kind benefactorship, and through all of your, ehm, bluster and pouting."

"Your information is wrong." Eiko raised a hand to maintain the silence of his audience. "It's wrong because I've dealt in this business, at the cost of my life, for longer than you know. And if you want to listen to a boy tell you how his toy army and hollow philosophy are better for you than what you know to be true, then be my guest."

"There has to be an opportunity for this to be resolved amenably," the Jedi offered. Again, the sound bit at Eiko's patience – more whining than speaking, with outstretched palms and a gentle expression meant to smooth the already heated scene. It wasn't working, and it was time that the boy knew it.

Eiko reached for his saber more for show than for intent, his breathing steadied and mind cooled by the touch of the leather insets. The other two rose to grip their own weapons.

"I will personally see to the dismantling of your operation," he nodded to the pirate, "and to the elimination of your philosophical pox, Jedi. You have my absolute word, as a Plagueian and a Revanite."

His fingers released the saber and gestured toward his accompanying guard, who fell in step behind him slavishly.