***Remembrance***

The *Havoc’s Tether* was packed to the brim with unruly, boisterous patrons. Not a single table or barstool in the dimly lit cantina remained empty. Returning soldiers, pilots, mechanics, and mercenaries drank and caroused to celebrate the recent victory against the forces of the Collective. Many drank to dull the pain of losing comrades and to forget the horrors of battle. Others chased their vices with wild abandon to escape the memory of the closing of the last war. That was a *different* time. That was a *different* place.

Far in the rear of the establishment, nestled in a corner booth sat three very *different* men. Millions of miles and lifetimes of regret and hard choices had brought them together. The heavily bandaged man, early thirties and compactly built slowly pushed his glass around the table. Clank. Clank. Clank. He was as silent and inflective as the grizzled Jedi and the stout Chiss seated to either side of him. They took turns chasing the shadows in the corners of their mind as a gaudily dressed barmaid came over to refill their slowly evaporating drinks.

Mauro Wynter should *not* have been at the *Havoc’s Tether*. If it were not for the men seated with him, his corpse would lay crumped next to the bodies of the Shikari on the bleached sands of Nancora. Perhaps none of them should have been *here* at all. The same question that had haunts every soldier in every war stalked the Human’s mind. “Why are we alive when so many better men are dead?” he asked.

Director Maximus Alvinius and Executor Len Iode looked up from wherever their minds had wandered to. Mauro’s rhetorical question, his aching survivor’s guilt was answered by the literal and methodic Chiss. “Mauro, you know the way the cards fall in war. As soldiers, we simply do what we must and hope that…” he was cut off. “He isn’t talking about Nancora.” Maximus stated dryly. They returned to the exhaustive work of staring at their glasses.

**LATER**

Standing at attention did not come easily to Mauro Wynter *these* days. Once he had been a fanatic Imperialist with Clan Scholae Palatinae. He recalled that the Director seated in front of him had often stood by his side in those days following orders mercilessly and efficiently. New Tython *had* changed that. *Nancora* had changed things more still.

Satele Shan’s Director and Executor were somberly reviewing the Odan-Urr’s casualty lists from Nancora. Even in victory, the butcher’s bill had come due at a steep price. Mauro remembered the Harakoans of New Tython. He recalled an ancient civilization eradicated due to hatred.

Len signaled for Mauro to stand at ease, a lifetime of military bearing and etiquette radiating off of his blue skin. “Director Alvinius has brought you here because of your shared history and because he *trusts you*. To be blunt, claiming victory in this recent war has shaken Odan-Urr to its core. We were prepared to die fighting in the skies above Kiast and on the fields of Daleem as the Collective bombarded our cities and slaughtered our people” he stated calmly.

The Chiss turned to Maximus who eyed his old friend sullenly. “We have a dilemma. Victory has brought us a windfall of recruits and credits. We are being flooded by strangers seeking asylum and former enemies seeking alliance. For our *resistance* to truly become a *rebellion* we must take this help at face value. The question becomes how can we protect our bastion of Kiast from *without* when we no longer are assured from *within?*” he asked.

*BOOM*. As if on cue, the holo projector built into the Director’s desk began playing newsreels of events none of them could ever possibly forget. *New Tython*. The death of a planet. The genocide of a people. The shattering of a dream. Mauro shook, startled from the trauma freshly awakening in his shattered psyche. Maximus reached across the table and steadied him. A look of compassion and understanding was shared. “No my friend, that is Nancora. That is our ships burning. Again, and again, and again. It will never stop unless we change something,” he stated.

“Then we must be that change. We must train ever harder, organize ever more, and be brighter. I will do that and more, I have an idea,” and with that he left the room burning with energy and redouble devotion to his Clan.