**Arden Karn di Plagia**

**#13299**

**Objective 2**

***The 22nd Rule***

**En Route to Lyra-3K-a**

**“So the ledgers in the 7th file detail to the payments to the mercenaries detailed in the 10th file. The payments to the arms dealers are in the 6th and 9th files. I thought someone with your background could follow all this, Taelyan.”**

**Arden had been trying to explain the data he had uncovered that showed that the Collective had staged the attack on Lyra for a solid thirty minutes straight. The hologram of the Deputy Grand Master had a perplexed look as he continued to pore over the ledgers, transfer records, and all manner of accounting notes that Arden had sent him.**

**“I’m more concerned with making sure the Principate people understand all this, Karn.” Evant responded. “There’s enough accounting data to make a Muun’s head spin.”**

**Arden smirked and shook his head. “I’d explain it myself, but I’m still a way out and you said they aren’t particularly interested in having more of ‘us’ show up.”**

**Evant shook his head but seemed to confirm what Arden was saying. “True. Though there is one more question I know they’re going to ask. Where did you get all this? Looks like far more than a slicer could have come up with. You didn’t rob a bank or something, did you?”**

**Arden chuckled. “Considering what some in the Inquisitorious are probably doing to get information right now, robbing a bank would be rather tame. But to answer the question, you don’t need to rob the bank when you already have the key to the vault.”**

**Nar Shadaa**

**InterGalactic Banking Clan Branch Office**

**Twelve Hours Prior**

**Follow the money.**

**Those were the first three words that came through Arden’s mind when he heard about the alleged Brotherhood attack on the Principate colony on Lyra. While a part of him didn’t think it was beyond someone on Arx to do something like that, it was far more likely a Collective plot. Unlike most of the members of the Inquisitorious, Arden had been interested in the Collective’s finances since they first emerged as a threat. He’d managed to piece together some information by tracing some information related to Capitol Industries. They had all the usual signs of a corporate front for something else, but they also were very thorough in hiding their funding streams through shell corporations, secret accounts, and pretty much every other accounting trick he’d encountered while a part of Corporate Sector Security. He hadn’t gotten very far in untangling the mess, much less finding an exploitable weakness. Now, though, he had something specific to dig into and a sense of urgency. It was time to go straight to the source.**

**There was one thing that anyone with law enforcement experience knew when it came to tracking finances. At some point the money is going to pass through an entity connected to the InterGalactic Banking Clan. They weren’t as powerful as they had been before the Clone Wars, but they still had their fingers in a lot of pies. As the major financial center nearest to Lyra, it was highly likely that the IGBC offices on Nar Shadaa had handled some of the transactions. It also so happened that Arden knew the Muun in charge of the Nar Shadaa office, Car Vorm. Car Vorm’s family and Arden’s had a longstanding business relationship going back over a century. It wasn’t always a clean and hospitable relationship, but Arden had managed to keep the balance of favors in the positive on his end. He’d already contacted Vorm and got the process started. That said, Arden decided a personal visit was necessary to make a personal visit to make sure things went smoothly.**

**After going through security, and checking his blaster, Arden boarded the lift to one of the higher floors of the IGBC compound. He had his droid assistant, Karra, with him just in case he needed a little extra physical persuasion. Vorm had a thing for droids, but Arden really hoped that he didn’t need to see any of that. After a few moments, the lift arrived at its destination. Vorm’s office took up the whole floor of the compound and was lavishly decorated with metal sculptures and a large stone desk opposite the elevator. Massive windows provided an awe-inspiring view of the ecumenoplois that was Nar Shadaa. Behind the desk was a 2-meter tall Muun dressed in a simple, but well made, black robe. He gestured to Arden and smiled.**

**“Mister Karn, a pleasure as always.”**

**Arden moved towards the desk and gave a slight bow. “Always a pleasure indeed Vorn. Well, except for the last time.”**

**Vorn’s expression soured for a moment, but then returned to a slight smile. “And I’m still most grateful for your efforts. A night in lockup would have been most…embarrassing.”**

**Arden smirked. “Come now, a night in a Bonadan jail would have built character. Doesn’t seem like that night was much of a setback in your career.”**

**Vorn nodded. “Well, I did cut back on the Merenzane Gold after that.”**

**“Well, it seems you’ve done quite well for yourself.” Arden replied. “I assume you’ve been working on my transaction.”**

**The Muun gestured for Arden and Karra to sit. “Indeed, I also got your donation. The Hosnian Cataclysm Orphans Fund thanks you for the generous contribution.”**

**“Which we both know you’re going to skim from,” Arden said with a wink. A quarter million credits wasn’t much for him, but greasing the wheels never hurt.**

**“Still, quite generous,” the Muun replied. “And your request was quite interesting. Capital Enterprises has never really attracted significant interest from people like you before. I know you’re not in law enforcement anymore.”**

**“I went private a long time ago.” Arden showed no outward discomfort at saying so but cringed a bit deep down. “Disagreements with management, you know how that goes.”**

 **“Indeed,” the Muun responded. “Still, I wonder. What did they do to earn your attention?”**

**Arden took a deep breath before answering. “They and those they associate with have made life rather difficult for my present client. Lots of assets damaged or destroyed, and now they have stooped to disparaging their reputation to a potential customer.”**

**“I won’t ask who you’re representing, that’s not my concern.” Vorn started typing on a panel on his side of the desk. “But they’re right to be worried. I’ve turned up quite a bit of interesting data related to the accounts and locations you asked about. They’re in bed with some rather shady characters.”**

**As Vorn finished a holographic display flared to life and an array of charts, graphs, ledgers, and images appeared above the desk. To most the data would be indecipherable, but both Arden and Karra’s eyes started darting about, taking it all in. After a moment or two of silence, it was the droid that spoke up first.**

**“That’s a lot of credits they’re moving.”**

**Vorn nodded. “Indeed. Most of the major arms dealers in this part of space are involved in some way. Weapons, ships, mercenaries, you name it, they’ve bought it.”**

**Arden reached into the holodisplay and went straight for one dossier and the associated ledgers. His eyebrow clearly arched. “They hired him, did they? The Trippani character? Well, my client will be rather interested in that.”**

**“Quite the unsavory individual according to my people,” Vorn piped in. “All in all, this should be enough data for your client to convince their customer of Capital Enterprises’ illicit activities towards their assets. I found it rather unusual though that they seemed involved with individuals that seem to have a particular animus towards Force users. Didn’t know that there were many of those around after the Empire.”**

**“It’s a big galaxy, you never know.” Arden didn’t really feel comfortable with the line Vorn was going down, but he didn’t let anything on. As far as he knew, even his own family didn’t know about his abilities. They definitely didn’t know how powerful he’d become over the years. He still kept in touch, but hadn’t seen any of his relatives since he left the Corporate sector several years ago.**

**“That it is,” Vorn stated. “I’ve already begun transferring all the data to your ship. Before you go though, there’s something that I found that would be of particular interest to you. When I was digging into one of the shell companies that were used to move some of the ships, I noticed connections to a certain individual you might be familiar with.”**

**Vorn manipulated one particular section of the web of data and enlarged it. When Arden saw the name and accompanying image, his eyes went wide. He didn’t know what to say for several seconds, but it was clear he was very uncomfortable with what he saw. Karra noticed Arden’s discomfort and was the first to speak up.**

**“Is that who I think it is Master?”**

**Arden nodded. “It is. That complicates things quite a bit.”**

***The 22nd Rule***

**En Route to Lyra-3K-a**

**It had been just under three hours since he’d contacted the Deputy Grand Master with his findings. Arden had been lounging in his cabin on *The 22nd Rule* with a glass of Corellian Brandy as the Gozanti moved closer to it’s rendezvous with the Plagueian forces that had responded to Lyra. He really wasn’t looking forward to having to deal with Ronovi after his abrupt departure from power, but it didn’t really matter. He had much bigger worries at present, specifically what Taelyan or Tyris would do if they noticed what Vorn had pointed out in the data. Just as he downed the glass he was working on, the light on his panel indicating an incoming transmission. Sighing, he tapped a command and Evant’s image appeared.**

**“Taelyan, how’d it go?” That’s all Arden could manage to say at the moment.**

**“The Lyran authorities seemed…intrigued by your findings.” The Deputy Grand Master seemed sincere in his statement though his face was clearly troubled. “They’re verifying it of course, but it seemed rather thorough. They found it interesting that an IGBC agent would just give up stuff like that.”**

**Arden shrugged. “Long standing business relationships have their advantages.”**

**Evant shook his head and got to the point. “How much was the bribe?”**

**Arden chuckled. “My charitable activities aren’t of your concern, Taelyan. I did make a sizeable donation to a very important charity in his name.”**

**“Riiiiight,” Evant replied. “That said, when I started looking into some of the individuals, I did notice a name that was quite concerning. Seems one of the arms dealers involved was someone named Coren Karn. Any relation?”**

***Kriff it! He did notice.* Arden knew he would see it, but he was hoping it wouldn’t be now. He had considered stripping the information about his brother out of the report, but it was a critical piece of the puzzle. He was hoping to have a plan, or at least more details before Coren’s name came up. There was little point in hiding it, the Inquisitorious would figure it out eventually and lying about it wouldn’t help in the long run. After a couple deep breaths, Arden answered.**

**“Coren’s my older brother. My family has a lot of connections with arms dealers of all stripes, savory and otherwise.”**

**“I see,” Evant answered. “You know what must be done, don’t you?”**

**Arden simply glared. “My family, my problem. If any of your people harm him, they’ll answer to me.”**

**“Just handle it.” Evant cut the transmission and left Arden staring deeply at a void above his desk. He had been hoping his family and the Brotherhood wouldn’t get in the way of each other since he first got involved with them. He’d done everything he could to keep a clear division, but deep down he knew it would never last. Arden had made his choice, he had put his family in harm’s way, and for what? Some small kernel of power or influence with a group of people that didn’t give a shit about him? Hopefully there was a way to avoid the result that seemed inevitable.**

**He didn’t want to kill his brother.**