

GJW: Discord In the Name of Business

Phase I Multi-Objective Fiction

Objective 2

**Lunar Spirits Pub
Lyra Colony, Eorilia's Moon
Lyra-3K-a system**

The Lunar Spirits pub echoed with hushed voices and the occasional *clank* and *clunk* of a glass or mug being set on a table as the evening's visitors filed into the joint. Now and then, the barmaid and her associates would approach patrons with cheerful expressions to try and lighten the mood. After the attack on the colony by the "Iron Fleet," the citizens were still recovering from the assault while fearing for another one.

The heavy mood weighed on Fëanor Láng as the Sorcerer took a sip from his herbal tea. The relatively new member of House Imperium wasn't sure what to think about the whole mess with the Collective and the Brotherhood, but he felt pity for the innocent people who had to suffer from a feud that didn't involve them. He only hoped that the end to this mess would come quickly.

However, he couldn't let his emotions blind him from the mission at hand. It was a simple one assigned to him by his Quaestor, and that was to just go and listen to whatever gossip and rumors might be found in the colony. This task was an especially important one given the Collective's presence in the system as Rath Oligard continued the illusion of being the Principate's 'best friend'. Being that Fëanor hadn't quite made a huge appearance with Scholae Palatinae yet, he was less likely to be suspected of being aligned with the Brotherhood. At least that was how his superior, Shadow Palpatine Nighthunter, felt.

It was a gamble for sure, but it was one Fëanor was willing to make. Earlier in the week, he had gone around visiting a few social pubs and the market sector to see what he could find. Now and then he heard fearful whispers from citizens worried about another attack. Sometimes he heard Principate law enforcement curse the Brotherhood for the uncalled for attack, and how they hoped negotiations with the Collective would proceed in their favor. Only once did he hear someone question the attack itself, wondering why the Brotherhood would make such a bold and reckless move when they were trying to negotiate with the Principate. It was then that a certain pair of guards had caught Fëanor's attention as one of them berated the civilian for such nonsense.

It was also that same pair that Fëanor was now waiting for at the bar. For the past two days, he had been following the guards to this specific bar before and after their patrol. They came here both in the morning for a cup of caf and in the evening for some spirits. When he was sure that they kept to the same routine, the Seer was finally able to formulate a plan.

Such a plan was about to be executed when his expected prey entered the bar right on the dot. One of them was a silent Zabrak male while the other was a gruff human male who had caught his attention back in the market. From his table in the corner, Fëanor watched the two guards take their seats in their usual spots just a few feet away from him. He stirred his tea lazily as he watched the two from the corner of his eye, wishing he had brought his pouch of jasmine flower tea bags instead of the awful excuse for herbal tea the pub had to offer.

"Whiskey for me mate, and a bottle of scotch for me, missy," the human guard said as one of the waitresses took the order.

"A few shots for me," the Zabrak quickly added. "And be quick about it. We're thirsty here."

The young woman huffed and went to fetch their drinks. She returned with their desired beverages on a tray and quickly served them before taking off to see to the other patrons. With a haughty laugh, the human opened up the bottle of scotch and took a long swig before slamming the drink on the table.

"Ah, Sev're. Once this bloody mess is over, we will be able to do this more often, my friend," the man remarked. "With those Force-using tyrants gone, we can finally have the life we want without them to bother us."

"Taalk, watch your mouth," the Zabrak ordered. "This isn't over yet. Dammit, man, you're already a loud mouth before even getting drunk."

"Sev're, you worry too much," Taalk scolded before taking another swig. "After all, we've got this in the bag. From how I hear things are going, we'll be the heroes in the end. The way I see it, the big boss has everything covered."

"Doesn't mean you ought to be so reckless, you idiot."

"Buzz off, Sev're. Just drink your whiskey. Tonight's the night we celebrate the first few steps to ending those good-for-nothing tyrants."

"Tyrants? What tyrants?"

Both guards quickly looked in Fëanor's direction. The Sorcerer gasped, and stood up and bowed. "My apologies, gentlemen. I'm new here, on business for my father. I just arrived yesterday. I heard of some sort of attack that happened not too long ago, but no one seems willing to give me any details other than that something called the 'Iron Fleet' was involved."

"Damn right the Iron Fleet was involved," Taalk said with a grin. "The fleet belongs to those tyrannical Force-fiends known as the Brotherhood."

"Taalk..." The Zabrak gave his companion a warning look.

"Hey, might as well spread the word, right? Especially if he's an outsider...eh what's your name, kid?"

"Fëanor. Fëanor Balmiren," the half-Sephi answered. "My father is Calcos Balmiren. He does business throughout the galaxy. Mostly spice-trade as well as mineral resources. We just recently discovered this place, and my father thought we could perhaps find someone who might want our goods and services."

"Is that right? Mineral resources, huh? I may know someone you could make a deal with," the bulky human said as he scratched his beard. "Got anything else of interest?"

"Well..." Fëanor looked around before quickly joining them at their table. "He's got connections in the black market that sell or trade stolen high-tech schematics as well as contraband."

"Really now?"

This time Sev're had spoken, the Zabrak keeping a close eye on Fëanor. "You know, telling two colonial guards this could get you into a lot of trouble."

"I know that, but considering that things are tense here and that you're having to deal with a threat, perhaps my father and I could be of service. As terrible as it sounds, conflict tends to bring profit to, eh, pockets of all merchants, whether legal or not. Sometimes, even the troublemakers end up helping in the war effort...for a good price."

"Scum," Sev're spat. "Just a rat benefitting from the misfortune of others."

"Now wait a minute, Sev're," Taalk quickly said. "The boss is always looking for resources and tech. Perhaps this young man could be of service to us. Think about it. We get more goods that can help us with the war, we help in the war effort and be recognized, and we end up saving more lives and eliminate the terrible threat of the Brotherhood. It's a win-win situation. What's there to lose by at least giving Mr. Balmiren an audience with Rath."

"Taalk!" Sev're was quick to his feet. "Watch your damn mouth!"

Taalk rolled his eyes and pulled his companion down. "Easy, mate. Don't draw all the attention, you daft fool."

"You blabbing your mouth away to a total stranger is going too far."

“Sev’re, listen to me. This guy’s an outsider and a merchant. Besides, I’m sure with some creds, we can keep his mouth shut.”

Taalk returned his attention to Fëanor and smiled. “Look, my mate and I work with a group known as the Collective. We’ve got a good deal going for us with the Principate boys here. This Brotherhood, well, they’re a group of Force-sensitive tyrants who have done a lot of bad stuff to good people. Our leader, ol’ Rath, is trying to keep us on the Principate’s good side, and well...we got it looking like the Brotherhood just made a move to terrorize the Principate into aligning with them.”

The guard chuckled. “Now, I know your Pops is probably expecting you to return with good news and a good profit. I guarantee you, that if Rath and you get something going, you won’t regret it. On top of that, I’ll give you a good amount of creds if you swear to keep your mouth shut about all you’ve heard and now know.”

A look of uncertainty crossed Fëanor’s face. “I don’t know. My father would most likely invest in and work with the winning side. Can you give me such a guarantee?”

“Look, mate. We basically set-up the Brotherhood. We are behind the attack. Not them. The Principate is one hell of a long way from welcoming the Brotherhood with open arms. With us in their favor, we will definitely crush the Brotherhood.”

“As long as this fool doesn’t tell the whole galaxy about our plans,” Sev’re added in annoyance.

“My companion here is just overly-cautious, but since you’ve heard this much already, what’s the harm? Our side is ready and willing to do whatever it takes to eliminate the menace before us. Plus, I’m sure after this is all over, we could help you establish business here in the colony. The boss is a generous man. He’ll repay you in whatever way possible as a thanks for your help.”

“If he agrees to doing business,” Fëanor remarked. “Of course, what’s to say that if I’m not satisfied with your leader’s offer, that I won’t just go and give the Brotherhood this info as well as seek out a deal with them?”

The two guards looked at each other, though Sev’re looked more like he was ready to scold his human friend. He and Taalk realized that they were now in trouble. Sev’re quickly pulled out his blaster pistol and pointed it at Fëanor’s chest. “I really don’t wanna have to do this, Mr. Balmiren. You just know too much.”

Fëanor quickly raised his hands. “Wait a minute. Okay, okay. Listen. There’s no need for anyone getting shot here. After all, I’m just looking out for my father’s interests. Maybe we can reach an agreement. Say, you pay me five thousand credits, and I’ll keep my mouth shut. I’ll

meet with this Rath guy of yours, and then if things don't go well, you just pay me an extra five thousand, and we'll call it good. I'll stay quiet. I just want to live."

Sev're and Taalk looked at each other again and whispered to each other before Sev're spoke again. "Fair enough. You have a deal. We'll go speak to Rath and get in touch with you when he's ready to meet. Is there a place we can find you?"

Fëanor nodded and sighed in relief. "Yes. I'm staying at the Solarian Hotel in room fifty-four. I have to head back next week, but if your leader needs to meet at a later time, I can extend my stay."

"Excellent. Now as to the payment..."

With the transfer of credits completed, Fëanor bid his farewell and made his way to the hotel where he had been staying. When he was far enough from the pub, he took out his datapad, and checked for the recording. The whole time at the bar, he had set the datapad given to him by Shadow to record the whole conversation. Everything he needed to prove that the Collective had set up the Brotherhood was there, and the half-Sephi couldn't help but grin in satisfaction. Quickly, he shifted direction towards the spaceport, where he would embark for the Imperial fleet where Shadow awaited him and his prize.