

# Strange Request at a Cantina

An entry for the **Competition: [Fiction Series] Word Bank 1**

Written by Knight Appius Wight

## Chapter 1

Ebon Ridge is not the kind of place you want to find yourself alone under most circumstances. Located just a short distance away from the space station in Jasper, this gambling den serves also as a cantina and bar in the middle of the desert region of Zsoldos to lowlifes and scum all over the area. Especially those with weapons as duels of dishonour and backstabbing weren't just allowed, but often encouraged.

Appius stood outside the main entrance to this hive of ne'er-do-wells and wondered why out of all the missions he could possibly get, why did it have to be at Ebon Ridge? He tried hard to make sure he avoided this place as it was rife with conflict, something he wished to avoid at all costs and being six foot four inches tall he had a tendency to stick out in the crowd a fair bit.

Nonetheless he was a Sorcerer affiliated with Clan Vizsla and as such had a job to do. He walked inside the grotty building and made sure to keep to the walls in a vain attempt to try to not draw any attention to himself. He entered a massive cantina and bar adorned with all manner of tacky furniture and cheap decor all tainted by the stench and visibility of alcohol, vomit and rotten food littering the room.

He held his breath for a few moments as to not inhale as much of the toxic fumes as possible and began to scour the room for the man he was looking for.

*'A man in a leather jacket...'*

That was all the description he was given. Not really much to go on but considering Ebon Ridge was in the middle of the desert not many would be willing to wear such a garment over themselves.

In the far corner of the dimly lit room was where he spotted him. A grey haired, slightly overweight and balding man wearing a leather jacket was eating what appeared to be some kind of sandwich from the cantina menu.

A cold shiver dropped down Appius' spine at the sight. Even for all the credits in the galaxy he wouldn't dare eat any of the food from the Ebon Ridge cantina. The place was far from sanitary judging by the grime and dirt everywhere he looked. The man rather cleverly

seemed to have dug himself a trench out of the furniture in the far corner so as to remain out of sight.

Appius approached the table at the far corner of the room and stood next to it. The man sat there didn't seem to even realise he was there.

"Um... hello?" Appius asked trying to get the man's attention.

"Sit." The man said, kicking a seat for Appius from under the table. It wasn't so much a request as it was a demand.

Appius took the seat and sat down at the table. The man then took another large bite out of his greasy sandwich as bits and pieces fell down his chin and onto the table they were sitting at. It looked like a trough for a wild animal and it made the Sorcerer's stomach churn.

"Consider this an interview of sorts. I need to know I can trust you. I paid Vizsla good money to have you..."

The man's tanned face lifted to meet Appius' pale skinned and slender frame. His green eyes met Appius' blue and immediately it seemed he was taken aback.

"I paid for a bounty hunter!" He objected loudly whilst spitting crumbs of food out of his mouth.

"I'm from Clan Vizsla and I can assure you that whatever it is you need, the clan took into consideration when they picked me to come see you." He replied diplomatically whilst trying to put the man's unease to rest. Though in his Inquisitorius Armor he certainly didn't look like the typical member of Clan Vizsla. The man obviously wanted someone that looked more mercenary-esque.

"Well, if you are from Vizsla then where are your weapons?" The man questioned.

That confirmed Appius' suspicions and he just smiled at the man and beamed with confidence.

"When you have the Living Force on your side, you don't need weapons."

The balding, husky man was about to object once again until a ruckus caught the attention of the entire cantina. Two human men stood at the bar were arguing and throwing verbal insults at each other.

Appius hoped they would just leave the area and that would be the end of that. Sadly, he wouldn't get his wish as one of the men drew a blaster onto the other. He fired, but perhaps the Force was on the other man's side or perhaps the shooters aim was hampered by his intoxication. Either way, the bolt missed its intended target and nearly hit an innocent bystander in his skull. The shot barely scraped him as it zoomed over the top of his head

and impacted into one of the few structured pillars still holding the building up. An explosion of dust and debris kicked up from the column that clearly hadn't been cleaned in years.

In response to the sudden attempt on his life, the target he had just tried to shoot bolted towards the main entrance of the building. Only to put himself in the sights of his attempted murderer once again.

Appius knew he had to act quickly if he was going to save the man's life. He didn't know what was so extreme about this argument that it warranted a death sentence, all he knew was it wouldn't happen on his watch.

Appius stood up from his chair, knocking it over in the process and held out his right hand with the Force, he could feel the many midichlorians in his body work to connect him to that mysterious power, it enveloped him but he neither controlled it nor did it control him, he simply let it be around him and within him. He felt the power course through his bloodstream, giving him the confidence he needed to act.

Just as the man was about to pull the trigger of the deadly weapon he was greeted by the shock of the deadly contraption being yanked out of his hand by such force it nearly pulled him off his feet. The blaster flew quickly like slugthrower ammo through the air into Appius' outstretched hand. He placed the blaster behind him carefully onto the table he was sitting at a moment ago much to the disbelief of the man he was only just speaking too.

"Hey! That's mine! Give it back!"

The attacker clearly was the type to act first and ask questions later. Most would have realized that Appius was a Force user of some description and held back but obviously not him.

He ran at Appius like an angry snarling rancor with all the intimidation of a corellian hound. Appius raised his hand again and instantly the would be assailant found himself almost weightless in the air as he flailed and struggled aimlessly whilst trying to free himself from the mystical grip he had become subject too.

Appius quickly threw his left arm to the side, causing the man to be sent hurling through the air into a pile of stacked tables and chairs located in the opposite corner of the cantina. He crashed into the stacked furniture as it all fell and piled on top of his body and buried him underneath. Muffled sounds could be heard coming from underneath though no one came to his aid.

The Sorcerer returned to the weapon he had placed on the table and unsheathed a metal hilt that was attached to his left hip. It was his lightsaber, aptly named *Redeemer*. He activated the weapon and a green energy beam presented itself before them and he called upon the Living Force once more to lift the blaster into the air before he sliced it down the middle. The two halves of the weapon dropped to the ground unceremoniously as Appius retracted the blade of his lightsaber as he reached out to recall his seat to him.

"I've always hated these things." He said as he sat down to the sounds of patrons returning to their games and drinks returned to the massive cantina. Clearly, events like this were a common occurrence.

"So anyways, as I was saying, you don't need a weapon when you have the Living Force on your side. But I always keep my lightsaber on me just in case." He said reassuringly to the middle aged man sat across from him.

"So, this interview of yours..."

"Forget the interview. That was all I needed to see." The man said as his tone and attitude shifter after Appius' display of *Force*.

"My name is Blake, I recently came into possession of this."

The man, now identified as Blake interrupted Appius from saying anything further and dug his right hand deep into one of the pockets on his leather jacket to retrieve what looked like an old used notebook. He placed it into the centre of the table and gestured for Appius to take it.

The former Jedi scanned over the contents of the notebook and as he turned the pages he couldn't believe what his eyes were reading.

This 'notebook' was detailed with all the points of how to dissect a living being, male or female from a variety of different races around the universe. But that wasn't the worst part.

The worst part was that it was whilst they were still alive and conscious, the pages were detailed with pictures and images that would disgust even the most hardened of stomachs.

Appius' face told Blake everything.

"Yep. That's normally the reaction I see. It's from a guy that calls himself 'The Butcher.' Apparently he considers himself a connoisseur or artist of sorts."

"So... you want me to find him? Kill him?" Appius asked hesitantly.

"Turn to the last entry."

So he did. Albeit reluctantly, he scanned the page and found it to be an entry about a human female. It detailed how 'The Butcher' had removed her guts and intestines with various tools and techniques as she writhed in pain. Blood stained the pages as Appius read every word detailing the torture and suffering the woman had to go through until her inevitable death.

"That was my daughter." Blake said emotionally with tears in his eyes. The sudden revelation of who the woman was caused Appius' eyes to widen.

So that was it. That was why Blake wanted someone from Vizsla. He had lost his daughter and he wanted vengeance and closure.

"I want you to find him and take him down. I don't care how you do it. Just... do it. For her..."

Appius nodded solemnly. He wasn't normally the type to act on someone else's desire for revenge but just looking at the notebook and its glossary of disturbing entries even he knew that something had to be done.

"I'll see what I can do." Appius said as he smiled. He stood up from the table and left Blake behind to finish eating so he could get started right away with tracking 'The Butcher' down. He took the notebook with him as he would need it to help him track down the man. The first place he needed to go were the Clan Vizsla bounty archives. If there was any information about the man it would be there.

He left with grim determination. One way or another, he would do whatever needed to be done. For the greater good.

**---END---**

**--- To be continued in Competition: [Fiction Series] Word Bank 2 ---**