

What Goes Around, Comes Around

Warden Raiju Kang

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Between the sounds of the serving droids whizzing by, the vibrant music, and the loud and slurred speech of the patrons; the hotel bar was filled with a familiar chorus. The clink of credit chips being slapped on the bar counter and the excited prattling of at least a dozen different languages; all gathered together to create a nostalgic ambiance for the Nautolan in the center of the room. This was the best place to spend your hard earned credits after a loosey mission; or earn some more - like Raiju Kang was hoping to do.

The bar floor was jam-packed. The sabacc tables in the pit were like little islands, around which flowed streams of jocund humanoids of every colour and shape. Each being here had their own story, their own thread connecting them to the Galaxy. But all that melted away on the sabacc table, where all that mattered was the crisp rat-a-tat of riffled cards. Seated at one of these sabacc tables, the Nautolan Raiju Kang remained concentrated on his cards while he ignored the serving droids pushing their blue drinks. Yet, his focus on the rotating value of his cards was briefly broken when a new contender climbed into the seat on the right side of him.

"It's always weird to me to see you here without a lightsaber..." The Trandoshan hissed, drawing out each 's' the reptile spoke. Raiju normally wouldn't have paid the creature any attention, but this was the third time this evening the Trandoshan followed the Nautolan from table to table.

"Do you have a crush on me, Lug?" Taken back from the question, the Trandoshan pulled his head back with a shake before Raiju continued. "Then why do you keep following me around the sabacc pit? Do I need to give you a lesson on consent?"

"Just trying to figure out why you are here-"

"Cause unlike you, I'm an initiated member of Vizsla." Raiju was quick to rudely cut off the Trandoshan...sometimes they can just take forever to speak. Tossing his cards down on the table to fold, the Nautolan quickly stood. "Now stay off my tail."

Moving through the crowd, Raiju was forceful in his pursuit of the bar and paused for no one in the crowded space. Grabbing one of the blue concoctions from a cart that motored by, Raiju took a heavy drink to help clear the lump in his throat before collapsing against the bar counter and sliding the empty pint glass to the barkeep.

"Give me something that burns."

“Suppose it’s better you’re asking me for that than the girls next door.” The reply came from a mammoth of a creature, a Besalisk named Gord Falk, who stood behind the bar and slide a mug of something toxic towards Raiju. Gord had become a good friend of the Nautolan ever since he made landfall and that wasn’t just because Gord had the best contracts available - he usually had a bottle of Josen Blue Wine beneath the bar when they felt like celebrating.

“Can’t go see the girls yet, they stopped offering me credit.”

“Then I suppose to are here for more than a drink?”

“Always-” The Nautolan’s response was quickly cut short as a sharp pain stuck the man in his side and a hard, scaled hand gripped his shoulder. From behind the Nautolan, Raiju heard a familiar hiss.

“Are all Nautolans as simple as you? How do you not know after all these years in the game, that a Trandoshan never gives up a chase?”

“Can’t say I spent much time with any aside from your mother...” Raiju spat back at Lug, placing down the mug and turning his head to see the blaster pressed into his right side. “You’re an idiot for bringing that here...”

“The only idiot is you. What Jedi leaves his lightsaber behind?”

“Former...” Raiju felt the overwhelming need to correct the beast.

“What?!”

“Former Jedi.” Raiju said as he lifted his hands and spun slowly to face the Trandoshan. As several other patrons say what was happening, they quickly backed away and created a hole in the crowd that encircled the Trandoshan and its prey. Behind him, Raiju heard Gord jester towards the musicians playing in the corner and the lead singer was quick to stop their song. It was at this moment the crowd in its entirety turned their attention to the conflict at the bar.

The silence was deafening as everyone’s eyes fell upon the Trandoshan’s blaster.

“Former?!” The Trandoshan tsked at the word and barked what laugh it could muster before pointing a finger at the Besalisk. “I’ve seen you all over Zsoldos with that lightsaber of yours, preaching the honkey beliefs of the past all the while taking contracts from the bartender. If anything you’re a hypocrite.”

“Nah, just a merc without the mess.” A toothy smile spread across the Nautolan’s mouth while Gord groaned at the overused slogan. “I don’t get myself into situations like this.”

Raiju was quick to nod his chin towards movement in the crowd behind the Trandoshan.

A trio of armour clad figures had quickly parted much of the crowd before the Trandoshan was able to step aside and turn back to face them, but none of the trio paused upon the edge of the circle the crowd had given the Trandoshan. Instead, the tallest of the three was quick snap his hand out and immediately the Trandoshan's blaster leapt from its master's grasp and into the hands of the man Raiju knew as Vizsla's Rollmaster. In turn, the blue armoured man leapt at the creature with an extended arm that drilled into Lug's temple.

Enraged at the attack, the Trandoshan roared in fury but instantly sagged at a firm knee that found its way into Lug's gut. The blue armoured man, whom Raiju knew to be the clan's Proconsul, thrashed the Trandoshan a third time with an elbow that dropped the creature to its knees. Groaning in pain, the creature spat blood on the feet of the third man, whom now stood at the head of the group and peered over Lug with his own look of fury.

"We have a simple code in this establishment." The man with a black short beard spoke with a sense of authority and what mutterings had been in the crowd instantly died as everyone took in the words to be said. "Weapons are prohibited here. Do you know what prohibited means?"

"Yes, but- " Lug tried in vain to continue his sentence but was immediately silenced by a slap.

"So you admit to the crime is what I hear." The man with the beard was quick to look around the crowd behind him and meet eyes with every member of Vizsla in the room. Each of them was quick to nod before the bearded man finally looked upon the Nautolan, whom was slow to nod as well. Ignoring the pleas of the Trandoshan for a moment, the man proceeded to point to several items behind the bar - which the Besalisk quickly handed to Val Cole and Montresor.

"Yes, but with good reason!" Lug finally continued, attempting to rise to his feet but immediately being pushed down by the bearded man while Raiju sagged back against the bar counter in hopes of gaining some distance. "There's a bounty on his head, a fortune! Enough to pay for a dozen men's initiations into Vizsla. All of which I was going to donate, Declan."

The room seemed to be sucked cold as the Vizsla Consul shook with his next words.

"You think I would let any of our clan's members be collected on?!" The man seemed to foam at the mouth as he snatched the item from Val's hands. "How long would we last if our enemies could just mark each of us. What kind of idiocy is that?!"

"But I thought the goal was to get paid."

“And it’s that lack of foresight is why you never made it past initiation, Lug.” An eerie sense of calm returned to the Grand Master as Declan snapped his fingers. Instantly Val and Montresor grabbed the Trandoshan and helped each other shove a funnel from the bar into the creature’s mouth. As the creature choked against the device, Declan stepped forward and popped the cap off the jug of the cleaning solution Gord had provided. As he began to pour, Declan repeated loudly so every person in the room could hear.

“Weapons are prohibited here!”

The smell of bleach was nauseating to the Nautolan, who quickly turned from the carnage, but Raiju was relieved at the sight of another mug being placed on the counter for him. A warm pat on the shoulder came from one of Gord’s arms, and the Besalisk leaned in on the counter to get close to the Nautolan so no one could hear them.

“I warned you that a Jedi would have it rough on this planet, and if you are going to continue to survive here you will have to put that behind.”

“No, Gord.” Raiju sighed deeply before he continued. “If there was any planet that needed a Jedi - it’s Zsoldos.”