

The morning was turning out to be much like any other. Life in the Imperial Remnant had been hard for many, but not so for Howlader. Whereas the life for the common stormtrooper was nothing to be envied, he was made of sterner material. As he was a more refined individual, greater care had to be given to all things. Be it the finest bamboo, the softest velvets, or the choicest warships Howie would have his pick. Such was the life he had chosen. For the Imperial, this life was his to live. He was the only one who could wear his own pants.

Never mind that they had been custom tailored to him. Yes, while many of the admiralty had fine clothes, Howlader demanded even more of his threads. That was the thing that was really getting on his nerves this morning. He would be meeting, alongside his staff, with the Grand Admiral. Such an opportunity demanded the finest of his finery.

The trouble now was that said finery did not seem to fit. Yes, his dress uniform was sharp and nearly form-fitting. With its fine lines and flattering cut, it more than served its purpose. In any normal circumstance, he would have used an appropriate belt. His troubles were two fold, however. First, that there had been a mix up in the laundry. His belt, normally sent to be cleaned, was nowhere to be found. The second issue, was that the pants he had appeared to be too small.

Had there been a mix up in his laundry beyond the belt? Had he received part of the dress uniform of an ensign, or another admiral? No, it couldn't be that. His proportions were unique enough among his comrades, that no fool could mistake his clothes for those of another. The wrath that would be kindled against the laundry staff would be deterrent enough, even so. He turned the pants around, looking for the tags within.

He hoped against hope, that perhaps an old article of clothing had been found, something that he had fitted some months ago, or some such issue. His heart dropped, however, as he glimpsed the tag, and its minute script. There was no mistaking it now. These were indeed his own pants.

They were smaller. Which could only mean one thing. Howlader through the pants across the room in a huff. The pants must have shrunk! Some fool or idiot must have ignored the clear warnings, or sorted the clothing incorrectly. His best pair of pants had been ruined!

Reaching into his closet, the Admiral shook his mighty head. He would have to settle for his second most comfortable pants this morning. They did not quite match the rest of his dress uniform, but it would have to do. There was just no more time to devote to this preparatory task. With a low growl, Howlader began to stalk out of his quarters and down the hallway toward his private dining room. He would have to eat with rather more gusto than was his usual way, but at least he would get to enjoy some succulent fare.

Ensigns and officers alike shuffled off the sides of the hallway, throwing up sharp salutes. Howlader's visage was nothing to trifle with this morning. He did not even acknowledge the salutes. His mind was on his breakfast. He was never quite the same when he was hungry.

He noticed something was definitively off when he arrived in his private dining area. The plate was bare, and an ensign was sweeping the floor. He did not speak, but rather pointed at the bare table, with his eyes narrowed in suspicion. The ensign looked up almost sleepily before throwing up a sharp salute.

"Sir," the ensign croaked, "I did not expect you so late this morning. When you did not show up at 0630, I just assumed you had business elsewhere and had not seen fit to inform myself. Your breakfast had already grown cold. I disposed of it promptly after 45 minutes. The smell was so awful, sir. I assure you, if I had known--"

Howlader threw his arms up in anger, taking the edge of the table in both paws and shoving it sharply. The table turned over with a crash. He had been denied his morning bamboo. This was an outrage. This would not stand.

If this is what such care to his uniform would cause, he would have no more part of it. The pants had been the one part of his uniform that had held him up. The pants had caused him his delicious morning delight. This would not stand. He would wear pants no more!