The Prospect of Return

By Warlord Archangel Palpatine, #7589

The Caperion system teemed with a thousand different vessels, plying their trade around the densely populated planet of Seraph. The ships were of a plethora of species or vocation, such as the Huttese ships from Nal Hutta and Nar Shaddaa, or the insect-like container ships of the Verpine. Trade in the system had flourished when the Clan had decided to annex a portion of the main planet for itself. Their presence alone brought the hawkers and transports in, as bottle flies follow a Rodian.

One of these thousands drifted quietly outside the established space lanes, the twinkling navigation lights of its brethren streaking across its viewport. A small patch of black against a galactic backdrop, it surveyed the industrious freighters, and one of their prime destinations: the Golan Defense Platform being constructed above the planet.

Over a thousand meters long and intended to bristle with laser cannons and defensive armaments, the Golan was still under construction, and would not be ready for some time. The patch of darkness drifted slowly and quietly along a circuitous route, which led it along the length of the giant space station.

“She will be a fine station,” he muttered to himself, his arms held tightly across his armored chest plate. The chest plate was marred in places, pocked and burnt from blaster bolts, and singed by lightsaber blades landing close to target. He had made the conscious choice not to refinish it. Let the others make their armor and weapons ostentatious, he will wear his wars on his chest. The bare steel and burnt scotch marks stood out proudly on the crimson plating.

“GONK” said a mechanical voice a few meters away. The man started for a moment, not having noticed the boxy droid entrance. He scowled at the bot, his introspective moment dispersing with annoyance.

“Shut up, you,” he replied, his gaze turning back towards the Golan space station. He had been on one plenty of times in the past, during his tour with the Emperor’s Hammer. There had even been missions where attacking one was the only way to secure the intended objective. It was a long time gone, however. He was an old man by both chronological means and in terms of experience. He had lived enough to fill three lives, but still only looked middle aged when compared to the far shorter-lived humans and aliens.

“GONK” the droid said, awkwardly turning towards the armored figure, its pudgy legs bouncing the oversized body back and forth. Even though his vocal synthesizer was only designed to emit one term, the GNK-series power droid, or Gonk as they were colloquially known, seemed to be able to add sarcasm and snark to its statement. The man had taken to taking it Marvin, even stenciling it on the front of its metal plating.

“Says you,” the man replied, watching what looked like a prefabricated turbolaser battery being slotted into place on the dorsal hull of the space station. He could feel the GNK droid glaring at him with its featureless frontal digital readouts. He threw up his hands in frustration.

“Fine!” he shouted, tapping at the communications control panel, “YT-2000 Heart of Gold calling Judecca Station”

The commlink patched him through quickly, his personal comm tag apparently still in the system. A martial female voice responded briskly.

“Heart of Gold, this is Judecca Station. Where have you been?”

“Judecca Station. I was on vacation. Could you patch me through to my wife?” Archangel said, his uncertainty and doubt creeping in to color his words. A quiet chuckle was the initial reply to his request.

“Heart of Gold. Right away, Lord Archangel. Do you want me to transmit coordinates?” the woman at the Judecca Station communications center asked. Sith Warlord Archangel smiled, a cold sweat breaking out on his close shorn pate.

“Judecca Station. Hell no. She’s going to want to kill me.”