Like Coruscant, Nar Shadda was a single city spanning the entirety of the moon, and like Coruscant, it was a city of dreams and nightmares. The kind of city that could chew you up and spit you out, or leave you walking out a prince when you walked in a pauper. There is no in-between on the Smuggler’s Moon, none whatsoever.

That’s where people like me come in. People who can look between the already blurred lines of the city and see the darkness beneath it. People in a unique position to do something about it. People, most importantly, Not-Jedi.

---

The holo ads cast an electric shadow on the rain slick streets of Nar Shadda and the venting steam cast a fog cloud to conceal activities best left unseen. Bindlestiffs laid a beating on a couple of yokels for what had to be the last of their gambling fold, but something like that meant absolutely nothing to me. Let the locals handle it, if they even cared. Even to fair odds they didn’t.

Prostitutes stood on the corners because on the ‘Moon, it didn’t matter where they plied their trade. One of the few truly encouraged professions here, and given the auras coming off these working girls, they’d been at it a while which meant they were either very tough or very good. Probably both knowing the neighborhood they were working.

I walked along in that horrible rain, a bottle of Mandalorian Narcolethe under my coat and wrapped in a wino-wallet in case some punks got the wrong idea. Not that I was worried about some punks. I was more worried about what I’d do to them.

You see, packing a plasma toothpick on your belt tended to draw the wrong kind of attention and that wrong kind of attention was all of it. Hutts tended to not be all that fond of space wizards, and for good reason. Jedi were meddlesome and Sith were just plain trouble. To them, trying to tell them you don’t represent either flavor is just stalling for time, so I kept my handle back in the office until I needed it.

All that left was the heaviest roscoe I could lay hands on, a modified and customized DL-44 I got as payment from an arms dealer for recovering his kidnapped… kid. Wow, fitting that, I suppose. This blaster packed a punch like a bowcaster *and* the Wookiees that shoot them. Not something I like advertising either, but it’s a lot better than the toothpick.

Having that heating unit strapped to my hip like some kind of frontiersman made for some funny looks for sure, but it also meant I was able to walk myself and my Narcolethe into my building and further, into my apartment and office. I should mention success is about as transient as the population here, so it was mostly my office with a cheap sofa.

I sat myself down at my desk and glanced at the object of my most passionate love/hate relationship, the comm unit. Not so much as a single blinking light to alert me that someone had called looking for my services. So it seems we were in an argument again; nothing new there. It seems like we’re making up more than we’re making love.

Of course, that’s when the whole situation would have to upend itself on me. How, you’re asking? She walked in.

A Twi’lek dame, leggy as they come, and wrapped in something way more expensive than anyone in this neighborhood could afford. She had the smell of a fine perfume, like exotic fruit and spices, and the way she walked, heel to toe and clicking her expensive shoes on my tile, spoke of a woman who’d been raised wearing fifteen centimeter stilettos.

“I heard you were the kind of man who could get things done,” she said to me, her words honeyed and smooth, just husky enough get her point across, and not the slightest hint of a Twi’lek accent. “The kind of man who was discreet for the right price,”

“You heard right, have a seat,” I told her, and poured a second drink for her. I slid the glass across my desk and just kept observing. Everything about her body language was seductive, but more than that, she owned the room. This was no slave girl made good, and the calmness in her Lekk’u was another indicator I wasn’t dealing with some dizzy dame.

“I need you to investigate a murder,” she purred around a professional’s drink of the Mando hooch, and followed it up with a slow lick of her lips.

“That’s in my wheelhouse, but if the Hutts don’t want me snooping, it’s going to cost extra to keep the ball rolling. Plus, incidentals and per diem are non-negotiable. I don’t work for promises,” I told her, laying it out clean before things got messy. With a doll like her, they *always* got messy.

“I find that fair. Would five thousand credits be enough to get things started?” She asked, and every alarm in my head went off, all at once. Nobody dropped that kind of dough on a two-bit gumshoe in the armpit of the Smuggler’s Moon, but there I sat, all but entranced by the idea of paying up the overdue bills, which is to say, all of them.

“Yeah, sure, that works,” I replied, trying to keep it cool. I probably wasn’t keeping it cool. “Who’s murder am I investigating?”

“Why, my own, of course,” She replied. Yeah, this dame just brought the worst trouble imaginable.

“Okay, let’s get started,” I said against all my better, and even not so great judgment. I was down to my worst decision making skills, and I was working them overtime. For this kind of trouble, I’d need it.