

It wasn't exactly the reason that Xathia wanted to be in the casino on Adner, but then the way that her Quaestor had worded the mission had made it hard for the Battlelord to refuse it. She wasn't the only one in the Clan with contacts in the casinos, but apparently, hers were in a more amiable mood than those in touch with others. The Human hadn't set foot on the planet for years, mostly since she had tried to leave the Brotherhood behind to raise two kids, but her needs and likes hadn't changed. She had swapped the glamorous lights and the loud crowds for the city corners and intimate drinks with 'friends'. She always had been a dab hand at Sabacc, though she saw it more as a chance to get individuals to part with the things they didn't love enough if they were willing to bet it against the Sith. Still, the thrill of paying for information in these places was a high that she had yet to match.

The bartender watched her with suspicious eyes. The lightsabres hanging off her utility belt meant she rarely had a warm welcome, but the credits on the bar changed the exterior expression of the native Adnerem to a welcoming smile. She gave him a flirty smile and leant forward against the bar to give him a decent glance at her cleavage in a manner that seemed more befitting of her teenage daughter, but it was a tried-and-true tactic. "I'm here for the Fulcrum game," she purred. "I'll take whatever liquor you pass off as rum here."

The Adnerem grumbled at her comment but knew that the establishment had a line of 'the customer is always right'. It was something that Xathia liked to ensure for the places that she visited, since then she could normally lean on the staff for the higher quality items in lieu of outing the crap they peddled with stickers on for a silly price to the majority. She glanced around over her shoulder to look at the glitzy room as the bartender was locating her poison of choice. Most people were dressed up in some of their finest, laughter ringing around the room as the lights purposefully caught sight of the glistening chandeliers that littered the open hall. The rich colour of the carpet complimented the game tables that were spread out in the room.

The clink of a thick tumbler against the bar brought her direct attention back to the begrudging looking bartender. He then gestured his head sharply to the left to tell her to follow him.

She could still feel plenty of the room watching her as she followed the employee to the back rooms. A narrow staircase swirled around to lead to the second floor of the casino, the kind of place that only paying the high number of credits would get you. The rooms lined the corridor, with one-way glass angled over the public room below. Xathia glanced down, glad to catch sight of her probe droid hovering near the entrance since droids weren't allowed in. Not that she needed any help to win at most card games.

One door was opened halfway down, revealing a mixed group of males under dim lights. The carpet was well worn, and the seats were the empty crates and barrels that had once contained stock for the bar, with thin cushions thrown on to stop the rears from going entirely numb during a game. It was hardly the glamour that was reflected downstairs, but this was for the hardcore games. The ones that the owners didn't want you to know about. A couple of Adnerem, a Twi'lek, a Rodian, a Halaisi, a Kodan and a couple that she couldn't write off as shapeshifters. She had to applaud their poker faces as she flipped her cloak with a flourish and took the final position. She smiled as the door closed behind her and tapped the table while taking a mouthful of her drink. The liquid burned her throat slightly as it went down, but she had found herself looking forward to the heat the neat liquor would give her. Cocktails were good for hiding drugs in and the fruit juices would take away the sting of alcohol, so she liked her drinks neat. It made the stupidity of the universe easier to cope with.

The first three games were done in silence, with only the game speak uttered from any of the players. Credits were thrown about before everyone's tongues loosened. Then the boasting started.

The Twi'lek told a high tale. Mostly about escaping an assassin who had been sent after him to neutralise him when he had traded information after a game akin to theirs. Then it was about who had the most harrowing tale

as Xathia refused to loosen herself. She could feel the room beginning to turn its attention on her as she won the seventh game and her third win of the night.

“What about you?” One of the shapeshifters pressed. The game had stopped, which annoyed the Battlelord mostly. Her glass was also empty, the others in the room were drinking ale and beer and she wasn’t the type to get her own drink. She knew that the bartenders liked to come and check on things to make more money out of these types of groups, so she was mostly waiting for a refill. She wanted to summon them, but there appeared to be no way of doing so in the room.

“I like information,” she shrugged carelessly and glanced up to meet the groups’ gazes. “And I like to play. So let’s start the next game, shall we?”

The temperature seemed to drop a few degrees, but Xathia was used to it. These weren’t the types she had played games within recent years; it was refreshing like a blast of icy ocean water to the face to wake you up. The games continued as they changed to Sabacc. It was a silent invitation, the credits stopped being played, now it was time for the main event.

The men in the room felt exposed. Xathia had taken them out to the cleaners in a record time, and she still hadn’t gotten a refill on her glass which annoyed her. She tidied the cards up before the shapeshifter to her right suddenly roared in her face, trying to intimidate her in close quarters. She sighed, sticking her finger in her ear, and screwing her face up as she rotated her pinkie in the canal to clear it of the offending spit. Then the assailant’s face slowly began to falter from its rage. It hadn’t taken her much effort to weave her way through his mental barriers, keeping her eyes closed as she built a picture for him of taking him to pieces slowly with her lightsabre, and the agony that he would endure for disrespecting her in such a manner. She wasn’t a little girl to intimidate, she was a Sith.

“I know you all trade in information, and I know someone knows something about a planned kidnapping of Shadow Nighthunter, so either someone talks or I get to start extracting information out of you all in a very messy

manner. So, you either walk out of here with all your limbs or some missing," she cheerfully added. "Either way, I will get that information. Think carefully!"

It took seconds for the Twi'lek to crack, he gave her all of the details which Xathia dutifully recorded onto her datapad before she stood up abruptly. She gave them all a smile that didn't reach nor warm her emerald eyes. "Thank you, for your co-operation, and let's hope you don't cross paths with me again. Though I would enjoy extracting more information from you all in a more intimate manner, but I'm too sober for that right now. Enjoy your games!" She waved at them before letting herself out of the room. She had done her job, as she mentally wondered about sending the bill for her drinks and admission to Ralenin and getting it refunded as 'expenses' and headed back out of the casino. It was never in her nature to drink excessively where she worked for information after all.