*\*Click\* \*Click\* \*Click\**

*“Derc! Over here! Derc!”* hollered one media tabloid paparazzo.

The red-carpet was alive. Tonight was the Galactic HoloActors Guild award gala – the Ghaggies. His presence was lost among the hordes of celebutantes, adoring fans, and clamoring media agents. His had seen an incredible resurgence in the last ten years, but that was beginning to wane. The world of socialites and stars were filled with so many flashes in the pan. Only a few personalities had the staying power to remain burning as bright as he had. Where age had claimed the looks of so many of his peers, time had been kind to him. His sharp youthful features had evolved from rakish firecracker to a the refined distinguishment of a well cultured gentleman. Such an elevated position in these ranks required the force of a long career, which the Bakuran had established with the conclusion of his third action-adventure franchise. Yet, the luck was beginning to run dry. He approached the holo-photographer and was quickly waived over to a young woman holding a microphone.

*“Derc! We’re so happy to see you here at the Ghaggies! You look very handsome, as usual.”*

The hovering camera droid came a little too close to him and he ducked away from it. He didn’t trust the machines, but was able to hide that disdain from the public. His youth in the outer-rim had engrained a cautious approach to interaction with droids. He smiled.

*“Woah, a feisty one that one!” he laughed. “Hello, Sinka! It has been too long! Look at you, ravishing!”*

They exchanged pleasantries for a moment before the ambush interview had fully commenced.

*“We’re joined by star of the beloved Rog Series and Epsilon Arc films, Derc Kast! Derc, Hello! How are you?”* the Devaronian woman asked, tilting the microphone towards him

*“I’m well, thank you, Sinka.”* He replied, sure to look directly at the camera lens.

*“It’s been months since we last saw you walk the red carpet, we’re dying to know, what have you been up to?! Any secret projects you want to leak for us?” she asked.*

*An obligatory chuckle began his response. “I’m afraid I can’t do that. But… I can tell you I do have something in the works, it’s a very exciting project and I can’t wait for you and the people to see it. Unfortunately for now, you’ll just have to stay tuned.”* He was lying.

*“Such a tease! We will be on the lookout! I understand you’ve recently returned from holiday in the outer-rim, how was your trip?” she asked.*

*“Well, it was sort of a holiday. My wife had some business to attend to and she asked me along for company. It had been so long since I had been back to Bakura, I couldn’t pass up the chance to spend time with her and visit home. So much has changed since I was last there, it was really a sight to see. Have you ever been?” he asked*

*“I have not. Though, I hear it is lovely.” She replied.*

The media correspondent had not even heard of his homeworld, much less heard of its beautiful mountains and lakes. He didn’t need to probe the depths of her mind to see that. Deceit was the default nature of the entertainment industry. A thinly veiled lie coated in a dust of nicety got flattery and flattery made celebrity feel comfortable. That comfort gave the fast track to a hot scoop. The hot scoop meant more eyes across the galaxy tuning in to see the lifestyles of the rich and famous, which was their lifeblood.

*“You’ve lived a hyperspace pace lifestyle for quite some time. We’re dying to know, does that ever get old? If you were to settle down, where would it be?”*

*“Oh, we’re moving on to the tough questions already?” he shot her a smile. “It can be tough to travel so frequently, but it has its benefits. I am very fortunate to be able to see so much of this beautiful galaxy. I get to meet so many great people and see so many interesting worlds. And the Fans! I love them. I couldn’t possibly pick only one world to settle on. It wouldn’t be fair to all my fans, who have been so great to me.”*

*“Speaking of great, you look great tonight. Tell us, who are you wearing tonight?”*

Interviews on the red carpets were always fast pace, but the short-horned woman was a master of tempo and a genius with segues. Her eyes starting drifting down the carpet, scoping what prey she could ambush with inane questions next. Derc Kast, the hero of holoscreen, could tell that his time was nearly over. Among the career storytellers and well-practiced performers, there was always a new young rising star that was taking aim at the throne. The flavor of the week: Maximast Mariken.

He was universally disliked by the veterans of the business, but loved by the media. His fresh face drove up numbers. Derc had a particular disdain for the newcomer. Two stolen roles and several articles entitled “The New Derc” had set the tone for their relationship before they had ever even spoken. Worst of all, the whippersnapper had been slated to star in the remake of The Rog Draft; Derc’s most iconic role. Mariken was aiming to take Derc’s crown and here he was strolling down the crimson walkway, swarmed by everyone.

*“My wardrobe was provided by Koressh at the house of Silvan’ur.”* He said, hoping to gain back some of the interviewer’s attention.

*“Well, you look amazing. Thank you so much for your time!”* before she’d even fully turned away from him, she was waving to the object of his hatred. *“MAX! MAX OVER HERE!”*

Just like that he had been tossed aside, as if he were the core of a chewed apple. He stood silent for a minute and the venom of hatred began to consume him. The flashing lights of the cameras, the din of the crowd, the bright red of the carpet tunneled into black; at the center the target of his wrath. There were so many secrets among the galaxy’s elite celebrities; Infidelity, tax evasion, perversion, drug abuse, just to name a few. However, the shadowy depth of Kast’s allegiances outside of the world of spectacle would have stirred galactic fears. He was on the verge of leaping across the carpet and searing face of the youth with arcs of dark electrical energy when a boney finger caught him clear between the shoulder blades.

*“Hey, you. I know you.”* came a frail old voice.

He turned to see an old Theelin woman. His singular focus changed from violence to slight panic. He stared. Her once bright skin had faded to a spotted pastel pink and liver spots speckled her boney fingers. She wore a long black sequined gown and her silver hair was pushed up high in the style of her heyday which had long since gone. Around her neck was a blue diamond larger than her fist and she clutched a lacquered cane her off hand. There was no mistaking this legend. He’d seen her films since he was a child, some he knew by heart.

*“Dame Crezz. It is such an honor to meet you.”* He said, starstruck.

*“Don’t you Dame me or butter me up with your bullshit. Call me Sooni. If it isn’t the green-eyed wonder, Derc Kast. “* She said, holding out her hand for him to take and kiss. He obliged without thought.

*“You...know…me?”* he stammered.

*“I know everyone, numbskull. I’m the queen of this circus.”* her crotchety croaking voice quipped.

*“Of course you! You are the queen! I love your work. I’ve seen all your films. It’s…wow…the real Sooni Crezz. I can’t believe it.”* He was so rarely at a loss for words, he felt like a shaky baby nerf.

*“Bantha poodoo. You haven’t seen a damn thing, Name one.”* she said doubtingly.

*“After It All. It’s my favorit The scene where you and Kazan Ma are in the apartment after fighting and your monologue. And he says ‘You don’t understand.’ And you turn to him and say ‘I don’t need to underst“*

*“’Understand, darling. I’m free to be me. I’m off to see the galaxy!’” She said, finishing the obscure line from the scene. “Maybe you aren’t full of shit after all kid. People never quote that one.”*

He wanted to rattle off a hundred more of his favorite scenes and quotes. He tried to compose himself. The old crone cracked a smile.

“*Look at that little shit.”* Sooni Crezz said gesturing to Maximast who was practicing martial arts for the camera *“Has no respect for this business. No respect for those that came before him. He’s a diva. He’s talentless and can’t act worth a sack of used geft grease. I can see why you don’t like him. He reminds you of yourself. There is a big difference between you… do you know what that is?”*

*“umm.” He stammered*

*“Derc, honey, you might be a Diva but at least you’re talented. You have a right to be a diva, you’ve earned it. That and you’re hiding a lightsaber under that sash. I know all your secrets, Derc. Or should I call you Thran?” She grinned.*

*“You… think I’m talented?” Derc Kast was turning red, he was blushing. He didn’t even acknowledge her outing his most secret identity, the one that represented his true self.*

“*Oh, shut up, kid. You’re no Hurston Boffart, but you’re good. I hate that little parasite too. His antics on my last picture delayed shooting for so long it caused the bankers to back out. I told them he’d ruin it, he doesn’t understand art. But they said he’d sell tickets and we needed the funds…That little cretin ruined my magnum opus. I want him gone forever. You want in or is this old bat gonna have to do it all by herself?”* She said.

He stood up straight and looked her up and down. A hero of his youth, a legend, was standing in front of him, offering an allegiance to destroy his greatest rival. He swore he was dreaming. She was a titan in the halls of entertainment and had built and destroyed more careers than there were systems in the core-worlds. He couldn’t speak, he just nodded in affirmation.

She tucked her arm under his. She’d serendipitously found a proper escort for such a glamorous event. The evening of the festivities was just beginning and the pair continued their walk down the ceremonial corridor. They spoke in whispers and hushed machinations as the lady laid out her plan. They wouldn’t kill him, but would put him in a place where he’d want to do the job himself. He’d never work again. They made their way into the cocktail hour, where producers and actors mingled. Chats about upcoming projects, pitches and all manner of droll industry chat filled the room.

The two settled at a corner table where they could wait for their plan to unfurl. They ordered drinks and harassed a waiter into leaving a tray of hors d’oeuvres. From her clutch, she revealed a small vial of purple liquid. One drop was all they needed and they selected a handful of the bite-sized savory treats to dose. They memorized which bites were tainted and picked around them, till none were left but those bearing their payload of vengeance.

The snare was set now they need only wait. The bait was simple and impossible for their victim to pass up. They knew that Mariken would be unable to pass up the shot at rubbing his success in the face of the man he was set to replace. While they waited, they shared stories from set. Derc asked questions after question about her storied career. Sooni complimented his performances and queried about his method. Their conversation felt too short, but the trap was about to be sprung. Sauntering over the conceited newcomer came.

*“Well, well, well. They’ve already put you at the table with all the other dead stars.”* Max said. *“I’m presenting some award tonight. They only let stars do that. You’ve never presented, have you? No. You haven’t. That’s because you’re irrelevant. Oh, and* *I’m sure you’ve heard already; I’ve been cast in the new Rog Draft holo. I just thought you should know it’s official.”*

*“Marcus, congratulations.”* Derc replied, intentionally calling his rival the wrong name.

*“It’s Max. Losing your memory already, old timer. You’re washed up. Time for you to pack up, old man.”* The punk had the nerve to call him old.

The ferric taste of rage was building on his tongue. The Sith could tear this mere mortal apart like a Rancor snacking on some helpless cattle, but touch of a small creased hand on his arm stayed the bloodshed.

*“Oh, look, he’s found himself a sugar mama. You’re gonna need it Kast, since you’ll never get another role again. Bad choice though, the way she blows deals that money will be gone before she finally bites it.”* the neophyte said with a laugh.

“*You know a thing or two about biting, dumbass.” Sooni added.*

*“Listen, kid. It is time for me to pass reigns, I get it. If you take anything else from me, take this advice…For every second you get in the spotlight, the size of the target on your back grows. Enjoy it while you can…Cause one day, you’ll be on this side of the table. Now if you would excuse us, the ceremony is starting soon and we must get to our seats…since they are way down in the front row, it might take these old bones some time to get there. Try the prawns, Their absolutely divine.” Derc said, obscuring slight gesture that secured the compulsively enchanting nature of his suggestion.*

The green-eyed man stood, helping his elderly co-conspirator to her feet. The two shuffled off, headed to the theater for the coming award presentation. They smiled to each other as they watched the ill-mannered youth pop a prawn into his mouth. He didn’t stop chewing as he called out.

*“Don’t die on the way, no one wants to watch a longer In Memoriam reel.”* He said, laughing.

The presentation ceremony went on for an excruciating amount of time. Each hacky speech by the host and every dragging list of thank-yous from winners felt longer than the one prior as anticipation gripped Derc Kast and Sooni Crezz. They waited patiently for the moment of retribution to manifest. The voice over the loudspeaker introduced the target and Derc glanced at his pocket-chrono. The timing was perfect. Dame Crezz, apparently, had a curious skill for gauging timing.

*“Maximast Mariken!” it echoed.*

He was already visibly drenched with sweat. It was a serious case of flop sweats. He was looking like a spice addict two days off the powder. Max shook and shivered as he stepped up to the podium. The envelope he was carrying fell to the ground and the crowd went silent. He didn’t really speak, instead he mumbled some gibberish. There was an attempt at a charming joke, but the only thing that could be heard was a self-proclamation of Mariken’s greatness. A rumble was audible through the many microphones.

Sooni gripped Derc’s hand. The moment was here.

“*And the Ghagg ‘warg fer”* the prey said between belches. “*Blurst ficture.”*

He fumbled for the envelope he’d dropped, but before he could gather it, an eruption came from his mouth. The volume of sick that poured from his lips was staggering. He stood upright, turning to the audience and splattering the cocktails and prawns he’d imbibed earlier all over the stage. His gut was evacuating all its contents with a violent expeditiousness. Tears streamed down his face. The crowd gasped and many began to retch themselves. Just when it looked like it could not get worse, Max’s eyes widened. He tore down his pants and squatted right there. There was a spray of oily discharge. The sound of absolute horror from the crowd filled the theater.

It was vile. The diabolical duo could barely contain their laughter. The room cleared in very short order among wails and screams of disgust. In short order, Security droids took to the stages, repeatedly striking Max with stun batons. The pair stifled the urge to celebrate as they made their way towards the awaiting line of hover limos. They passed outfit after outfit of celebrity media correspondents reporting on the “utter horror” “deliberate insult” and the “reports of intoxication”. They ducked into an elongated white repulsor craft and the instant the door closed they exploded with laughter.

They rolled and rolled. When they could finally breathe, the old woman hugged the still youthful Bakuran. She looked up at him and smiled.

*“Ya done good, kid.”* She said.

*“Thank you. For all of this. This was the night of my life.”* He replied

“*No, Thank you. I found the Star of my film. It has to be you, Derc. Please, will you help this old woman make this film?”* Dame Sooni said, pleadingly.

*“It would be my pleasure and deepest honor to be in your film, Sooni” He said.*

With vengeance won, the limousine whizzed off carrying the new found friends into the night.

Warlord Thran Occasus-Palpatine (Sith) / [House Caliburnus](https://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/units/caliburnus-878d2ed5-e2e7-42cc-9a9f-089ab075a004) of [Clan Scholae Palatinae](https://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/units/scholae-palatinae) [SA: VI] [GMRG: IV] [SYN: II] [INQ: IX]

SBx2 / GCx3 / SCx5 / ACx4 / DCx7 / GNx6 / SNx5 / BNx5 / Cr:3D-2R-6A-14S-21E-8T-9Q / CFx208 / CIx115 / CGx12 / SI / LSx10 / SoLx4 / S:5Al-3D-1Do-4Dk-7Rm-8P-17U-5B-18Dec-17Aff-3Cr-14En

{SA: MVF - MVH - MVHL - MVL - MVLD - MVLO - MVPH - DPCM - DPCP - DPE - SVHL}

[Legacy of Palpatine](https://wiki.darkjedibrotherhood.com/view/Legacy_of_Palpatine)