

Shadowseers Compound Urikoth System - Unknown regions

The portly Panda pondered his pursuit as he shifted in his ill fitting disguise. Tasked with infiltrating the elusive Children of Mortis, Howlander Taldrya wasn't the first choice for the job, nor was he second...or third. In fact the Prophet was the dead last choice, but unfortunately for everyone, he was the *only* choice. Not normally one for subterfuge, Howie was a fish out of water here, or better yet a Panda out of the forest. Reaching his massive paws into his pocket, he removed a shoot of bamboo he had smuggled in with him and began nibbling on the end. His normal stoic composure was replaced with anxiety and nerves, but his favourite snack always helped with both. The crunch and snap of the bamboo meeting teeth lightly echoed down the nearly empty hallways.

With the black and white fur of his rotund figure protruding from beneath the edges of his initiate's robe, Howie only looked mildly out of place amongst the Shadowseers. Luckily, of the members he had seen so far, they had barely paid him any mind. In fact, everyone he had seen since infiltrating the facility seemed too focused on their tasks to even give him a second look no matter how ridiculous he looked or felt.

The Dark Side of the Force oozed from every crevice of the compound, growing stronger with every step Howie took, pulling him in, drawing him further and further down the stark hallways. He had no idea where it was leading him, but he couldn't resist its call. It felt as if something was speaking directly to Howie.

Slowly, carefully not to make too much noise, the Panda's paws padded softly down the stone floor as he crept into a massive room filled with machinery. Off to the right side of the room were a row of industrial looking starships being loaded with pallets of something, the kind designed for transporting goods as quickly as possible, prepped and ready to take flight.

Howie took in a deep breath as a pungent odor wafted over him, familiar yet he could not quite place it? He had stumbled onto a factory and distribution hub of some sort, but what were they making? And where was it going? Making a snap decision, the Dark Councillor decided it was more important to find out *what* they were making.

Tap. Tap. Tap.

A boney finger poked into his shoulder causing the Panda to jump.

"Initiate. What is it you think you're doing?" a cold withered voice asked.

Howie slowly turned to face the man, letting out a nervous growl.

"Here," the man sighed, his features softening a touch. "Take that hover cart of supplies over into storage and help sort it for processing. Don't be nervous, I remember my first day here."

Howie grabbed the handle of the cart and made his way across the factory floor, head down to keep from making any eye contact. Moving around workers and conveyor belts moving crates towards the waiting ships, Howie followed the irresistible pull of the Dark Side and the smell that had caught his attention. Pushing through a set of double doors labeled "Distillation", the Panda found himself a small room filled with massive copper vats filled with a golden amber liquid and deep red crystals, this was the place that had been pulling him in. A lone man stood at the base of the copper vat filling a small glass with the concoction.

"Oh," the man said, startled. "What are you doing here?"

The strange man looked Howie over from head to toe for a moment before offering him the liquid.

"First day huh? Here, take a taste of what we've been working so hard on. It's perfectly safe, I promise." He took a sip from the glass as proof.

Cautiously, Howie sniffed the beverage. A wave of euphoria washed over him, he couldn't resist and downed the remaining liquid in the glass.

This was it! This was what he had spent his entire life working towards, searching the galaxy for. He had finally found his nirvana, he was home. He had finally tasted the greatest beer the galaxy had to offer.

Howie was finally at peace.