
The Dropping of Eaves

I was six crystalline tumblers deep when the call of nature pointed my in the direction of the washroom. I'd been playing a modified version of Hintaro, wherein the player place against the house. The chance cubes had been kind to me so far, but that luck was sure to break soon rather than later. The hostesses did well do keep the stream of complimentary Namana brandy flowing. It was standard practice. The drunker casino patrons were, the more likely they were to make bad bets. I bounced through the crowd, narrowly avoiding prolonged engagement with the debutantes and junior vice presidents that were strewn about the casino pit floor.

A simple smile and wave were often enough to keep them at bay, but for the particularly ambitious a strategic spin-move and hard left turn was enough to shake the pursuit. These societal predators were clad in the ritualistic colors deemed fashionable by haute couture publications and media sources. Maroon and pumpkin seemed to be the flavor of the month. In six months' time, they'd all be wearing the same forest green and silver I was wearing now. I had long been a trendsetter and under normal circumstances I would relish the attention, but I had to piss.

I clamored down the flight of six simple stairs and ducked into the washroom. It was adorned in an ostentatious collection of gold fixtures, tall slimming mirrors, and black marble flecked through with veins of white gold and slightly rose-colored quartz. The style appealed my senses in a deep way. I made mental notes for my interior designer.

My hands pushed open the door of the stall and I slipped inside. The alcohol danced through my blood, elevating my head beyond the length of my neck. The vertigo came in waves. I rocked back and forth as I struggled with the fasteners on my trousers. This was another of the fatal flaws of high fashion; form was far favored over function. I felt as though the whites of my eyes may be filling with the hazy shades of yellow as I struggled to hold my piss for just another ten seconds. Finally, the last of the metallic hooks gave up and the front of my pants opened.

I quickly aimed myself in the direction of the commode and let loose the pressure of several hours of cocktails. I mostly hit the target, but they had droids that would clean up mess from my initial release, so my accuracy was not of paramount concern. I placed my hand on the wall before me, soaking in the deep satisfaction of relief. As the waste of liquid sin filled the air with sound my sighs of liberation were broken by the clunky opening of the washroom door. Footsteps followed. Then voices.

"Selika is bold to assume we would all align under one banner."

"Yes, and presumptuous that we would do so under her beckon call. And what of the Arconan delegation?"

"I am told they were not even invited."

"Plagueian treachery, surely."

"Undoubtedly. I am sure the Palatinaeans heavily endorse that sentiment."

"That depends entirely on who you believe is leading their paltry Empire. Kamjin is indifferent at worst. He'd bridge that gap, if he felt he could advance himself from that. Occasus...Well, that is a different story."

"Is the Empire not run by their Emperor?"

"Revak, when dealing with the Sith one must look beyond pretense. If Kamjin really were in control of the Empire, what reasoning would he have to ask our assistance in resolving his Proconsul issue?"

My ears twitch. It was not a startling revelation that the Emperor would want me dispatched, but the desperation required to ask assistance from the other Consuls was enlightening. In the political sabacc game we play, Kamjin had inadvertently revealed his hand. He was, perhaps, starting to flounder under the weight of my pressure. I had been wise in my approach to reclaiming power. In my maturing knowledge of the galaxy, I had learned of one of the great powers; money. By making myself indispensable in the economic restructuring and growth of the Caperion System, I had secured myself as the true power of the Empire. Lap'lamiz was little more than a figure head.

The stream of my relief slowed to a trickle. Two shakes. No more. Three was considered playing with oneself. I stood up straight, fixing the clasps on my trousers again and setting myself straight. The fuzziness in my head was no longer acceptable given the information that had just been dropped into my lap.

"I think we should stay out of it. This matter is not ours."

"Wisdom prevails again, Jedi. Occasus is an absolute snake of a man, he's far more dangerous than he looks."

I patted at the pockets of my jacket, looking for the small metal tin I kept on me. High-grade stims would cut the haze of drunkenness and give me a new clarity for the evening. The tin, no larger than a handheld communicator, was tucked in my breast pocket. I pulled it clear and opened it. The lavender colored powder was mounded up within. I dumped a pinch on my right thumb, bending my head to meet it. A sharp inhale whisked away the fog of drunkenness in a heartbeat and ushered in a tide of aggressive thoughts.

I have had a mind to kick open the door and cut down the two conspirators then and there, but that was the stim talking. This knowledge, so welcomingly deposited on my doorstep, could hasten my ascension back to the throne if use appropriately.

"What I don't understand is why Kamjin would ask us to assist him in this matter."

"Lap'lamiz has lost and semblance of control in that dynamic. He knows he's being moved like a pawn on a holochex board. Rumor has it, Occasus lit the man on fire...in public...Kamjin's

allies just watched. I imagine he's somewhat slighted by the notion that even his closest allies would not blink at his downfall."

The old man was still salty about the incident at the bar. It was only a little fire and he was hardly burned at all. If Kamjin would be so childish about a small attempt at immolation, perhaps he was not fit for leading. I straighten my collar.

I open the door. Two sets of eyes rise to meet mine in the mirror. Revak, Jedi Sentinel, and DarkHawk Sadow of Naga Sadow froze. I smile.

"Gentlemen. Consider your eaves as dropped."

I walk to the sink, lather my hands with the Purgill ambergris scented soap. They part the way for me. The water begins to run at my proximity. I remain silent as I clean my hands. The two stand silently. They are unsure how I will react.

"Was there something I could assist you with, gentlemen?"

The Jedi swallows hard. He's thinking about his lightsabers. The insidious ghost of fear lingers around him. My presence haunts the Consul. His guard against intrusions into his mind is raised. It's not needed. His face tells me everything I need to know.

"We weren't getting involved, Thran."

"Shh. You are now. You'll return to the conference. You will agree to Kamjin's terms. You will return home and await my contact. Understood?"

They nod.

Kamjin has the subtlety of a mudhorn in a porcelain tchotchke shop. He will pay dearly for crossing me. I didn't acquire the title The Usurper by not making good on my word. I grab the fine cloths set out for drying my hands and I wring them in the supple fibers.

"Why are you still here? Go..."

They nervously scuttle out of the room. I smirk to myself. I am going to have some fun with these two before this is over.