

## *Aliso City Amphitheatre*

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The air in the outdoor amphitheater was electric, TuQ'uan Varick di Plagia, Quaestor of House Tyranus, the Hat himself, was giving a speech tonight and anyone who was anyone in the sector was in attendance. What would he talk of? Was he going to talk about his success as a gambler, tell the harrowing tales of his missions as a mercenary, or maybe even reveal some of Plagueis' deep dark secrets they held so close. Nobody knew for sure, but everyone was itching to find out.

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## *Inside TuQ'uans Private Quarters*

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TuQ stood facing the mirror, he had to make sure that everything was ready, it had to be perfect. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity for his fans and he refused to disappoint them.

"Sir?" A nervous young intern poked his head into TuQ's room, interrupting his preparation, his head bowed and eyes glued to the floor. "I have a bit of bad news. We, uh, we can't find your hat."

TuQ spun around, fury washed over him, his brow furrowed in anger, the cold black metal of his goggles staring daggers at the poor intern just trying to get extra credit for school.

"What did you just say?" he growled. The intern's eyes lifted for a moment, saw TuQ's hand hovering over his blaster, and dropped them back to the floor.

"We can't find your hat," the intern gulped. "As requested we sent it out for dry cleaning, and somewhere along the way it seems that it was, uh, misplaced."

TuQ slowly stepped towards the intern, keeping his anger in check, his bald head shining in the fluorescent light of the room. A dead intern wouldn't help him here, sure, it would make him feel better, but he needed all hands on deck for this.

"Find it," he hissed. "Or I won't be so forgiving next time." The intern fled as quickly as his feet could carry him.

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The atmosphere was beginning to take a turn in the amphitheater. The event had been delayed, forty-five minutes and counting and rumours were beginning to circulate as to the cause. Was TuQ off single handedly taking down a den of thieves using his impeccable gambling skill?

Maybe he had been sent on some secret mission to overthrow a cartel! Some even thought that the Dread Lord herself had ordered his imprisonment for his plans to spill the clan's secrets. No matter what it was, this was an event not to be missed, even if it meant waiting a little longer than anticipated.

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*Inside TuQ'uans Private Quarters*

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TuQ paced nervously back and forth inside his apartments, it had been over three hours since he had received the terrible news about his hat and he was worried. All of the worst case scenarios ran through his head. Was it lost forever? He couldn't fathom going on without his hat! Maybe someone had kidnapped it! He would certainly make them pay for it, but no ransom letter had arrived just yet.

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The audience was growing restless in the arena, the bars had run out of liquor, no update had been given on the di Plagia's delay and arguments were starting to break out amongst the patrons.

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*Inside TuQ'uans Private Quarters*

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A gentle knock came from the doorway.

"You better have good news or there are going to be two sounds. The first is my blaster, the second will be your body hitting the ground," he hissed as he turned around, blaster drawn.

Nora stood leaning against the door frame, a playful smile on her lips and his hat dangling from the tip of her finger. He should have known she would pull something like this. Without a moment to spare, he stormed out of the room, snatching his hat from her as he left and placing it back in his rightful spot.

"It's time!" He cried down the hallway causing his staff to jump. The staff fell in line, finally ready for TuQ to make his grand entrance.

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The lights were out, the sound of tie-fighters grew louder and louder before buzzing just over top of the amphitheater. Flying in a tight formation was a squadron of tie's, their menacing sound filling the air. As they reached the rear of the venue they swooped sharply up making room for a second squadron to follow suit. Once the second group had passed overhead, the two made a second pass starting from the rear and heading back the way they came, only this time they were flying in the shape of a T and a V for TuQ'uan Varick. A lone shuttle flew like a dot between the two letters. As the two squadrons of tie-fighters zoomed past the venue back where they had launched from, the shuttle simply hovered over the stage.

The ramp lowered with about 10 feet of space between it and the stage below and a single figure leapt down, landing in a crouch, one knee on the ground and head tilted down, one hand rested on the crown of his hat while the other brandished his signature blaster. TuQ slowly lifted his gaze to take in the sight of the gathered masses, all here to see him.

What he saw shocked him, out in the seats were a handful of employees cleaning up the mess left behind by TuQ's fans. A swishing sound startled the Kel Dor and when he looked over, a lone custodian was sweeping the stage.

"Sorry sir, everyone left hours ago."