

## **Chapter 2: Cheque Please!**

Horus, Stryker and Genie stepped out of Plif's office aboard the Warrior.

**Genie:** OK, so, everyone's at the Challenge's Bar, let's head over there get ourselves a drink and get our squads up-to-speed.

**Stryker:** Sounds good. Horus, you are coming?

**Horus:** Yes, just a moment. Horus leaned down on a piece of paper that was sitting at the edge of the corridor. It was a ruffle ticket. *Loitering*, he thought to himself. He put it in his pocket, half the ticket still hanging out.

**Genie:** I got my shuttle parked at the Hangar, let me give you guys a lift.

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Over at the Challenge's communal bar, **AckBar's Folly**, about half the active pilot roster was there. The time was 22:17. On the northern wall side, somewhat dark, lit only by a tiny light, Witcher, Xye and Mantissa were playing darts. Every regular hit was one finger of drink, double was two fingers and trebles were four fingers. They must have been playing for a while, as the wall around the dartboard was full of holes. A waiter brought them a fresh serve of drinks.

**Waiter:** The repairs are coming right out of your paycheck.  
Put it on Silwar's tap, **Witcher** replied.

Sub-Lieutenant **Quintillian** walked up to the bar.

**Quintillian:** Can I have one Zekk-on-the-beach and two Yama Beers? Oh and an Ewok-on-a-stick! Put it on Silwar's tap!

**Barman Rufus:** Coming right up.

As the barman served the drinks, he also handed a thin wooden skewer with some juicy, freshly BBQed meat on it. Quintillian took a quick bite. He felt a tug on his trousers. He looked right, saw no-one.

Hey! He heard a voice. Quintillian looked down, there was Lieutenant Commander Solohan.

**Solohan:** What do you think you are doing?

Quintillian froze. I am ... so sorry he uttered.

He felt an arm around his shoulder.

Calm down SL, he heard Genie reassuringly speak into his ear.

**Genie:** We call it Ewok-on-a-stick but it's not really Ewok. It's actually dewback meat. Makes it more fun to eat though.

Quintillian took a deep breath of relief.

**Solohan:** Hey Genie, damn you! Why do you spoil my entertainment!?

**Genie:** Your true entertainment is over there, he pointed at the three Twilek women that were surrounding Zekk at the corner couch. Leave the recruit alone, Genie smiled. Comeon, let's go over to the table. I have something important to tell you.

Solohan punched Genie just above the knee.

**Solohan:** Now we are even and only because you sweeten the deal with those Twilek women.

**Genie:** OK, I deserved that. (*good thing he can't reach any higher*). Though you know, you'll have to wrestle them out of Zekk's hands. Easier said than done. Perhaps you can get one.

**Solohan:** Look at this beautiful face! Look at my fur! I am irresistible!

Stryker had gathered Ricaud, Niksavel and TI-40026 (aka Travis) at a table.

**Stryker:** So guys, while you are busy making those drinks disappear, I have some news for you. In a few hours, at 06:00 in the morning, we leave for a very important mission. We are to escort a squadron of special forces in our Xwings to sabotage two New Republic Bases. One of Eagle's flights will also join us.

**Travis:** This sounds like a one-way trip to me. Waiter! (*his name was Walter*) Four Imperial Stouts! Travis shouted.

**Stryker:** Wait till you hear who the special forces are.

**Travis:** Who?

**Stryker:** Lambda Squadron...

**Travis:** Waiter! Make that twelve Imperial Stouts!

**Ricaud:** Ok, so give us the rundown.

Stryker proceeded to explain the details...

Genie had gathered the entire Lambda squadron (Xye, Highlander, Corran Shub, Spywalker, RedBaron, Slade Carroll, Kypho, Wookie, Phrick, Physics and Solohan) at a table near the dance floor. BE-37 was also there, unable to properly sit down he stood next to Wookie.

**Genie:** So guys, I am not going to sugarcoat this. We have a critical mission in our hands, but chances are not everyone will make it back.

Genie continued for a bit...

**Genie:** We live tomorrow at 06:00 hours.

**Xye:** Which timezone?

**Genie:** Exactly, right!? Standard Coruscant Time.

**Wookie:** Ohwoanan, cahwhoawo aoacworcwo scraro rhwo whoo aooscoorcrcoooh rawwaoworc aooscoorcrcoooh, anwoaac warcahwhor!

Aye! Shouted everyone in unison.

Graf, Perkis, Hiyama and Cupcake were sitting at a corner table, barely lit. Graf had his laser-pistol holstered, rumours persisted that he slept with it. Horus stood next to Graf and was talking over the details of their mission. When Horus was done, Hiyama wondered,

**Hiyama:** How come you won't be flying with us?

**Horus:** I wanted to. COM Dempsey has already given me an assignment, especially since Stryker will be also out, flying with you.

Horus got interrupted by Taygetta, who took center stage and was holding the microphone.

**Taygetta:** Can I have your attention please everyone! Rufus, can you turn down the music a bit please? He signalled to the barman who gave him the thumbs up. We are about to do the draw of our monthly lottery. As you all know, we hadn't had a winner for five months now! The top prize stands at 50 000 Imperial Credits!

Taygetta signalled a Twilek man and a Twilek woman, both scantily dressed, to bring forward the tombola wheel. Taygetta started to roll the wheel.

**Taygetta:** And the first number is 7. Taygetta spun the wheel.

**Taygetta:** The second number is 41. Third number is 12. Fourth number is 53. Fifth number is 20. Our sixth and final number is 36.

Everyone was looking at their raffle tickets.

**Graf:** Damn it, I am off by two numbers. Waiter! Stop serving those firebirds and get over here man.

**Walter:** Yes, what would you like to order?

**Graf:** I'm having a double dry hop. Perkis is having a galactic pale ale and Cupcake over there will have a Han Shot First. Horus what are you having?

**Horus:** I'll have a pale ale as well.

As Horus turned, Graf noticed the piece of paper hanging from Horus' trousers.

**Graf:** Hey man, aren't you going to check your raffle?

**Horus:** What raffle? Ah this? Nah man, no need.

**Graf:** Let me check it for you. Graf grabbed it out of his pocket. 7, 12, 20, 36, 41 and... 53! Man, you've won the raffle ticket! Taygetta, over here! We got ourselves a winner!

**Horus:** Hey man, what are you doing!?

**Graf:** You've won! 50 000 Imperial Credits!

**Horus:** God damn it, I'll have to pose for the cameras and smile and the Emperor's Hammer gazette is going to be pestering me.

Walter the waiter returned with the drinks. As he served everyone and made to leave, Graf uttered,

**Graf:** Put them on Silwar's tap.

Meanwhile, over at Lambda's table, everyone was about to take down a shot of Chalquilla. Silwar, Morgoth, Echo and Wreckage had also joined in by that point. Solohan put his shot glass into his pint of Yama beer and was readying up to drink up...

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**Select the next step of the story:**

- Vote A: Does Walter the waiter push Wookie by mistake as he's about to have his drink?
- Vote B: Does Walter the waiter push Solohan on purpose as he's about to have his drink?
- Vote C: No-one gets pushed.

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