

Venue: Jekk'Jekk Tarr Cantina

Catering exclusively to exotic clientèle, the Jekk'Jekk Tarr Cantina on Nar Shaddaa isn't just unwelcoming to Humans—it's deadly. Unlike some establishments that have gained a sordid reputation, the Jekk'Jekk Tarr Cantina's patrons don't often bear criminal charges. Instead, circulated cyanogen fumes and pollutants that are toxic to Humans provide a buffer against less desirable company.

Instead of serving drinks, the bar serves "nutrient chemicals" to its clientèle, who pay large sums of credits for the privilege. Five sections emulate the environments of different worlds preferable to certain species and are colour-coded to signify the types of gases being vented into the chambers. The sections are divided by short halls designed to function similar to an airlock so as not to contaminate the different chambers.

The first chamber, favored by species that could perceive the infrared, such as the Devaronians and Trandoshans, is lit with red lights and doubles as the cantina's entrance to the far more dangerous yellow and green rooms.

Simulating the harsher climates of worlds such as Ryloth and Sriluur, the yellow-tinted room to the west is still poisonous to Humans, due to the amount of concentrated gases, but leaves some near-Humans, such as Twi'leks and Weequays, unaffected.

Identical rooms lie to the east of the infrared chamber, both bearing green color-coding. Exclusive to the insectoid Gand, these chambers filter in ammonia-based atmospheres that are toxic to most other non-insectoid species. The fifth chamber requires passage through the two ammonia-based rooms, but unlike the others, the private lounge is not harmful to Humans. In some cases, measures have been taken to circumvent the harmful toxins, including the use of breath masks. Alternatively, a control panel located in the private lounge can purge the chemicals from each room to allow Humans to pass through unhindered in dire situations. All of the rooms bear the usual outfit of an unadorned cantina—arrangements of chairs and tables set within a hexagonal space.

Post 1: Jasper

The hall between the western chamber and the main entrance of the cantina gave Jasper Arlow a quiet place to collect herself. Oblivious to the glares of passing alien patrons, the girl fiddled with the respirator issued on her arrival. It was pitiful and long overdue for replacement. Not that an establishment like Jekk'Jekk Tarr needed to keep any on hand. In fact, her admittance to the cantina was a rare exception, the sort only made when credits lined pockets or favors were being cashed in.

A KX Security Droid, colorfully painted, stepped up alongside her. "Commander, we are due back to the shuttle at exactly 2200 hours. It is ten minutes till." The droid shifted his grip on an E-11 blaster, eyes illuminating the dim space.

"Okiedokie, lemme jus' fix this thingy," Jasper's boisterous twang was muffled by the respirator. She rubbed the backs of her knees before adjusting her mismatched socks, copper buns wobbling atop her head. Sitting still was not one of Jasper's strengths and fifteen minutes of debriefing felt like an eternity. Though her contact seemed happy enough and that's what mattered.

Jasper bounced out of the airlock-like hallway into the main chamber of the cantina. The red glow of the room only added to its unusual ambiance. The eclectic clientèle watched sidelong from their seats as the droid and his owner marched to the exit.

Without warning, the strap of her respirator slipped, almost exposing her fragile human lungs to the cyanogen filled air. The engineer gasped, slapping her hands over the device to keep it in place while she secured the ties and kept walking.

"Gosh darn flimsy piece of—"

Just as she fixed her mask, Jasper collided into the folds of dark robes. She froze, blinking away the confusion before lifting her emerald gaze to the victim of her carelessness.

Surprised, she found a rather stoic looking man towering above her. He was, without a doubt, a warrior, the lines of honed muscles clear beneath his robes. And she was certain that the two hilts at his waist weren't for decoration.

"O-oh goodness! Sorry! I didn't see ya!" Jasper laughed and waved her freckled hands in the air. "I didn't hurt ya did I? I swear. I should'a been called Grace!"

"I assumed this would be a simple task." His authoritative voice somehow rang crystal clear around her, even through his respirator. "I never imagined you would walk right into my waiting arms."

"Sorry... what's that?" Brows furrowed, Jasper glanced around the room, completely in awe of his ability to throw his voice.

Rex leaned over Jasper, tilting his head slightly. "Excuse me, good sir, Commander and I are due back to our shuttle shortly."

The man remained motionless. Icy blue eyes pierced through Jasper with as much power as a blaster bolt. Not usually one to be put off by strangers, Jasper was surprised to find herself shiver. She'd recognize that feeling anywhere.

"I ain't lookin' fer trouble an' I sure as heck ain't lookin' fer the dark side a' things."

"Come quietly, Odanite. Do not waste my time."

"Okay, okay! Calm yer jets there firestarts, I'mma comin'," Jasper patted him on the chest and swayed back and forth. "Ya know, ya could'a just said 'please' or somethin'." The copper haired girl glanced up at her droid, noting that the man's gaze followed her own.

"Yes, Commander. Manners matter," the droid proffered. "One must always strive for politeness and excellence in all things."

Before the man could reply, Jasper stood on her tip-toes. "Say, how'dya get so tall? I eat fruits an' veg an' blue milk an' I stay smaller than an Ewok under a Wookiee foot." He was the slightest bit perplexed by the girl's antics, his eyes darting between her and the droid. "Besides, I dunno how much ya know 'bout me. But I sure as heck don't do nothin' quiet-like."

Her knee flew up, but he was quicker. Sensing her movement, he twisted so that she narrowly missed the space between his legs, his grip lightening just enough for Jasper to wrench herself free. She rolled to the side, shouting as loudly as she could through the obstructive facemask. "Rex, Grek 6! Go-go!"

The droid's eyes flashed as he recognized the command prompt. He barreled, full force, into the warrior before him, sending them both stumbling.

Post 2: Braecen

The KX Security Droid drove his metallic shoulder into the chest of the Sith Elder. Unprepared for the attack, Braecen's spine arched backward, and he flew down the passage with limbs flung wide. By then, Jasper was five steps from the nearest intersection and wishing she had a grenade - because, as a member of the Lotus Resistance, her pursuers rarely came alone, and they were seldom fools or cowards. The Grand Master's Inquisitors were worthy adversaries. When the Adept did not immediately emerge from the previous chamber, Jasper slipped close to a nearby wall and launched herself into a high, arcing dive over its lip. She landed hard in a forward roll that was more of a forward *thud* and still managed to come back onto her feet. She extended one leg and pirouetted on the other, coming around just as the blue eyed devil reappeared. She raised her BlasTech E-11 carbine and pointed in in her foe's general direction and unleashed hell as she completed her pirouette.

Emerald bolts screamed from the mouth of the blaster and raced towards the Dark Adept in a scatter. A lightsaber snapped to life - casting a vibrant white flame before Braecen Kaeth - as he wildly batted away the onslaught. His blade weaving a defensive basket of light around his form as bolts were indiscriminately deflected in a myriad of directions. He did so without concern for others. There was only the competition to determine who would be the victor in this moment. Jasper sprang backwards and assessed the situation. "Gotta be the good," she whispered from a lopsided grin. She possessed a deep passion to see the galaxy at its full potential. And when things get dark and stormy, she is the first to offer shelter from the gloom of reality with a quick smile, a pat on the back, or a helping hand. Now, *in this moment*, she saw a chance to do some good for the people whom had been unwillingly drawn into harm's way on her account. "I gotta protect these people. I ain't lookin' to get no one killed."

She dashed towards her opponent in a zigzag motion before launching herself in a half slide at her opponent. Her blaster raised, she unloaded the clip at the Corellian's chest. "The floor is lava, Sithspawn!" Her moves would have been perfect - except her attacker was no longer there. Standing just beyond her reach, shaking his head clear disbelief and holding his lightsaber in a low guard that seemed a little too careless. Jasper should have killed him, but it would take time - and time she did not have. Her mission was to debrief then scuttle her cell until the next mission. If she allowed this Sith to capture or kill her, her resistance cell could be exposed. She had to escape. "Sorry." She was a slightly winded, yet not so winded she could not goad her attacker. "The floor ain't really lava. Jus' a game!"

"This is foolish." He was not out of breath at all. "Surrender now, and you won't suffer." Jasper did not waste her breath on a reply. She caught motion out of the peripheral of her eye. Rex was circling back into the fight and flanking her opponent.

"There is no escape," her pursuer called. "Not for you."

"Who said somethin' 'bout escape?" She rolled away from her attacker and came up on one knee with her blaster leveled in the Sith's direction. She pressed the trigger and shouted, "Now, Rex, hit 'im again!"

Braecen Kaeth would not be caught unawares to the same tactic twice. He summoned the Force to his aide and felt the Dark Side answer his call. The power burned in his veins, quickened his pulse, and crashed over him in a wave of nausea as his stomach flip-flopped against the cold, dark power that teemed within his mortal coil. It encapsulated him, wove itself into the fabric of his being, and swirled about him - a tempest of dark power. His skin burned and his mind screamed as the power built to unimaginable levels.

Ending 1: Jasper

The Sith moved like a wave seeking to desecrate the shore. With cat-like grace, he swept aside as the charging droid rushed past. He was tired of her game and far too important to be dealing with a mere errand girl. The Adept pivoted with perfect precision, effortlessly dodging the final volley of fire delivered by his assailant. *How bullheaded can she be?* he thought sourly. Braecen flicked his wrist, grasping the hilt of his blade firmly. She had wasted enough of his time. He leapt towards the droid, dark power coursing through him like poison.

Across the cantina, Jasper prepared to fire another clip at the man. Instead, to her horror, she watched as he coiled back, unleashing a cyclonic blow deep into Rex's backplate. The droid took one clanking step forward, turning to warn his owner. His glowing eyes went dark as he crashed into a table, crushing an older Trandoshan beneath him.

Deliberately, Braecen met her wide-eyed stare, challenging her—daring her to make the game worthy of his prestige.

Chaos erupted.

Jasper let loose an anguished cry. Angrily, she unloaded every last bolt until her gun refused to recharge. The patrons, once frozen in their seats, finally began to scatter in a stampede of terror. Struggling with her sudden desire to ruin him, the girl lowered her weapon, refusing to let herself hurt another innocent.

Noting her reaction, Braecen pushed forward, provoking her further. He had calculated every eventuality, identified the dangers and all possible approaches. Where others stood to test the measure of his strength and prowess, Jasper served only to remind him of the failings of the galaxy. He had won long before the game had even started.

The Odanite clutched her blaster to her chest and charged forward. She dodged the scuttling patrons, barely ducking under flailing arms and tails. Closing in, Jasper jumped as high as she could, throwing her meager weight into the sweep of her blaster.

The swing felt sluggish. Jasper knew the second she launched it. The agile Sith recoiled. Before she could even register his dodge, his elbow connected with her jaw sending her into the tables behind them.

She heard the pop of her respirator hose as she skidded to a halt, the burn of sulfur clawing her throat. A sharp pain drove from her left hip all the way down to her shin. Wincing, but

determined not to give up, Jasper rolled over, exhaustion finally hitting her. She couldn't give up. Not now. Not on a mission so utterly simple and mundane.

Loose copper strands hung around her face, her buns slipping from their ties. The girl groped aimlessly for her blaster, praying to find comfort in anything at all. Instead, trembling hands found the polished leather of Kaeth's boots.

Jasper sank back onto her knees. She mustered the courage to look up. Above her, he towered like a dark monolith, immovable in his determination. He was a monument to everything she'd spent her life fighting against. All the darkness. All the hatred and hurt. But the girl looked beyond her fears, catching a glimpse of the haunted man guarded behind ice blue eyes.

A pang of fear rose inside her at the hiss and spit of Braecen's saber igniting once more. Under the white glow of his blade, she drew a ragged breath, the respirator finally failing her. There were no words left, so Jasper smiled, conveying her forgiveness the only way she could now.

Gotta be the good.

Ending 2: Braecen

Rex accelerated to terminal velocity – covering the distance in a few, rapid steps – as he came to bear down on Jasper’s assailant. Braecen shifted his feet and squared his body as he braced for the impact. The Force steeling his will, and body, against the attack like a piece of Mandalorian Iron. His eyes locked with Jasper’s for the crucial moment where he absorbed, then shrugged off the attack. As the KX Security Droid staggered away, he turned his full attention to the droid. He raised his off-hand, splaying his fingers wide and summoned the Dark Side to further do his bidding.

The cobalt-white lightning arced from his hand through the air. It twisted and splintered across the distance with an eerie scream of a headless monster. The smallest parts grabbed purchase against the droid’s metal skin first, before the largest bolt struck the target center mass. The metal heated, circuitry fried, and the eyes popped due to the overload on the electrical system. It collapsed in a satisfying heap of slag that left Braecen both satisfied and extremely drained from the sudden expenditure of the nausea inducing aura of the Dark Side.

He staggered and fell to his right knee. Several deeps breaths attempted to cool his seared, burning lungs, but the respirator made it a futile exercise. The air was a mixture of sticky sweat and bio-manufactured oxygen for humanoids in the ultra-lounge. His respite was short lived as an indistinct blur of alabaster skin and copper hair rammed into, and toppled, the Elder. The pair rolled across the floor as Jasper unleashed a flurry of punches and kicks. Finally, the momentum of their tumble tossed them apart.

“Did you *bite* me?” The Sith asked incredulously.

Jasper grinned malevolently. A strand of her hair fell down her face and partially softened the intent. “Darn right I did an’ don’ think I won’t do it ‘gain!”

The pair hoisted themselves upward and at one another again. Jasper launched herself into a corridor with a kick that *should* have caught the man pursuing her square in the chest. An arm snaked around Jasper’s waist, and the cold circle of a lightsaber emitter nozzle touched the side of her neck. “Move, and you die!” She froze and stood very still on one leg. Then she began to think. Sith were not the kind to show mercy, not after a long grueling fight, not in the midst of a search to eliminate the Lotus Resistance. Maybe her pursuer wanted her alive. That would explain all the talking, and the lack of lightsabers and Force lightning.

“Move an’... die?” Jasper gasped, still breathing from the exertion. “Really?”

“Try me.”

“Sure.”

Jasper let her leg collapse, and her weight fell on the arm around her waist. Taken by surprise, her blue eyed devil failed to catch her, and Jasper dropped like a bag of rocks. When the lightsaber pressed to her throat did not ignite, Jasper knew she was right about the huge effort to capture her. The Sith wanted her – but he wanted her alive.

By the time she hit the floor, Jasper was rolling back toward her captor. She drove an elbow into Braecen’s knee and heard a *pop*. A dignifying, life altering *pop*. The man screamed, and the *crack-hiss* of an igniting lightsaber sounded above Jasper’s head.

Too late.

Jasper was already grabbing for the wrist. She snapped it at the joint, forcing the blade away as the Elder collapsed. Jasper accelerated into her roll, driving her foe down hard, and the hollow crack of skull hitting durasteel echoed off the cantina walls. She watched as his eyes swam – fighting against the darkness – before they closed. She quickly checked his pulse and noted he would live. She struggled for a moment with the decision to let him live. He would certainly be back, but she believed karma would favor her.

“Gotta be the good,” she whispered as she ran out the door.