

## A Game of Cards

Ranger looks over his datapad and lets out a sigh. "I've done every competition that's posted, killed every enemy, earned every medal. What's left to do?" he says and he flings his arms off the side of the bedbunk.

"You know, we could rally something between Lambda squadron. Maybe start a friendly rivalry perhaps, don't you and Wookie go toe to toe often?" says Solohan.

Ranger rolls over on to his stomach, flinging the datapad on to the bed and looks over to the short furry Ewok sitting on a stool with amusement.

"You mean something...casual? Are you suggesting we forget about medals and recognition and do something... for the fun in it? I can't even begin to think of something like that". Ranger says dejectedly.

"Why not? You've got something better to do? Give it a shot." says Solohan, arms crossed.

Ranger was a bit of a completionist. Over the years serving in the TIE Corps he would shoot for the top spot in every avenue that was made available to him. Always chasing the gold for recognition and praise. A very furry wookie walks into the room.

"rooouagghhhh! What's going on guys, did I miss something?" says DemWookieCheeks

"Oh we were just talking about how you and Ranger here should do something fun for a change instead of just, I don't know, chasing for a shiny piece of metal day in and day out." shrugs Solohan.

"Well hey, here's an idea. We just got a bunch of cards shipped in from the last resupply run. Ranger, you ever play a game called Pazaak?"

"Huh, no, I can't say that I have what's it about?" questions Ranger

Wookie explains the rules of the card game Pazaak to Ranger, spend a great deal of time elaborating on the dos and don'ts of Pazaak.

"And that's all there is to it, it's pretty straightforward if you think about it." says Wookie.

"Well if you put it tha-" says Ranger as he's interrupted by Wookie

"Hold that though, I'll be right back".

Wookie runs over to his locker and grabs a brand new pack of playing cards.

"Alright, check it out. The empire really gets the best stuff, these are fresh from Canto Bight!" says Wookie, his cheerful grin and beaming eyes directed towards Ranger. "Let's go to the mess hall, its less

cramped than it is in here.”

Solohan hops down off the stool quickly. “Hey, are you guys just going to leave me? Screw that, I’m coming with you too!”

The trio heads out of the Lambda bunk space and out into the hallway. After a quick trip they make their way to the mess hall where pilots, officers, and crewman are all hanging about.

A small furry Jawa approaches the group as they enter. “Ranger, Solohan, Wookie! What going on guys, you look to be in a hurry.” says Gytheran.

“OI Wookiee heres got some playing cards for us. Ranger wanted to break up the monotony of his daily life so Wookie and Ranger decided to have a bit of fun. They’re about to play Pazaak, care to watch?” says Solohan.

“Pazaak eh? Haven’t heard of that game before. Come, theres an open table over here.” Gytheran gestures the group over to the center of the room. Wookie cracks open the sealed deck of cards and begins to shuffle them around.

“Did I ever tell you guys about my cousin Shrookiee? She used to deal cards for one of Jabba’s dens. Nothing crazy really, just some big name bounty hunters and smugglers.” Says Wookie with a sly grin.

“Oh boy, not again” says Gytheran and he rolls his yellow eyes.

“Yeah she’s seen the likes of Dengar, Dash Rendar, heck one time she saw Greedo hanging out with a few Twi’lek woman too. But enough about that, lets play! Solohan, would you do us the honor of being dealer?”

“Sure! I can do that” says Solohan as he hops onto the table and sits cross legged in the middle. “Alright, Ranger and Wookie, choose your side decks, you can choose up to four cards to use. I’ll flip a coin to decide who’s first, best of three games, ready? Call it”.

“Heads!” shouts Ranger.

“Tails!” roars Wookie.

“It’s tails! You go first Wookie, here’s the first card. A seven. Deal, Pass, or Stand?” says Solohan.

“Pass.” says Wookie

“Alright, Ranger here’s your card. It’s a 10, ooh, tough call eh?” smirks Solohan.

“I think I can make this work. Hit me.” he confidently replies.

“Okay, next one is... a 5!” announces Solohan.

“Perfect. I’ll play a card from side deck, a 5! Ha! That makes 20, good luck Wook” laughs Ranger.

“Okay Wookie, you gotta get 20 or you’ll bust, and I’ll keep dealing cards since Ranger here already hit 20. Whats the plan?” questions Solohan.

“Nothing ventured, nothing gained, keep em coming.” shrugs Wookie.

“Sure thing, here’s your cards” says Solohan

Solohan grabs the first card from the top deck. First card is a 2, then a 1, then 6, then another 2.”

“Well that puts you at 18 Wook, you wanna keep it going?” asks Solohan.

“I’ll use my side deck and play this 2 card. That puts me at 20 too. Guess it’s a tie for this round eh Ranger” chuckles Wookie.

“We’re just getting started my furry friend. Let’s keep it going Solohan.” orders Ranger

Solohan continues to deal cards to both players as the game progresses. Ranger puts Wookie in a tight spot, causing him to use up all his side deck cards, as does Ranger. Nearly half an hour passes as the game goes back and forth, both players tied. A crowd has grown as onlookers gather at the center table, eyes focused on the card players.

“Alright guys, games tied two to two, you’re both out of side deck cards. Now we’ll really move fast. Wookie, youre up. First cards an 8. Your move?” asks Wookie.

“Hit me. Not much to it” says Wookie as he gestures for another card. The ewok slides the top card off the deck on to the table, revealing the number 8 yet again. Wookie lets out an exasperated sigh

“Well I can’t say that’s good or bad. This puts me in a tight spot. Alright here’s what I’m going to do. I’ll stand. Good luck ranger, try to beat that!” laughs Wookie as he leans back with folded arms behind his head. A murmur of excitement sounds from the crowd. Solohan reaches for the next card and deals to Ranger.

“A seven, Ranger.”

“Give me another.”

“Here’s... a nine”.

Ranger ponders for a moment, thinking about his next move. He’s holding a total of 16 cards, with no side deck left, it’s up to the heart of the cards. Too high and he’s out, too low and he loses to the Wookie.

“LET THE WOOKIE WIN!! YEAH THE WOOKIE!!” shouts erupt from the crowd.

“You’ve put me in quite the spot Wookie. I’m left with no other choice. Solohan, HIT ME!” shouts Ranger

with confidence.

Solohan grabs one final card from the top of the deck. He places it in front of Ranger.

“Sorry bud, looks like you bust. It’s a five, which brings you to 21. The game goes to Wookie!” announces Solohan.

The crowd cheers and gathers around Wookie, praising him on his win and congratulating him. Wookie stands up, with a big grin on his face as he walks over to Ranger’s side of the table.

“Great game man, it’s been a while since I’ve played Pazaak. Thanks for sticking with it, sorry you couldn’t get the win, I know how much it means to you, the winning and all”. Says Wookie.

“You know, this whole time we played I wasn’t really concerned about winning. It was kind of refreshing just to play a card game, no stakes, no medals. Just something fun to do with a friend, and hey, look at this crowd! Maybe we could make this a weekly thing, you know we could use something to take our mind off of things.” says Ranger.

“Oh oh, is this the birth of a new Ranger we’re seeing?” asks Gytheran as he emerges from the crowd, pushing the taller pilots out of his way.

“Maybe... maybe not”. says Ranger, winking at Gytheran.