***Conspiracy & Prophecy***

The cantina had it's usual, rowdy demeanor. Locke ducked inside, carefully avoiding the low archway that indicated it's entrance. He looked around, seeing nothing that interested him. There were humans of every shape and size, as well as half a dozen alien species he did not recognize. He did not enjoy cantinas much; and this one felt even less like home than the ones back on Tarthos.

The Augur picked out a seat at the bar, noticing that the patron in the next seat over seemed pretty quiet. Quiet would be nice.

Locke sat down and called over the bartender. He was an alien with four arms and a strange, narrow face. "I'll have Corellian Ale," Locke said, hoping that was common enough and that the bartender understood his Basic. The alien nodded in something Locke hoped was acknowledgement, and didn't take long to place a drink in front of the Augur.

In truth, Locke thought all alcohol tasted the same, but taste was not why he was drinking it.

Sipping on his drink, Locke glanced at the man next to him. Then he saw that the other human was actually quite intoxicated. He seemed to be analyzing a piece of old flimsi that he had spilled some of his drink on.

"What's that?" Locke asked.

"A map," the man said, voice raspy. "This is the Realm of the Immortal," he said.

"The realm of who?" Locke asked.

The man's eyes took on a feverish gleam. "You don't know?" he asked.

"No," Locke said slowly, glancing at the bartender out of the corner of his eyes. He didn't know much about alien body language, but the bartender seemed to suddenly become very busy with something at the end of the bar.

"They're planning something," the man said. "It's a prophecy...or a conspiracy, its both!"

"Okay," Locke replied, looking at the 'map'. He saw what looked like two stars, a larger and a smaller one, along with what might've been the orbit of a binary planet. It looked kind of familiar. He took another sip. "Tell me about this prophecy."

The other man picked up his drink and swallowed what remained of it in one gulp. His bloodshot eyes took on that glint again, widening as he began to speak.

"It's called the Prophecy of Ambition, and it goes something like this:

"When the Warriors of Light walk the Halls of Orn, when glorious darkness balanced with treacherous light, when those who shun the magic of the gods make their presence known…"

"Uh huh," Locke answered, listening intently. It sounded like a bunch of nonsense to him.

"The Hunter and the Daughter of Night will return to the Immortal's Realm," he intoned. "And when they do," he stabbed a finger on the flimsi, "they will find the weapon left by the ancients."

"They who despise the ancient magics will be removed from the sacred space. And then **HE** will be reborn."

"Who?" Locke asked, slightly intrigued. If nothing else, it was more interesting than the usual gossip.

The man seized Locke's shirt, putting his face close to the Augur. He inhaled deeply. "I smell his blood on you."

For some reason, that made Locke's blood run cold. He shook the man off and held up a hand, his voice a whisper. The Augur suddenly realized that the entire cantina was quiet. No, not just quiet, everyone was *frozen*.

"What in the nine hells-"

"You're part of it too!" the man snapped.

"I don't know what you mean." This was supposed to have been a vacation. It was just a backwater rim system. This had to be a dream. "What was in that ale?"

"You will know soon enough," the man said, laughing. "You will know when he returns." His laugh turned into a cackle.

Frustrated, Locke glanced at the flimsi again. Then it clicked.

It was a crude drawing - like something a child might make, but he recognized the binary star and the strange arrangement of the worlds.

*Orian*, he thought, a chill running down his spine as several other things clicked into place.

"I have to leave," Locke announced. He stood up. The man tried to stop him, but Locke flicked his hand up, blaster pointed at the man's ribs. "End this, now. I don't know what's going on, but I want out."

The man grinned and spread his arms. Suddenly everything was moving again, the cantina alive as if nothing had happened. Locke turned away toward the exit, hoping this was all just some surreal dream, but he could hear shouting behind him.

"You can't escape him! You can't escape it at all! When Sadow returns, you'll have to answer to him, too!"

End