

## Promotion Time

Korvin Thrane had been working on Lorainne Korn's security detail for three years now. He had been tasked with providing the senior vice president with protection while on site at Hyperdyne as well as at her estate in the dunes outside the city. He had always liked his job. The matronly Korn had always treated him well, despite her rather ruthless reputation. Lorainne Korn may have been a cool, calculating business woman who would take any opening to further her goals, but she was one who also took care of those around her.

Which was why he was confused by the situation that he now found himself in.

"Put down the gun, Thrane!" ordered Thrane's superior Kenneth Branmer.

The rest of the detail, sentients and droids both, all had their weapons trained on him, and it took Thrane a few moments to understand why. He realized that he had his own weapon drawn and was holding it squarely on Lorainne Korn.

He couldn't remember actually drawing the weapon, and had no idea why he had. In fact, he could hardly remember crossing the Hyperdyne courtyard to where he now stood near Vice President Korn's skimmer. He remembered leading the group out of the Hyperdyne building, but his recollection was hazy for the period covering the several meters between that exit and the skimmer. He shook his head, trying to clear it, and then lowered his arm.

Or, at least, he tried to. The right hand in which he held his high-powered blaster felt as if it was caught in a vice. He could feel his muscles straining against the whatever restrictive force he was bound by, but to no avail. As he struggled momentarily, one of the droids moved to stand between him and Lorainne Korn, much to Thrane's relief. That relief, however, only lasted a moment as something pushed his trigger finger and discharged his weapon. The first blast hit the droid squarely in the chest while the second burned its way through Korn's head. Both droid and Hyperdyne executive dropped lifelessly to the permacrete. Thrane was shocked and filled with revulsion as his stomach churned over the carnage he witnessed.

That feeling, however, lasted only a heartbeat. His three human comrades and the two remaining droids opened up on him with their weapons. Bolts of scarlet fire tore through him as pistols and the heavy rifles carried by the droids burned him down. And as the last bits of life seeped out of him, Korvin Thrane tried desperately to figure out just what, exactly, had gone wrong.

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Selika Roh sat back and admired her handiwork from a patio table outside the upscale tapcafe across the street from the Hyperdyne complex. Chaos had erupted from stolid routine in the span of seconds, leaving passers by panicked and guards shocked. Standing up from her table,

Selika dropped a few credit chits on the table to cover her caf and set off down the street. She smiled as she pulled a comlink from her belt and thumbed it on.

"The mission is complete," Selika signaled.

"Were there any complications?" asked Furios Morega, Aedile of House Ajunta Pall, from the other end.

"He seemed to shake free of the mind trick before it was finished," Selika reported. "But I finished the job myself."

"Were you spotted? Did you have to engage directly?" her superior demanded, agitation clear in his voice.

"Of course not," Selika said, frowning at the commlink. "I simply pulled his trigger myself."

"From across the street?" he scoffed, incredulously.

"Yes," Selika said with a sigh, "From across the street."

"Good, good," Furios said, his worry clearly eased by her answer. "The way should be clear for Amavia."

"Indeed," Selika replied. "Now, was there anything else you needed of me?"

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KE Selika Roh (Krath) / House Ajunta Pall of Clan Plagueis (2632)