

The Molator

The multi-hued m'onnok crumpled into a heap as the kintan strider's club made contact with its skull. To add further insult to the fatal injury, the strider then stepped forward, placed one large foot on its opponent's head, and let out a roar. Watching this from above, the Jedi Hunter Farrin Xies allowed a small grin to cross his face, as with the m'onnok's death he had beaten his holoterminal's latest attempt to defeat him at a game of dejarik.

It surprised Farrin that more of his Dark Jedi brothers did not play dejarik, a game that he had enjoyed in his younger days on Corellia - despite his parent's best efforts to find him a less-violent and more stimulating game. Farrin had read once that even the great Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn played it, remarking on its use as a meditative and strategic focus - it was that throw-away mention in a news story about a local dejarik tournament on Tatooine a few years ago that had spurred his renewed interest in the game. And certainly, the Jedi Hunter employed meditation when it was called for, but doing so while playing a game of dejarik allowed him to have something to center on.

With a couple of taps on the side of the holoprojector, the game board - previously a sea of corpses from the computer's last attempt to defeat him - cleared and, after a second, the holomonsters reappeared. Soundlessly roaring, waving crude weapons, gnashing teeth, and otherwise simulating their real world counterparts, they looked poised to begin another fight to the death for Farrin's amusement. He surveyed the board, mentally working out which opening gambit would be best, when he noticed the space that Grimtassh the Molator should have been in was empty. Half-rising off of his bed in his quarters, Farrin reached across to strike the side of the holoprojector. It was old, after all, and perhaps it was on the fritz.

Just as he reached back to hit the side of the table, he noticed something where the Grimtassh piece should be. Squinting, he looked more closely, his face now inches from the game board. Barely noticeable on the game board, he saw, was the word RUN. Leaning back, Farrin contemplated the odd message, the holomonsters on the board showing their boredom as they sat unused. Upon reflection, he decided it had to be a bug in the software of the terminal running the projector, and so he rose to power it down and take it to someone to diagnose the problem.

Farrin sat in the corner of a relatively quiet and sedate cantina in Eden City's District V, his cloak wrapped tightly around him in order to hide the simple gray hilt of his lightsaber on one side of his belt and his DL-17 blaster on the other. One of the best holoterminal repair shops in the entire system was just a few blocks away, and hopefully they'd be able to repair his gear. Lost in his thoughts, his drink sitting only half drunk in front of him, he barely noticed as a hooded figure approached the bartender on the other side of the room. Coming back to the present from his reverie, he looked again at the hooded figure, now sitting at a table midway between Farrin's own and the bar. Looking more intently, he noticed a small glittering pin affixed to the lapel of the other figure's cloak, but it was too dark and the distance too great to see it plainly.

Shaking his head to clear it of the mental cobwebs reflecting on the past always brought, he downed his drink, grimacing at the warm liquid, and rose to get another one. As he crossed the room, he passed by the hooded figure's table, and, taking a sidelong glance, he was able to see the pin that had caught his attention earlier. Farrin almost missed a step before he got himself and continued walking as he noticed that the pin was in fact a small metal molator. The molator, a creature from Alderranian mythology, was not something that was ever seen unless it was on a holotable during a dejarik game.

As he reflected on who would wear such an odd pin, he suddenly, with clarity, remembered that was the piece that had been missing from his holotable a week past. Farrin turned quickly, his hand

reaching inside his cloak to the grip of his blaster. The hooded figure was gone, but on the table he had sat at lie a glinting metal object - surely the pin that had caught Farrin's attention earlier. *Wait*, Farrin reflected. *Hadn't there been something else strange with that particular game piece?*

Farrin had to squint and shield his eyes as the darkness of the cantina was temporarily changed with the opening of the door out onto the bright street. A tall Duros walked in, his red eyes scanning the room before falling on the Jedi Hunter. *RUN! That's what the message said!* The thought crackled through his mind as a lightning bolt just as the newcomer to the cantina raised a blaster rifle and aimed it squarely at the Dark Jedi from a few meters away.

Just as the red blaster bolt fired from the weapon, Farrin dove to the side, smoothly dropping his cloak as he hit the floor. Drawing his blaster with one hand, with his free hand he used the Force to fling a table at his attacker. From the sickeningly meaty sound of the impact, he felt his impromptu projectile had hit home; all the same, he rose slowly from the ground behind the table he himself at taking quick refuge behind, his blaster held steadily in front of him with his finger on the trigger, his free hand on the gray hilt of his saber at his side.

His attacker lay barely within the room by the door where Duros had opened fire, the motley green skin red and his large skull a crushed mess. Though the table had just been meant as a diversion, it appeared as though it had even more than its desired effect. Sweeping the room, Farrin noticed that even the bartender had disappeared - where to was anyone's guess. As he completed his slow scan of the room, his eyes again fell on the gleaming metal pin of the molator. Quickly stepping across the room, he grabbed the pin from the table, dropped it into his pocket, and threw his cloak back around his shoulders.

Hopefully the shop was completed with their diagnostics and he could retrieve his holoterminal. He hated being in Eden City's slums, when even a Dark Jedi had to be on his guard for his very life. As he stepped across the body of his slain attacker, he reflected on how the strange pin and the remembrance of the message from his dejarik game likely saved his life. Out in the street, he pulled the hood of his cloak up to hide his face and made his way in the direction of the shop. *Well*, he thought, *at least I have a new good luck charm*. Hidden under the hood of his cloak, a small grin played across his face.

JH Farrin Xies (Krath) / Battle Team Jen Kaari of House Tarentum [SA: V]

DC / Cr:1A-1S-1E-1T-1Q / S:5Rm

{SA: MVC - MVH - MVPH - MVW - DPE - DPV - SVWP}

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