A Foe of Many Faces

**By: Halcyon Rokir Taldrya - 43**

The flashing light at the corner of his monitor caught his eye. With a small tap he brought the notice up, showing him a live feed of the outside of his warehouse. Dragostae police, their special unit from the look of their armour, were busy unloading from their armoured vehicles and surrounding his building. Jared Shetto, known locally as President and Owner of Giza Imports Incorporated, set about inputting a complex set of codes into his terminal. Confirmation came in the form of all lights in the office suddenly dying with only a red ring of emergency lightning keeping things from complete darkness.

Jared has been waiting for this day for the past week. His systems had quickly caught an outside bit of code trying to infiltrate it. It was well-designed, but his systems were top-of-the-line, made by the best experts money could buy. He knew all about Taldryan, a group of Force users who were more or less in charge of the entire system. He didn’t know what they knew about him specifically, but that didn’t matter. Something about his true connections had become public knowledge. His business made a sizable amount of credits, but it was ultimately expendable, like many scattered throughout the galaxy. His preparations were all in place and he put them into motion.

Rising from his seat he could see the rest of his small office outside the large windows. His office was located at the top level of the mostly hollow warehouse, above all of the various containers and other imported material that they housed. The bulk of his administrative staff was local, mostly Zeltron with a few humans mixed in. He made sure never to hire any of the other races that lived in Dragostae. He tolerated Zeltron, but that was as far as he would go.

Two of the staff here his own personal guards, dressed as just another administrative drone. With a nod from him they rose from their own seats, removing the small, yet powerful blaster from inside their coats and opening fire. It took only a few seconds of fire to clear the area, each shot perfectly precise. Jared allowed himself a small smile. The men were paid handsomely, and it was good to know that those credits did not go to waste.

The two men entered his office after they had completed their work. The rest of the floor was filling up with smoke due to all the terminals being instructed to destroy themselves. The building shook as an explosion took out a large chunk of the far wall on the warehouse floor. Armed officers began pouring in through the hole and fanning out throughout the area. Jared quickly entered a code into a hidden panel on the wall behind his chair, revealing a small elevator that was nowhere on the original plans. The elevator opened automatically, with just enough room for the three of them. As soon as they had entered it closed and whisked them downwards within second, opening into an underground shaft.

A small ground-shuttle waited for them as they stepped out. One of the men took the wheel as Jared sat in the passenger seat, with the second man sitting in the rear. The shuttle took off quickly, speeding down the passageway. Behind them they could hear the first in a series of explosions that collapsed the elevator shaft and the tunnel behind them. The tunnel system stretched across much of the city, painstakingly put together over a number of months for just one purpose: escape.

The tunnel finally came to an end, this time in front of ladder. The driver began climbing first, with Jared right behind him. The last man was setting a timer on the small speeder before following up himself. The first man reached the top of the ladder, punching in a simple code that opened a small hatch above him. All three climbed out and onto a simple docking bay that was paid for monthly by another unrelated corporation.

While he wished he never had to implement this set of protocols, Jared was pleased that each meticulous step was playing out as envisioned. His ego had begun taking over as every link in his plan went off without complications. He never saw the attack coming, with only a sudden breeze catching his attention. His bodyguards suddenly fell to their knees, each one clutching at a jagged piece of metal that protruded from the side of their necks. Jared had no time to react to the site before he felt himself thrown backwards by a series of blaster bolts. His suit had been designed to disperse indirect fire, but the concentrated attack managed to break through his defenses and penetrated into his body.

Jared’s mind began to work furiously, trying to come to grips with the situation. He was still alive, his suit managing to absorb most of the damage, but he wasn’t sure how long he had. He could hear boots coming closer. He willed his hand, shaking ferociously, to come up to his lips so that he could activate the comlink on his wrist. The smell of ozone registered first, followed by the pain as his wrist became a blackened mess. He never screamed, his mind too busy between being shocked and trying to find another way out.

“I’m glad to see that the suit worked as well as advertised,” he heard a voice say from just a few feet away. He turned his head towards it and immediately recognized the man covered in green and black attire.

“Hello, Jared,” the man said as he saw him looking at him. “From what we know of your files, you should already have a good idea of who I am.”

“You’re Taldryan,” he spat through the pain, “Halcyon something or other.”

“Correct. Your little operation here as been quite a success for your employers it would seem.”

“They will crush you,” Jared stated defiantly, but Halcyon replied with a cold laugh as he pointed his blaster, which appeared to be a customized bryar pistol, at his midsection. The weapon began to make a whining noise as Jared tried to move out of the way, but his body wouldn’t cooperate. A ball of golden energy burst from the pistol and slammed into Jared’s stomach, this time getting him to scream out in pain.

Jared squirmed in agony, never noticing Halcyon replacing the blaster cartridge in his pistol with another one. He did feel him kneel down next to him and remove things from his pockets, but he was too busy dying to notice.

“Your employer's slipped. It took our entire intelligence department a week to trace something back to you. A friend of mine is good at computers. Real good. Gave us a few little toys to play with. We just needed a foot in the door. A good thing we require locals to be hired for general work. Did you enjoy that new accounting clerk you had? A shame he was sick these last couple of days, although if we kept him there any longer he may have snapped and killed everyone himself. Regardless, we have been in your system for two weeks. We have everything we need, and while you tried hiding much of it, credits never lied and we eventually found all of your hidden little stashes. We actually got out a week ago. I’m sure you noticed something in your system just last week? That was just us leaving you a small present.”

“We will track you down and kill you all!” Jared managed to scream, blood gurgling out of his mouth and trickling down his face.

“Maybe. However, you will soon be dead over an unfortunate mugging-gone-bad. The authorities will find you here once I turn the security systems back on. As for your employers, they should be receiving some guests at Orron Three soon enough.”

Jared tried to speak again, find a new path out of the situation, but his words were swallowed by the blood that now filled his entire mouth. He heard Halcyon walk away. He felt himself growing colder. After some time he could hear the sound of an alarm, but it seemed very far away. It was the final sound he would hear.