

## Sins of the Past Episode II

Revenge is not always sweet.

The warehouse lay before them. Team Alpha was charged with setting up the welcome for their expected guests while teams Bravo and Charlie were to ready positions in and around the building for the 'surprise'. Captain Corvus looked at his men, they were all rough and ready mercs, hired for this job by an undisclosed benefactor, tasked with setting up a series of devices around the building's interior and perimeter, and told that these devices were sensor jamming systems with the ability to dampen the use of the force, Corvus cared not what they were, he and his men had a job to do.

Setting themselves up around the perimeter, Corporal Adams watched the men of Beta Squad as they dug themselves in, heavy weapons were emplaced at key points around the building. Adams could hear his men grumbling, this was a rubbish job, but was supposed to pay well, 25% up front the rest on completion, if it wasn't so hot and muggy here it would probably be a cushy number.

Charlie squad had been in position for what seemed like hours, their weapons formed a ring of death around the interior of the warehouse, no area was left uncovered, Sergeant Crax looked at their deployment and smiled, his men, unlike the other members of the company, were consummate professionals; they would give their target a warm welcome.

Two days went by with no sign of their target, this Teroch should have been here by now and Corvus could sense his men were getting restless, then on the morning of the third day, the proximity sensors lit up like a firework display. Three assault shuttles had landed and at least 70 Mercs were being deployed along with speeder bikes, and ULAVs the battle was on, and it wasn't going to be easy.

Rins'zler watched the events unfold; he lay atop a hill around 3 miles away, observing events as they unfolded via the macrobinocular viewplate built into his Helmet. He had done extensive research on Teroch, and had spoken to the various clans to find out his record among the Mandalorians. Teroch was an experienced combat expert, and very focused on his chosen skill areas, While Rins'zler was a veteran of many wars, he disliked going up against such specialists, at least not without help, and the use of his own skill set.

The mercs he had brought with them were deemed disposable. The Company in question had betrayed his uncle on two separate jobs and had earned his displeasure; as such he determined that they would have to die for their crimes. Rins'zler had convinced Jakata to allow him to use the company on 'one last job' assuring his uncle that there would be no survivors, he relented and agreed. Rins'zler had the men he needed.

His sensors picked up the rumble of the assault shuttles landing along with two transports, emerging from them came close to 70 well equipped mercenaries, 2 ULAVs and 4 speeder bikes, he couldn't make out the insignia on the shoulders of the mercs, but clearly they were one of the more expensive brands of private soldiers. Hidden among the gathering mercs he spotted his target, the Mandalorian Armour stood out like a beacon in a dark sea, while he hated to be the cause of the death of a fellow clan member, Teroch had earned the displeasure of not only Arcona but several other Mandalorian clans. Rins'zler slid his rifle up into position, his Helmet systems linking into the scope, showing him the view down his sights, Teroch turn and looked at him, to anyone else this may have given them the spooks, but Rins'zler knew his tradecraft well, even the best sensor systems would have a hard time spotting him, Teroch held his view for a few more seconds, then looked away, shaking his head.

The assault went ahead the day after Teroch arrived; his troops were merciless and gave no warning of their assault. Alpha and Charlie teams held them off as best as they could, but they were twenty against seventy, the odds were not good. The battle lasted several hours, but the conclusion was soon drawn when Teroch strode in, his rifle barking rounds, obliterating any resistance, force lightning made short work of the rest. It was now that Rins'zler triggered the first part of his trap.

Watching from his nest, he lined his rifle up for the two mercs closest to Teroch, and fired. The rounds flew from the muzzle, and wended their way towards their prey, Rins'zler watched through his scope, as the shots were going precisely where he wanted them, knowing this, he send two more rounds going towards another two mercs.

Teroch stood admiring his handy work and that of the men he had hired, they had slaughtered the defending force of mercenaries, to a man, those who had survived wounded, were quickly relieved of their lives, with as much pain and suffering he could manage. It was then he sensed something was off, he yelled to the four men to get out of the way as he felt four slug rounds blistering their way towards them. Teroch saw all four mercs dive for cover and breathed a sigh of relief, this relief was however, quickly shattered as he watched the four rounds ricochet precisely off sections of masonry and debris and punch through the neck seals of the four mercenaries, all four dropped dead as their throats were torn out by the explosive warheads on the slug rounds. Teroch just stood still as his men spun round in shock, how had that possibly happened, where was the shot from, he barked at his men to search the area, but it was too late, he watched as man after man dropped to the floor from precise sniper fire, he had little choice but to move into the building despite the nagging feeling it was a trap. Teroch yelled at his men to breach the warehouse, quickly, and take up defensive positions within it.

Rins'zler ejected the spent magazine from his rifle and clipped a new one in, the plan was progressing as he had foreseen, and he would have loved to see the shock on Teroch's face when he watched the four initial guards die. Rins'zler knew enough about Terochs precog skills to know that he would be able to sense such attacks, and had used that to his advantage,

knowing the way that soldiers typically take cover when ordered to, he calculated the trajectory paths so that the rounds would ricochet where he needed them. The other shots were simply to herd them into the next stage of the plan.

Within the warehouse, Teroch and his men spread out and took cover, scanning the room for threats, he could sense hostiles within the room, but despite his mandalorian armour, he was unable to detect their locations. Teroch looked down as he heard something clatter at his feet, it was a small holocom, he sensed no deception from the device so he picked it up and activated it, the image that resolved before him was of a fellow mandalorian, of the Fett Clan if he was not mistaken, judging by the iconography. He so was busy observing the figure, he forgot it was a live image, it wasn't until the image spoke that he jerked out of his reverie.

The holo spoke "Well are you going to speak, I don't have all day and neither do you"

Teroch responded "Who are you; I recognise your Clan allegiance, but not your armour"

The holo spoke once again "Ah now that would be telling, I assuming you have heard of the name Shadow Stalker"

Teroch laughed "Yes I have heard of Shadow Stalker, he was well known and respected within the Clans, last I heard though, he was dead, I suppose you are going to inform me that you are this "Shadow Stalker" and that he is not dead, I find that hard to believe"

The holo laughed "Hahaha, they say I am dead, well that's a new one, I will have to be sure to correct the record once we are done"

Teroch looked around at his surroundings "I assume you didn't 'invite' me in here just to have a chat, what do you want"

The holo took a serious stance "I have an offer for you, you can cease hostilities towards Arcona, and carry on with your life, with no ill will directed towards you for as long as you don't make any more offensive engagements towards Arcona. I give you this option as a fellow Mandalorian, and hope that what's left of the Mandalorian sense of honour, is still within you and will make you see sense, Arcona does not have to be your enemy, let the past be the past, and begin a new future"

Teroch paused then laughed "You really don't know me do you, I would rather die and have my atoms scattered across the known universe, than ever end my war against Arcona" Teroch paused again "there is another side to your offer is there not"

The holo responded "Oh, there definitely is, I have been instructed to end your attacks one way or another, while I would prefer not to have to kill a fellow Mandalorian, I have in place an option

B, within that room is a specialist team of mercenaries, who right now, how each member of your team under their sights, should they fail however, there is enough Baridium in that building to level a square block, so your choice is simple, you can either take option A and regain your honour and dignity, or you can take option B and have your wish of being scattered across the known universe made reality”.

Teroch threw the holo com on the floor and smashed it with his foot, he felt his anger rising and began to yell

“You, the fools who are working against me, I will offer you ten million credits per man to join me, disable those explosives and kill your employer”

Silence was his response, and then he saw a figure stand in the gloom

“Ten Million Credits, did I hear you right, what makes you think we can trust you”

Teroch laugh “I am a man of honour and Integrity, when I say I will do something I will do something, If I say I will pay you ten million, I will pay you ten million”

The man muttered something over a radio link, then responded  
“Ok you have a deal”

Rins'zler was no fool, he had rigged the warehouse with audio and visual sensors, it came as no surprise to him that his men would betray him; it was the reason that his uncle had condemned them in the first place. He sighed, he had really hoped that Teroch would see sense, and stop this foolishness, he had hoped that there was still some of that Mandalorian honour, buried within him, but he was wrong, he picked up the device that lay next to his rifle and depressed the first of two switches.

Teroch and his new allies suddenly became aware of hundreds of red lights appearing around the room, Crax looked around, these were the devices they had brought with them and deployed with Charlie team, they were sensors, his men had dismantled at least 2 to double check, and they had been fooled. Crax suddenly heard his comlink crackle into life.

“Crax, if you are still alive you traitorous dog, I thought I would let you know that you and your men were condemned to death, long before this mission, you made the mistake of betraying someone close to me, and he hates betrayal”

Crax tore the headset from his helmet and screamed “Noooo, this can't be happening”

Teroch had wasted no time, as soon as he saw the lights blink on he was making his way out of the warehouse, with luck he could be out before the explosives went off, he doubted very much that the explosive yield would be as big as he had been told.

Rins'zler depressed the second button and the area went silent. The warehouse went from a standing structure to a ball of expanding explosion in a heartbeat and despite his distance from the building, Teroch found himself lifted into the air, his Mandalorian armour abrading away every second it was exposed to the explosive shock wave. He landed in a smoking pile six hundred yards away, and with the little strength that he has left, lifted his head up, seeing the expanding shock waves of multiple Baridium detonations rippling through the surrounding area.

His body was broken, the heat of the thermal shockwaves had all but disintegrated his armour, abrading away with it large areas of his flesh, despite his agility, and skills, he had been unable to escape the blast radius. He rolled, agonisingly on his back, he could feel at least 4 ribs were shattered along with his right arm and most of his left leg from the impact, and was in no doubt about internal bleeding. He tried to hold in the scream, but was unable to do so, the yell of pain echoed around the area around him. What the hell had he been thinking, taking on this mad crusade, he could feel some part of his old self returning to him, the part of him that still valued honour, but had been submerged beneath hatred, he had been a fool, blinded by hatred and jealousy, he had walked down a path that would only end up in his doom.

Despite his injuries he became aware of someone else with him; the figure knelt down next to him, and laid a gentle hand on his shoulder.

"You are a fool, you know, you could have taken my initial offer and saved yourself, yet here you lie, broken and destroyed, for what, you were a Mandalorian, what happened to you?"

Teroch croaked a response "I let my past cloud everything in darkness until I could only see hatred and revenge, I was a blind fool, and I forgot everything our forebears taught us, it is sad that it took this to shake the darkness away"

Rins'zler spoke calmly "It happens to the best of us, don't worry I won't let you suffer"

Rins'zler stood and removed the lightsaber from his belt, it was then he heard the faint raspy comment and the faint sound of a weapon being drawn "you sentimental fool, If I am to die, then you will die with me". Those were the last words to be uttered from Teroch's mouth, Rins'zler wasted no time in bringing his lightsabre to bear and removing the Elders head, it saddened him to think that even in the end, the darkness won the battle for control.

Rins'zler examined the devastation he has caused, the whole block burned, but he cared not, this region had been so heavily damaged during recent fighting, you would barely notice it in a week. He returned to his ship, head in tow as proof of his target's demise and headed back to

the main Arconan headquarters to present his kill, with luck he would never be called up on to kill another Mandalorian again.