

Red Skies

2 Hours prior to Evac:

The sniper sat atop the rocky precipice; he had sat here for hours having relocated from his previous nest. The Iron Throne forces had eventually worked out where he was and had begun to move in, working it out had however lost them four officers and a dozen troopers, not to mention two scouting parties that had been sent to dig him out.

The battle was not going well, he could see the orbiting forces were being smashed by the forces of the Grand Master, it was not an unexpected outcome, the planning sessions he had been privy to had showed, that when the Tal'mahe'Ra had been deployed planetside to aid in the battle, they all knew they wouldn't be there for long.

Rins'zler adjusted his position and lay prone; his rifle in front of him covered by cam-netting. Hovering just above the ground was N3R2 "Number 2", his faithful droid and friend. Number 2 was transmitting a tight-beam stream of data to Rins'zler's helmet HUD, he was picking up targeting info and a general gist of what was happening around them. Below them a squad of Iron Legion were moving up the valley, targeting data pinged onto his viewplate, and he adjusted the scope and took a look. The info shifted on his HUD so as not to block his vision. using a scope in this fashion had taken him several months of practice, but he was now able to easily see the transmitted data and look down the scope to find the targets displayed.

There before him were his prey, a squad of Iron Legion, they were wandering down the valley seemingly unaware that there were any threats; their confidence was soon to be tested. Rins'zler adjusted his rifle and with his right hand picked up a magazine of match grade AP-slugs, he loaded them into the rifle and racked the slide. Taking aim, he let fly a round towards the officer, proudly strolling at the fore of the squad. The rifle made a sound like a spit wad being propelled from a straw and the slug flew from the barrel. The Mystic had deliberately fired off center so as not to give away his position, to counter this he reached out with the Force and took momentary control of the round's trajectory, shifting it around just slightly, subtly altering its flight path and guiding it towards its target. The officer dropped, the back of his head splattered open as the round punched through his helmet, blood and brain matter sprayed the troopers behind him. The squad stopped in their tracks. Rifles were immediately shouldered, tracking the surrounding area for the source of the round. Th troopers training took over, overriding the shock of the sudden loss of their officer. The troops fanned out, taking what ever cover they could find. Three more of them dropped, their helmets punctured by seemingly impossible shots from an unknown assailant. Neither their skill nor their armour could save them, all but one of the troopers fell; the last turned and ran, Rins'zler let him get so far before putting a round through the back of the troopers head.

The hunter had managed to finish off a full squad of the Grand Master's finest. He decided he deserved a break and was tried to relax. The valley before him seemed beautiful and the silence that followed the battle was serene, this wonderful silence was soon broken by a squawk over his helmet com, his com system decoded it quickly, it was an Evac command; they were pulling out. He threw

off the cam-net and packed away his equipment, it was time to leave. His shuttle was only a 10min hike away, and it wasn't long before he was able to reach it, and away from the world he flew.

Return to Dajorra

Worn out and needing a well earned break, he docked his shuttle at Giletta space port and headed back home. Home, the rather knackered remnants of a former transport ship. The ship was now little more than a shell, a permanent feature in the spaceport. As he walked through the docking port he saw the Holocom blinking, his gorgeous wife had left a holo message for him; she had gone to the training centre, to hone her skills. The image faded and he was about to shut off the Holocom when he saw the message light blink again, he hit the button and the screen lit up again, Uji's face appeared before him,

"Rins'zler, I know you have not long been back planetside, but when you get this message, your presence is required in the main chamber".

The Holocom message cut off after that, but the Mystic could feel dread bubbling up, something was wrong. He quickly made his way to his armoury and changed into his 'official garb' with purple mask and robes hiding the armour and weapons beneath, Number 2 hovering silently beside him as he left his home.

The noise coming from the chambers could be heard down the hall, there were angry shouts mixed over the top of others defending actions, the mixture of emotions coming from the room was overwhelming. The guards admitted him to the chambers and over the various yells and shouts he heard,

"Oh great, here comes the Jedi hater. Who let him in the room?"

Ignoring the comment, he took his place among the other members of Tal'mahe'Ra nodding to each in turn as he sat down. He looked up and saw Uji sitting on the dais and nodded to him, the Proconsul nodding in return and with that Atyiru stood, the room silenced,

"Now that we are all present, I would like you to turn your attentions to the datapads before you. Each contains encrypted information regarding current events. Most of you will be aware that our alliance with Odan-Urr has been strengthened by the Grand Master's actions against our friends in Tarentum and Plagueis. I know there are some among you who are vocal about this alliance, both for and against, but you need to set your differences aside. War is upon us and the Iron Throne will not care for your bickering."

Atyiru sat down and Uji took to the stand.

"Friends and comrades, the clan needs all of you, now more than ever, we need you unified, and working together to fulfil the goals of the clan, and to protect our future. Your House and Battle Team leaders will be debriefing you and providing you with your decryption keys.

With that the Arconans filed from the room. The room was empty save for one person, he stood close to the door, as if pondering if he should leave or not. He turned his masked face around as he sensed the proconsul approaching him,

"I can feel a question, you need to say something?"

"Yes, I know what is in this pad, the rumours of the Lotus and their terrorist actions have already spread through the underworld. My loyalty is unquestionable, however.....my views on these.....Jedi, are well known, I am unsure how I should react to this."

Uji gestured for the Mystic to follow him.

"Rins'zler my friend, you are not alone in your beliefs, and I would never for a second question your loyalty to the Clan. It has been unwavering since you joined our ranks all those years ago. With regards to Odan-Urr, you must follow where your heart takes you, and ensure Arcona survives. That must always be your top priority. Never let anything else impede this. I know it will be difficult for you, but you have shown that you have the best interests of the Clan at heart. I trust that your decisions and actions, whatever they are, will be for the good of the Clan."

Uji patted Rins'zler on the back and bade him farewell. The Mystic made his way back to his home. Uji's comments had been interesting and cryptic and he could feel that Uji was hinting at something else during the entire conversation. The mystic had the strong feeling that Uji understood and also supported his views on the current situation with the Jedi. The hunter reached the portal that lead to his homes access tunnel, he punched in a code and the door to the tunnel opened and he made his way back home, thoughts running through his head and ideas building themselves from concepts. He had much to think about before his briefing.

He fiddled and tinkered with various weapons in his workshop. Tinkering always helped him focus his thoughts. The question hung in the air. He thought about what Uji had said, the undertones had been clear. Follow his heart and let the Force guide down the path that he was taking. His actions, regardless to what they were, must be for the good of the clan. Nothing else mattered. If a few Jedi had unfortunate accidents along the way, well that couldn't be helped. The Mystic felt his thoughts click into place. It was as if a key had been turned in a lock, clarity came to him; Arcona must survive, and prosper regardless of the cost.

The com on the workbench beeped, someone was calling him. He reached over and tapped the flashing button. Ernordeth's figure resolved on the screen, sat in his comfy office chair as usual.

"Rins'zler, glad you're in, we need to have a chat about current events and about the Tal'mahe'Ra. Can you meet me in my office in say 40 minutes?"

Rins'zler checked the chronometer and saw the time, yes, 40 minutes would be plenty.

“Sure, I will head there now. See you shortly” with that the call ended.

Rins'zler donned his armour and his robes, slipping his gauntlets into place and making sure he had a good stock of throwing blades. Even in the safety of the city, enemies and Iron Loyalists lurked, it was wise to go around armed these days. He clipped his lightsaber to his belt and headed off to the door, this was going to be an interesting chat.