

# A Night of Betrayal

A Submission to the Competition:  
Endings



Written by  
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At the age of sixteen, Reiden was struggling to get by on the planet Corellia after the death of his parents two years earlier. He made use of his young age to get jobs from sympathetic people. He would do various odd jobs for them, and even found some work as a debt collector and low-risk bounty hunter. Although those jobs were always for small debts and bounties that didn't pay out much, but they were always for people that were not known to be violent, such as those that skipped out on bail and failed to appear in court. It was an obvious attempt on those that employed him to minimize the risk due to his young age. But he did not mind much. He was able to make enough money to have a roof over his head and meals in his belly on most days.

However, there were times when he was forced to rely on the kindness of others. But that didn't bother him. If it would help him to survive another day or so, Reiden would happily take whatever help was offered. He even managed to make a few friends along the way.

One of those that Reiden was closest to was a young Nautolan boy named Morenn. The two were around the same age, and they became thick as thieves shortly after meeting. They would work together on jobs, both collecting debts and bounties. The bounties, however, were what they excelled at when pairing up. They complemented each other, and each had the other's back, no matter what. Reiden never had any siblings, but he came to think of Morenn as a brother.

During one particular bounty job, the two were confronted with a more difficult task than they had done before. This time they were tracking down a bail jumper that had a rather substantial bounty on his head that totaled 10,000 credits. Typically, the pair would have avoided such a job, as those usually involved violent criminals. However, their employer had assured them that their mark wasn't violent and was merely bailed out of jail then never showed up to court; the type of job the two of them sought out the most. After hearing this, they decided that it was simply too good of an opportunity to pass up. Their target was a Rodian male named Xyden.

Reiden and Morenn had finished asking around at a couple bars to see if anyone knew of or had seen their quarry. Sometimes they were given a hard time due to their young age, or perhaps received a curious glance, but for the most part they were left alone. The offer of some credits helped to loosen any tongues. Unfortunately, they had struck out that day. Nobody had seen Xyden. Reiden didn't get the sense that they were being lied to, so he and Morenn decided to move on.

"So Rei, do you think we made a mistake taking on this job?" Morenn asked his partner.  
"Nobody seems to know anything."

“Nah, we’ll find a clue sooner or later,” Reiden replied. “I don’t think they were lying though. We just have to keep searching.”

The Nautolan sighed, “Yeah, I guess you have a point. It’s not like we haven’t had trouble finding people before. Hey, I’ve been wondering...do you know why the bounty is so high for someone that simply failed to show up at court?”

“I’ve been thinking the same thing, Morenn. I have no idea,” Reiden said with a shake of his head. “But since we were told that he wasn’t violent and shouldn’t pose much of a problem, taking the job was a no-brainer.”

Reiden and Morenn continued on in their search. As they made the rounds to their other usual sources of information, the two were beginning to wonder if they should call it a day and pick up again tomorrow. That was when a Weequay male pulled them aside into an alleyway.

“So, uh... I hear you’re the guys looking for Xyden? Is that right?” the alien questioned.

Reiden eyed the man warily, “Yes, we are. What of it? Do you know anything?”

The Weequay gave a furtive glance to each side and lowered his voice, “Well, yeah, I might have some information for you. That is, if you’ve got the coin to make it worth my while.” He flashed them a grin.

Morenn groaned, “Oh, come on. Stop wasting our time. Don’t make me hurt you.” Despite their young age, both he and Reiden knew how to handle themselves, and they were both armed with knives. Morenn displayed the hilt of his to the man before them to emphasize his words.

The strange man shrank back, obviously scared. “Y-Yes, I know something. But it won’t do you any good right now, I’m afraid.”

“And why might that be?” Reiden asked, arching a brow.

“Well, you see, I hear that he’s got a meeting scheduled for tonight. What most people don’t know about him is that he’s got connections in the crime families. He was supposed to testify against one of them, but he got cold feet, see? It’s not like he wanted to; the cops had something on him, so he agreed to it. Then on the day he was to appear in court, he was nowhere to be found. Now he’s hiding from both the authorities and the families. But he’s meeting with one of his friends that knows he wouldn’t testify unless he was backed into a major corner,” the Weequay explained.

“And why should we believe a thing you say? There’s no information about any of this in his file,” Reiden said, annoyed at what was shaping up to be a waste of his time.

“Of course there isn’t! The cops wanted to keep that quiet, trying to protect him from anyone that might want to...silence him,” the man continued excitedly.

“Hmm, that does make sense. How do you know all this?” Reiden pressed.

“I’ve got some connections of my own,” the alien said with a grin, glancing around quickly once again.

“So do you know where and when this supposed meeting will go down?” Morenn questioned.

“Yeah, I do,” the Weequay nodded. “I hear it’s happening in the middle of the night, down by the warehouse near the spaceport. It’s a front for one of the crime families.”

Reiden and Morenn thanked the man and tossed him some credits. The man tucked them into his pocket and quickly scrambled off. Reiden gave his partner with an inquisitive expression.

Morenn shrugged, “It’s the best lead we’ve got. May as well follow it up and see what happens. It’s not like we’ve got much to lose at this point.

Reiden sighed, “You’re right. Let’s head back home and prepare, get some rest.”

With that, the two of them made their way through the streets back home. Home was mostly just a place in which they conducted business meetings. It had a bedroom large enough to hold two beds, a common room, and a small, rarely used kitchen. They had rented it from the building’s owner after they stopped a man trying to mug him. The owner was so thankful that he offered it to the pair for almost nothing. In exchange, they paid him a small sum each month.

Both boys settled down in the chairs of the common room. They took out the money they had made from earlier that week and counted it, before adding it to the rest of the money they had stashed away in a hidden safe in the wall. They inspected the gear that they’d use that night. In the time between leaving home and meeting Morenn, Reiden had gotten his hands on an old DC-17 blaster from the Clone Wars. He cleaned the weapon and put it in his holster before leaning back to get some rest. It wasn’t long before he fell asleep.

Reiden awoke with a start several hours later. He checked the time and realized he should get going to the warehouse if didn't want to miss the meeting. He glanced around the room and saw that Morenn was nowhere in sight. He checked the other rooms and came up with nothing.

*I guess Morenn got impatient and left without me,* Reiden thought to himself.

He got dressed in dark colored clothes and a cloak. He stepped outside and onto the street, pulling the hood forward. He began the journey to the warehouse, glad that it wasn't located even further away. He moved quickly though, not wanting to take any risks tonight.

When Reiden arrived at the warehouse, he crouched low and crept towards a window, peering inside. He saw a dimly lit area, and standing in a pool of light was his target, Xyden. The Rodian was speaking in hushed tones to someone, but Reiden couldn't make out who it was. He could pick up part of the conversation.

"...knew I would likely get caught eventually. Lots of people were bound to be after me. I certainly didn't expect it would be a couple of kids." The Rodian laughed.

*Ah, fwec,* Reiden cursed to himself. *Somehow he knows that we were the ones trying to track him down. But how did he know if he's been in hiding?* Any further thought was cut short when Reiden heard Xyden's guest reply.

"Yeah, well the money was too good to pass up. But avoiding the need to split it is always good. And since I'm getting paid by you now, that's fine with me. Money is money, after all." A familiar voice said.

*That sounds like Morenn...but it couldn't be,* Reiden thought. He spotted a door nearby and went to open it, moving inside. No longer limited by the view of the window, he saw the full space of the warehouse. He stared in disbelief at the sight of his friend standing there with their target.

But he hadn't been as quiet as he had thought. The two occupants turned and spotted him. Xyden swore and took off running. Morenn ran towards Reiden, drawing his knife.

"You shouldn't have come here, Reiden," the Nautolan snarled as he charged.

Reiden shook his head and readied himself. He spun on a heel and kicked the blade from his friend's hand, following up with a swift punch to his gut. The boy staggered and fell down, winded.

"How could you do this, Morenn?" Reiden questioned, drawing his blaster and pointing it at his friend.

“The money was too good to pass up, but I didn’t want to split it anymore. I could do so much with all those credits. I wouldn’t have to live like this anymore!” Morenn yelled in response.

The Nautolan got into a crouch and launched himself at Reiden. The two fell to the ground, struggling for control of the blaster. Reiden refused to let go. Amid the tussle, his hand tightened on the grip and the trigger was pulled. A bolt seared out of the barrel and Reiden pulled himself away checking himself for any damage. But there was none. He glanced at Morenn and saw a hole in his chest. Reiden sank to his knees, distraught. He took Morenn’s hand in his and promised his friend that everything would be fine.

It was a lie. The poor boy was already dead. Rage and sorrow clashed within Reiden. He hadn’t meant to kill his friend, but it was almost unavoidable. Morenn was determined to stop Reiden, so it was either kill or be killed. Hot tears streamed down his face as he dropped his friend’s lifeless hand to the ground and stood. In a daze, he left the warehouse and made his way home. He had wanted the credits from the job before. But now, all he wanted was to forget all about the night’s events and put it behind him, never looking back.