

"My not sure my gettin' this right. Meesa want to *helpin'* dee Odiners, and yousa speekin' my to *joinin'* Iron Legion?"

"Yes," Alethia answered, massaging the part of her skull over the spot where she was sure an aneurism *must* be occurring. *By every god in every star in the galaxy, go become Grand Master if that gets you to not be my problem.* "You see, Agent Binks, despite your short time working with the Odanite Expeditionary Forces, you have demonstrated an exceptional talent for destroying complex, difficult, and *expensive* machinery."

"Oh, thankee missa Archenksova!"

"Yes. That's a wonderful thing. We are all so very glad to have discovered that."

"So yousa be wantin' me to joinin' Iron Legion as bombad doubler agent!" The creature, shrivelled with age and hunched over a wooden cane — spattered with lubricants, blood, and what Alethia hoped *animal* feces — was inexplicably even more annoying when it was happy.

Archenksova forced herself to smile and enthusiastically punch the air. "That's right, bombad Special Agent Binks of the Sentinel Network!" Her mouth filled with the noxious taste of barely suppressed bile as she put a hand on the Gungan's should and steered him out into the hanger. "There's no time to waste. We'd best get you to your ship. It's a very long flight to Brotherhood territory. A very long flight, so very, very far away from me."

"Oh mooney mooney, deesa gonna be BIG adventure! My gonna make you happy camper!" Jar Jar screeched at nobody in particular as he attempted to clamber into the cockpit of the rusted out Z-95 headhunter Alethia had reserved for him. "Whoopsie daisy!" he continued as he slipped, fell backward out of the cockpit and tumbled head over heels down the length of the snubfighter's nose. His cane flew into the air, spinning over itself repeatedly before it landed, point first, on what looked to Alethia like the hyperdrive ignition.

"Wow," she muttered to herself. "Good thing the hyperdrive doesn't work—" She was cut off by a high-pitched whine from the Z-95's engines. *Oh, kriff.*

"Wooooo, my almost land on head!" Jar Jar squealed, bouncing up to his feet directly in front of the fighter's nose. "That be beeeery bad a cause of the brain damage my havin' already. Hey space fighter, what's yousa makin' all dat noise for?"

With a violent shudder, the Z-95 lurched forward, hurling itself from a cold stop into hyperspace. The force pulled everyone and everything else forward into its wake, but Alethia quickly recovered. She was just in time to see the greasy pink mist swirling around where the Gungan had been standing before the fighter had hit him at roughly the speed of light.

"Iode! I thought you told me the hyperdrive on that ship was *broken!*"