

Sencara peered through the scope of her A280-CFE Rifle configuration. The forces of the damned Brotherhood could be seen moving throughout the terrain of the Badlands. They were drawing closer to Axio slowly, but surely. She shifted her scope over the landscape, trying to decide which target to take out. A particular Rodian, dressed in red-trimmed gray armor seemed to stick out from the rest. The alien was much like the others, but he had removed his helmet to examine it more closely. Biting her tongue in anticipation, the Weapons Specialist lined up the center of his head with the crosshairs of her scope. Her finger hovered over the trigger for a moment as she allowed the moment to linger just before she delivered hot death.

“You might want to be careful with that thing.”

The words pulled the Umbaran from her target with a jerk. She did not pull the trigger, instead whirling from her sniper’s perch toward the speaker. Before her eyes registered the now-revealing scarred human standing before her, the woman had already brought her sidearm up to bear on the intrusive party. As the last shimmer disappeared, she saw the man’s eyes widen.

“Hey now, that really isn’t much better, girly.” Brown eyes flitted from weapon to specialist and back again. “There are far better things you could be doing with your time, you know.” The man stretched out a hand with the barest subtlety, dragging his finger sideways in the air. Then the facts clicked together for the woman as her weapon was shoved sideways by an unseen force. With effort, she brought her weapon back to bear on the Sadowan to find she was staring down the barrel of a modified pistol. It’s form was roughly recognizable, if only for old holovids of the Galactic Civil War: it was the smuggler-preferred DL-44.

“Is that really your gamble?” The Mercenary eyed the weapon with feigned disdain. “What is it with you men, always thinking you have to show how big your blaster is?”

The man opened his mouth, his face changing from a flash of anger, to bemusement, then to a grim determination. “I don’t need to show off. I am already on the winning side, anyhow.”

The woman briefly entertained the idea of continuing the banter. Instead, she pulled the trigger of her sidearm with two fingers. In an atypical show of speed, the man twisted just out of the way of the shot, singeing a tuft of hair for his trouble. The blaster pistol was thrown aside with an unsuppressed yelp. She saw the man grasp at the ground as he appeared to slip. As the man fell, she felt the sting of sand thrown into her eyes. The woman brought a hand up to try to clear the obstruction, hearing a hearty laugh as she did so.

It took but a few moment to clear her sight, but when she did the man was again gone. The training that they had all received had made it quite clear just how dangerous these Brotherhood thugs were. They all had access to the Force in ways that the Technocrats, and by extension the Collective, could only combat using mechanical or chemical enhancements.

Sencara eyeballed the pilfered scanner that she carried with her. There was no movement tracked by the device. There had been some word about infiltrators amongst the treacherous Brotherhood. This man appeared to be playing with her. That was not a prospect she cared for in the least.

“You know, there is an old quote about this. I believe it was an old Alderaanian philosopher that stated ‘a man who runs from hardship will know nothing but.’ I suppose you believe your going to kill me. Hell, you might. You might even survive today. You may continue back to your Brotherhood, by some miracle of your so-called Force. But the thing is, that at the end of the day, you are still a coward.”

“Ah.” A single word sounded from behind A'theri. The loud snap-hiss of a lightsaber shortly preceded an unbelievable pain that began in her back and blossomed through her chest. Looking down, the Raider saw an icy-blue, almost sapphire-hued energy blade poking out from her chest. Bugged eyes turned to look at Bentre Stahoes as he smirked at the woman. “And an old Corellian once shot first.” A second snap-hiss sounded as the Sith Battlelord brought his second weapon around in a sweeping motion. The attack cleaved cleanly through Sencara's neck.

As the corpse toppled to the hard stone of the sniper's perch, Bentre smiled. “Or so the old stories say.” He deactivated the first weapon before clipping it to his belt. With one weapon away, the Sadowan Proconsul pulled the commlink from his belt. “Iron Wolf to Retributor,” he paused, momentarily hoping that he got the designation right, before he continued, “that is one more sniper down. You are free to join the party anytime.”

“Affirmative, Iron Wolf. We will be bringing the cavalry in shortly.”

“Safe flying out there.” Bentre nodded, despite knowing he went unseen over the commlink. His well-wishes were met with two clicks. Recognizing the nearly-silent affirmative, the Proconsul returned the commlink to its place at his side. This was one small victory, but the day had yet to be won. This was doubtlessly the start of a very, very long day for the Brotherhood. A day, he promised himself, that would end in victory one way or another.

Somehow.