

It had been three days since the shuttle carrying the survivors of the destruction of the *Torana* had lifted off from the surface of Nancora, since he'd chosen to stay behind and cover their retreat. In those three days he'd hid when he could, fought when he couldn't, but the lack of food and sleep was beginning to take a toll on his aging body. He'd managed to scrounge a ration bar here or there but his water was getting low, as was his patience.

He had engaged at least two dozen soldiers from both the Technocratic Guild and the Iron Legion. His DL-44 was empty, his EL-16 close behind and he was down to his last flash bang. The old Mandalorian found himself in the remains of one of Nancora's old factories, the steel beams criss crossing its open spaces looking like the skeleton of some giant beast. Close by he could hear the sounds of footfalls and shouted orders as the enemy once again closed on his position.

*These guys are like a bad credit* he thought to himself.

Hiding behind the rusted remains of what looked like a smelting unit Darro chanced a look around its corner and spotted his pursuers. A small squad of six Techo Guild soldiers led by one of the biggest Devaronians, a Techno Guild commander named Kerwin Drake, the old man had ever seen in his long and colorful life. It was pretty clear they had no idea where he was and the Mando was willing to use every advantage he had, no matter how slight, to get one up on the enemy.

Pulling his last remaining flash bang from a pouch on his hip he said "Here goes nothin," as he thumbed the activation button and deftly tossed the explosive in front of the enemy squad. The grenade exploded with a deafening crack that echoed through the cavernous factory stunning the Devaronian and his men momentarily. The old Human sprang into action, emerging from behind the old smelter firing his rifle, picking off Techno soldiers with ease. The six grunts fell in quick succession, felled by shots to the head or chest, but as Zhen aimed down the sights at the big Devaronian and squeezed the trigger nothing happened.

"Oh karabast," he swore as he dropped the weapon to the ground and charged at the enemy like a mad bull.

*I can't believe this is gonna work* Darro thought to himself moments before he found himself off his feet, flying headlong through the air, before he hit the ground with a thud. Evidently the Devaronian had recovered faster than the old man had anticipated and, using Darro's own momentum, had thrown him aside like a child's plaything.

"Well that didn't work," the Mandalorian said quietly to himself.

Darro rose to his feet and turned to face the enemy just as the end of an electrostaff swung around and thumped into his gut. Even with his armor the blow hit like a sledgehammer, knocking him back as the breath exploded from his lungs. He hit the ground and slid a few feet

along the dusty permacrete coming to rest against a metal beam, his breath came in ragged gulps.

“Why do you fight for them Mandalorian? What have the Jedi ever done for you?” asked the demonic looking alien.

Without waiting for an answer he crouched down and clamped the hand of his cybernetic arm around Darro’s throat, lifting the big Human to his feet with ease. As the hand squeezed tighter Darro struggled to breath, his hands clawing at the metal arm and face of Drake as he tried to break free. As his vision began to blur he lashed out with his left leg, the blow connecting with the aliens groin, dropping him like a bad habit. The hand around the Mandalorians throat vanished and he could breath once again.

Stumbling over to the Devaronian, writhing in pain on the ground, Darro said “I fight for them because they’re my friends.”

Darro cocked his leg back and unloaded a powerful kick to Kerwin’s head, his helmet flying off from the blows force.

“I fight for them because they don’t care what i’ve done in the past,” he continued unloading another kick to the alien’s torso. “I fight for them because they are some of the best people i’ve ever met.” He kicked his opponent a third time before he said “Now get up.”

Drake rose slowly to his feet, black blood gushing from a clearly broken nose. Darro pulled his vibroblade, holding the weapon in a reverse grip, and motioned for his adversary to bring it on. The devil reached behind his back and pulled a Z6 Riot Control Baton, spinning the weapon a few times before advancing on the Mandalorian. Kerwin swung but Zhen managed to dodge to the right, barely. Drake swung again but again the old Human managed to avoid the blow. Darro slashed out with his blade but the weapon merely skidded along the metallic surface of Kerwin’s artificial arm.

Drake swung the club like weapon again catching Darro in the side with a forceful blow that knocked the big Human off his feet, sending him tumbling along the permacrete for several feet. Zhen rose and readied himself as Drake advanced. The Devaronian swung his baton again but Darro ducked under it, slashing his blade across Kerwin’s thigh as he did so. The vibroblade left a deep cut across Drake’s thigh hobbling him slightly. He let out a cry, anger mixed with pain, and attacked again. Kerwin lashed out three times in quick succession, each blow coming closer to finding its mark, until the final swing connected with Darro’s hand knocking the blade from his grip.

Drake swung again, catching the Mandalorian in the chest, knocking him to the ground. The big alien dropped his baton and straddled Darro’s chest. Drake wrenched the Mandalorians helmet from his head, tossing it aside like a piece of trash. With a cruel smile Kerwin balled his fists and

began to punch the old Human in the face. Darro's lip split, his nose broke, deep gashes opened up above his eyes.

*This is how i'm gonna die*, he thought to himself. *Beaten to death on some nothing world.*

But then something, some animal part of his brain, screamed no. Almost on instinct the old Human's arms moved, latching onto Drake's approaching blow, and clamped down with whatever strength they had left. The Mandalorian twisted the limb, hearing a satisfying crunch, as the Devaronian's organic arm snapped. With his own cybernetic arm Darro threw the hardest punch he could muster, the blow striking Drake in the jaw, knocking him over. With a groan of pain Darro slowly dragged himself over to Kerwin and sat on his chest. Grabbing a hold of Kerwin's horns Darro began to slam the Devaronians head into the permacrete floor again and again.

A small pool of blood began to form under Drake's head, a wet thwack echoing through the building each time his head struck the ground. With a guttural roar Darro slammed his head into the ground one last time, Drake's left horn breaking off in the process. Darro was breathing heavy while Drake was barely breathing at all. Darro knew he should capture Drake, bring him in for interrogation, but his rage addled mind had other ideas. With every ounce of strength he had left in his body he thrust the broken horn into Drake's neck, the Devaronian's eyes going wide in panic as the horn punched through his flesh. Thick black blood flowed freely from the wound as Kerwin took a few last gurgling breaths and died. Exhausted, and in no small amount of pain, the old Mandalorian rolled off the now dead Devaronian and passed out.