

Dolash's strike team had a complete disadvantage. They were outgunned, outmanned and utterly overwhelmed deep within enemy territory. In a battle this pitched, the former intelligence agent turned Mandalorian Gray Jedi would advocate retreat, and then only a regroup after further intelligence was either uncovered or someone came up with a better plan. Unfortunately, being on the field didn't provide the luxury of planning like sitting in a command bunker did, or nestled in a command chair aboard the bridge of the *Affliction*.

Hopefully the other strike teams on the front and beyond were having better luck. Dolash grimaced at the enemy before him. To paint a picture, he had ordered the remaining members of his team to continue the mission. Instead, he was here holding off an enemy way beyond his capabilities. The Twi'lek mused, *I never used to be so suicidal*.

The green tinted, horny man before him was as much machine as Devaronian. He was huge though. He had arms and legs built like tree trunks. Like the trees you would find on Kashyyyk, actually. "Your Dark Jedi Brotherhood has failed you. Your leadership has betrayed you. Your death will be quick but meaningless, Jedi."

Dolash chuckled as he stretched his arm out before him and curling it into a fist. "Hahaha, that's where you're wrong, my friend!"

The Mandalorian Jedi's outstretched fist opened and wiggled mystically, a blaster from his belt floating up as he snatched it out of the air and pointed it towards Kerwin. Dolash squinted his eyes, his face growing hard, "Lasers... set to kill."

The shot from the blaster seemed to explode as a crescendo to the quiet chamber the two combatants stood in. It echoed loudly, announcing its deadly intent as it left the barrel. Unfortunately, the shot wildly missed Kerwin and the moment of fierce lethality seemed to be expelled.

Kerwin Drake guffawed, "Wait, can you not aim?"

Dolash shifted his stance, seething indignance, "Everyone has their off days! Fine, if you're so good, try to shoot me with your arm cannon!"

Kerwin's one eyebrow lifted quizzically, "My... arm cannon?"

"Yes," Dolash spoke matter-of-factly, "That cyborg arm? I've read all of the holo comics, I know the tortured scientist who mangled your body *had* to implant it with all kinds of deadly weapons."

"Oh... you're a moron." Kerwin seemed to reconcile with his train of thought as his bottom jaw returned to its normal location instead of hanging loosely.

Dolash scowled and unclipped his lightsaber from its place on his fanny pack. "No... *you're* a moron!"

The mint creme Devaronian grabbed for the helmet at his side and placed it upon his shoulders as it satisfyingly gripped at the undersheath below it and clicked into place. The metallic vocoder within altered his voice, "I refuse to carry this on further. Time to die."

Well, hopefully I kept him distracted long enough for the rest of my team to get out of here, Dolash ignited the teal blade from his lightsaber and lifted it above his head, pointing it towards his opponent as he stood sideways. His deadly opponent spun a electrostaff with ease as he swung it waist height at Dolash's exposed lower body.

The Twi'lek swung his blade down, knocking the electrostaff back but not without some difficulty. Dolash couldn't help but admire the man's brutal strength, as threatening to the Tarenti as it might be. His lightsaber spun efficiently, its movements reminiscent of a whirlwind. Each one of Kerwin's strikes were meant with a resounding buzz of electrostaff on lightsaber. Dolash suspected that his opponent was impatient and bound to make a trademark muscle head mistake.

An opening. Dolash swung his offhand out towards Kerwin. The cyborg appeared startled, cementing the possibility of his defeat. With a neat flick of his wrist, a hidden blade protruded and sliced at Kerwin's face. It slid neatly between armor plates, slicing into the undergarment beneath. The familiar resistance of it popping through flesh was synchronized with a mechanical shriek from Kerwin. The hulk of a man swung at Dolash with a free hand. The hard glove connected on Dolash's chin.

Shocked, the Twi'lek fell back. In that moment, Kerwin raised his hand once more and let loose a rocket aimed at Dolash. Barely two meters apart, the move was bold but if they were to trade blows, the armored man would be more likely to walk from the explosion as the cloth covered Jedi. With a mere moment to spare, Dolash summoned the Force as he propelled himself away with one foot. It amplified the force behind the push and launched him just high enough to escape the brunt of the blast.

"A-ha!" Dolash exclaimed as he landed back upon the ground, "I knew you had a arm cannon!"

A little bit of blood seeped through the wound in the crevice of the Technocrat's shoulder and neck. The lifelong soldier was not even shaken by the wound though. It was only a superficial wound, as Dolash could not manage to get the carotid. His wrist blade retracted back into its chamber and he once more angled his lightsaber. The two combatants studied each other, as if seeing each other for the first time. Dolash suspected that Kerwin was finally taking him seriously.

“Poison,” Kerwin exclaimed, before continuing, “I underestimated you and I apologize. You’re not the typical Jedi assassin, I’ll admit. I don’t normally resort to this but you’re one of the special cases.”

Dolash felt a pang of fear, knowing that Kerwin Drake was certainly not a boaster. Every one of his instincts fired off systematically. *I need to stay cool, he’s a big guy, but the poison will still shut him down enough for me to strike. It just might take longer. Stay cool, Dolash....*

Without warning, the armor clad man rose his arm, letting loose a volley of rockets that shook the building. Dolash looked up in horror, realizing he was going to destroy the 20 meter above ceiling. He quickly scanned the room in attempt to recognize the escape route. Naturally, Kerwin was between him and the exit.

“You might call us zealots,” Kerwin’s words were as poisonous as the inhibiting serum coated on Dolash’s hidden blade, however much more lethal, “That means you merely do not understand, and how could you? You do understand one thing, however. That everyday we do this, if or if we don’t fight, that we choose death. We’re so scared, but not the same type of scared as the first times we tasted the bitterness of choosing death. We’re honed killers and our fear manifests completely differently.”

Dolash shouted, “Kriffin-, ugh!! You’re crazy, man!”

The mauve Jedi used the force to launch himself towards the exit. As he began to pass Kerwin he felt an extra dose of adrenaline kick in. Then he felt something hard strike his side with enough force to send him careening back towards the ground. Using his above average athletics, he attempted to somersault his way back to his feet but his sore body resisted and instead he just tumbled further before getting back up.

The shaking and rumbling became more intense as rock and metal fell from the ceiling. Rubble as big as Dolash struck the ground all around them. Suddenly, he heard a fierce shout as a massive boulder landed upon Kerwin. The Technocrat was covered from waist down in rubble that would crush most people. The young Gray Jedi saw his chance for escape, running with rabid intent towards the exit. Suddenly, remorse flooded his psyche.

Dolash rushed towards Kerwin. Looking down upon his beaten opponent, he almost thought he understood. He shook the thought from his head though. As a mercenary he had learned countless times over and over where idolatry and blind loyalty led, and none of them were pretty. Due to the CNS depressant properties of the drug Kerwin had been administered with, the pain he was experiencing was intensely dulled along with the effects of shock. Reigniting his lightsaber, Dolash sliced off the cyborg arm from Drake.

Struggling, he used the Force to lift the chunk of ceiling off of the limp man. It would slow his escape down greatly, but there was too much potential to having captured one of the enemy

leaders and bringing him in for interrogation. Dolash dragged the man behind him, cursing the difficulty of the task. The Tarenti Jedi always was a sucker for a damsel in distress.

