***The Hunt***

An HMR Production

Exert Written by

Battlemaster DarkHawk

#264

**Kar Alabrek**

**Tarthos**

The fog had rolled in, very heavily, like a thick paste across the cityscape. The crisp air of the season accentuated the landscape, making Kar Alabrek more menacing in a picturesque setting. To the layperson, the city was just that, but those that can see, truly see the city is on a path of corruption and turmoil. Things will only get worse before they get better. A sense of turmoil on a scale not seen by many, acts of malfeasance was on the rise. The seed of jealousy and conjecture had been planted, longtime friends and allies are now poised to kill one another. This hatred will ravage the city, it's just a matter of time.

The Cathar and the Chiss SEO Police officers scanned their surroundings, the cantina was filled with the city’s finest criminals. Muggers, thieves, murders frequented the establishment. That was just the political personnel making their comings and goings. The Cathar and the Chiss were at separate ends of the bar. The Chiss woman, very attractive was seemingly paying no attention to the propaganda of insults and pick-up lines. One man made the mistake of sliding his hand over the small of her back as she straddled the bar stool. She nonchalantly slid her arm around the man’s wandering arm, pulling him closer to her. The last thing going through his mind was the bar as she slammed his head into the edge of the structure. The spray of blood whisked across her face and the man slumped to the floor. She wiped herself clean as the other patrons roared with laughter.

There was one solitary man sitting in the corner, he seemed oblivious to the commotion taking place. As a group of the city’s desirables started to congregate around the woman. The Cathar made his move, the speed, and strength of the officer was commendable. He sifted through the group of men like a tsunami, they did not stand a chance. Before the last man hit the floor the Chiss woman in a very sarcastic voice, “I did not need your help CJ.”

CJ brushed himself off, “Zahara who said chivalry is not dead.”

Zahara grabbed her belongings and just sneered at her CO, “Come on your highness, our boy left out the back as you protected my honor.”

The two SEO officers rushed out the back and into the connecting alley. About twenty-five yards down the alley to the South, a clump of black clothing dressed across the alley floor. The two officers rolled the wet clump of clothing over only to find their perp, freshly knocked out with a small piece of parchment paper rolled in his mouth. The note simply read 0330.

“Who do you think did this?” asked Zahara. CJ held up the small piece of paper “Who do you think?”

The Chiss just rolled her eyes again as she patted down the perp. There in his coat pocket was a bag of clean uncut death sticks, included in that bag was an address.

“Idiot was probably so high he had to write his drop off down…pathetic.”

“Not everyone can be as organized as you Z, course the OCD of your life probably takes precedence.” the Cathar stated with a big grin.

The two made their way out of the alley and flagged down a taxi towards their first rendezvous. CJ gave the “cabby” the address and off the sped into the foggy night. The Tarthos Trade Center district was the destination. The two SEO officers exited the cab and started making their way within the busy district. A small child ran square into the Cathar officer, “Excuse me, young Miss, I apologize.” CJ said most graciously. The young girl just laughed and ran off into the busy crowd. The Cathar felt the small roll of paper in his palm, “*Damn the girl is good…”* The paper just had an arrow drawn on it pointing up. CJ stopped and looked around, then looked up, High above the city street the anomaly caught his keen eye. A small red flash blinking in sequence three, two, one. CJ pushed Zahara to her left and led her into what looked to be an office building. They entered the elevator and the Cathar hit the top floor button, upon hitting the top floor they found the roof access and walked the flight of steps and emerged onto the roof.

As the two made their way to the roof’s edge the raspy voice caught them before they peered over the edge.

“Did you like your present?”

Both SEO Officers spun around guns quickly drawn. The Chiss out of sheer instinct squeezed off a round and red blaster fire illuminated the rooftop. The wraith standing before them simply raised a hand and the blaster bolt ricoched off and hit the base of an antenna array.

“Damn, why do you do that?” screamed the Chiss.

“I am not the one who fired, officer you did. Maybe you need to be more vigil in your surroundings.” DarkHawk said.

The two officers holstered their weapons, “Yes I liked our present.” CJ said to the black-clad figure. Seems we were right though, he had a fresh batch of these hybrid death sticks, but we got a lead.” said the Cathar.

CJ handed DarkHawk the scrap of paper that was in the bag of narcotics. A blank stare and no emotion expressed as his eyes gazed over the paper. “These death sticks are too pure for any street hood dealer around here, the supplier has to be a chemist of some sort or at least access to one. These things are plaguing the streets again. Just when you thought the Black Sun triad was out of the market, right?”

“Possibly, but why would the Black Sun start now, seems too early after all the dust has not settled from Senator Mansfield exposing their operations.”

“Possibly, but word on the streets this is someone new, and is like you…” Zahara said seriously.

“What do you mean like me?” asked DarkHawk.

“You know, all spooky and a Force user. Eyewitness accounts said that the individual was seen wearing a lapel pin of your Brotherhood.” Zahara continued.

“Impossible, no one in the Brotherhood would deal in street-level narcotics,” Takagari said angrily.

“Don’t kill the messenger, just relaying what intel we have...and these are not street level narcotics.” CJ abruptly cut in.

Takagari reached out with the Force and felt the Cathar was speaking in truths. The thought infuriated the Sith and he could not fathom anyone in the Brotherhood being attached to this. But these are turbulent times right now. So with the rise of dividing forces, one could easily slip under the radar of the Brotherhood and establish themselves as a prime supplier.

“I will look into this,” said the Battlemaster.

“Not without us!” exclaimed Zahara.

“No! Continue your purge of the streets, if this really is connected to the Brotherhood, it will not be any place for either of you.” The inflection of Takagari’s voice had conviction behind it.

No worries, we will continue our sweeps and we will relay any new intel to you, please do the same…” CJ said. He spoke too late as the figure that was once there no gone into the night.

“Asshole” whispered Zahara.

“Come on lets hit the streets,” said the Cathar.

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**Kar Albrek**

**Tarthos**

**Dragon Starport**

The Dargon Starport was a constant surge of incoming and outgoing ships, shuttles, city supply runs and most of all people. If a deal was to go down then this would be the place to do it. The Sith’s speeder blazed through incoming traffic, horns screeched as the black-clad wraith zig-zagged through the busy streets. DarkHawk stashed his speeder behind a construction sign and started traversing the side of the building to get a more tactical look of the surroundings.

The fog still thick as mud hindered any kind of distance reconnaissance. Though it did not take long for this recon to go array. From the East, three shuttles bearing Brotherhood and Talon Force insignia approached and troops disembarked the shuttles and into the streets. The crowd now screaming and scattering like insects, the militants made their way through the crowd and towards the very location DarkHawk was staking out.

The Sith without hesitation made his way down the from the rooftop and scampered into an alley. He stayed in the shadows and moved as close to the end of the alley as he could. Talon troops were moving in cadence and surrounding the adjacent building. A procrastinating Talon troop made the mistake of getting to close to the alleyway and was unaware of the predicament he was about to be in. As the trooper walked by a shadowy arm reached out and snatched the man by the collar and slammed him up against the wall. The man’s eyes were as wide as saucers, DarkHawk had a hand over the man’s mouth.

“Make a sound and I snap your neck…understood?” growled the Sith.

The man nodded.

“Why are you here?”

Takagari slightly removed his hand from the trooper’s mouth. The fear in the man was a familiar and comforting feeling to the Sith. “We..we…we been ordered to flush out all rebels and bring them to the Alabrek Castle.” Sweat poured from the man’s forehead before he could blink the elbow smash sent the man into unconsciousness.

“*Damn it…”*

No time to waste DarkHawk knew he had to get into that building and shake out what he needed before the Talon forces ruined everything. The Sith channeled his connection to the force and cloaked himself as he maneuvered past the front barrage of Talon forces. Into the building undetected and into the stairwell. Quickly racing up the steps the sounds of some rustling was taking place two floors up. Quietly the Sith made his way and slowly opened the stairwell door. In an instant DarkHawk could feel the presence of another Force user. And if Takagari could feel that presence, he could be felt as well.

*“Need to make this quick…”*

The corridor was dimly lit, which was an asset to the Sith. He clung to the wall making his way down. Talon troopers were already making their way into the building and into the stairwell. The double doors at the end of the hallway was the target locale. DarkHawk could see shadows moving behind those doors.

*“Time to make an…”*

He felt the familiar connection as he started to spin from harm's way. The stock of the gun came soaring from the right. The lanyard that was the firearms shoulder strap, slapped Takagari across the face as it sailed by. Continuing the spin DarkHawk swept the legs out from under the gunman and drove a fist hard to the face. Blood poured from the man’s nose and the Sith was back to ready position.

DarkHawk held up an outstretched hand, focusing on the double doors in front of him. Hinges snapped and metal wrinkled as the Sith focused all of himself. In fluid motion ripping the doors from the wall with a downward sweep of his arm. With two quick steps, the Battlemaster sprinted then dove thru the mangled new opening. The first attack came from a frontal charge. The Sith quickly sidestep and averted the lunge. The shimmer in the blade reflected just enough off the poorly lit room. The Equite timed the straight edge blade attack and hooked the assailant’s knife arm, twisting his hips and carrying the man’s own momentum into a suplex. DarkHawk slammed the body hard into the floor. The man’s breathe left his lungs, and the knife arm snapped in two with the impact. The man shrieked in pain, rolling forward the man’s scream was no less muffled when the next attack came.

The Trandoshan that hit the Equite was big. As per most Transdoshans, not known for finesse but more bar room brawlers. DarkHawk slammed into a corner wall as his scaly skinned friend rolled past him. The Equite rolled forward and sprung to his feet and started making his way towards the slow-moving reptile. As the Trandoshan made his way to a prone position, the Sith was coming down on the reptile with a knee to its massive skull. The knee of the Battlemaster drove the reptiles head back to the floor, the sound of bones crunching to dust followed suit.

The last attack came from the rear and without hesitation, DarkHawk dropped to his left knee spinning to the outside of the attack. Simultaneously unsheathing his saber and igniting the cobalt-colored blade to life. In one precise motion, the Equite sliced thru his attacker's upper torso severing his body in two. In an equally precise and fast motion, the saber was de-energized and sheathed back to DarkHawk’s utility belt.

The Equite surveyed the scene, only to find cases of the hybrid drug. As he approached the stacks of evidence his connection to the Force washed over him. Off to his left near the line of windows, the figure stood. Clandestinely dressed, the only visible object was a silver lapel pin bearing the insignia of the Brotherhood.

Talon troops now barged through the entryway, and with the second of distraction, the figure was gone. Troopers were surrounding the Battlemaster at this point, demanding for the Sith to relinquish his weapon. Even under worse conditions that was something that would not happen.

“Make a hole!” barked the Command Sergeant Major.

“You there, I see you been busy here!” he screamed approaching the Sith.

“Apprehending your traitors…Sergeant Major.” DarkHawk said motioning to the downed assailants.

“That’s Command Sergeant Major to you..” the crusty old ranger scowled.

The Battlemaster said nothing. He could sense the rangers around him were unsure of what was about to go down. As the Sergeant Major was finding himself face to face with the Sadowan, a very unfamiliar feeling came over the ranger. As he approached the Battlemaster, he stopped abruptly and order his men to stand down. DarkHawk took that moment to pull a smoke grenade out of one of his pouches, pulling the pin the incendiary device hit the floor and ignited. The room was instantly filled with smoke, the Equite bolted for the window crashing through the glass and into the night.

The Sadowan made it to his stashed speeder bike, just as he was about to get on his transport, a familiar voice beckoned from the shadows…

“DarkHawk, we need to talk…”

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