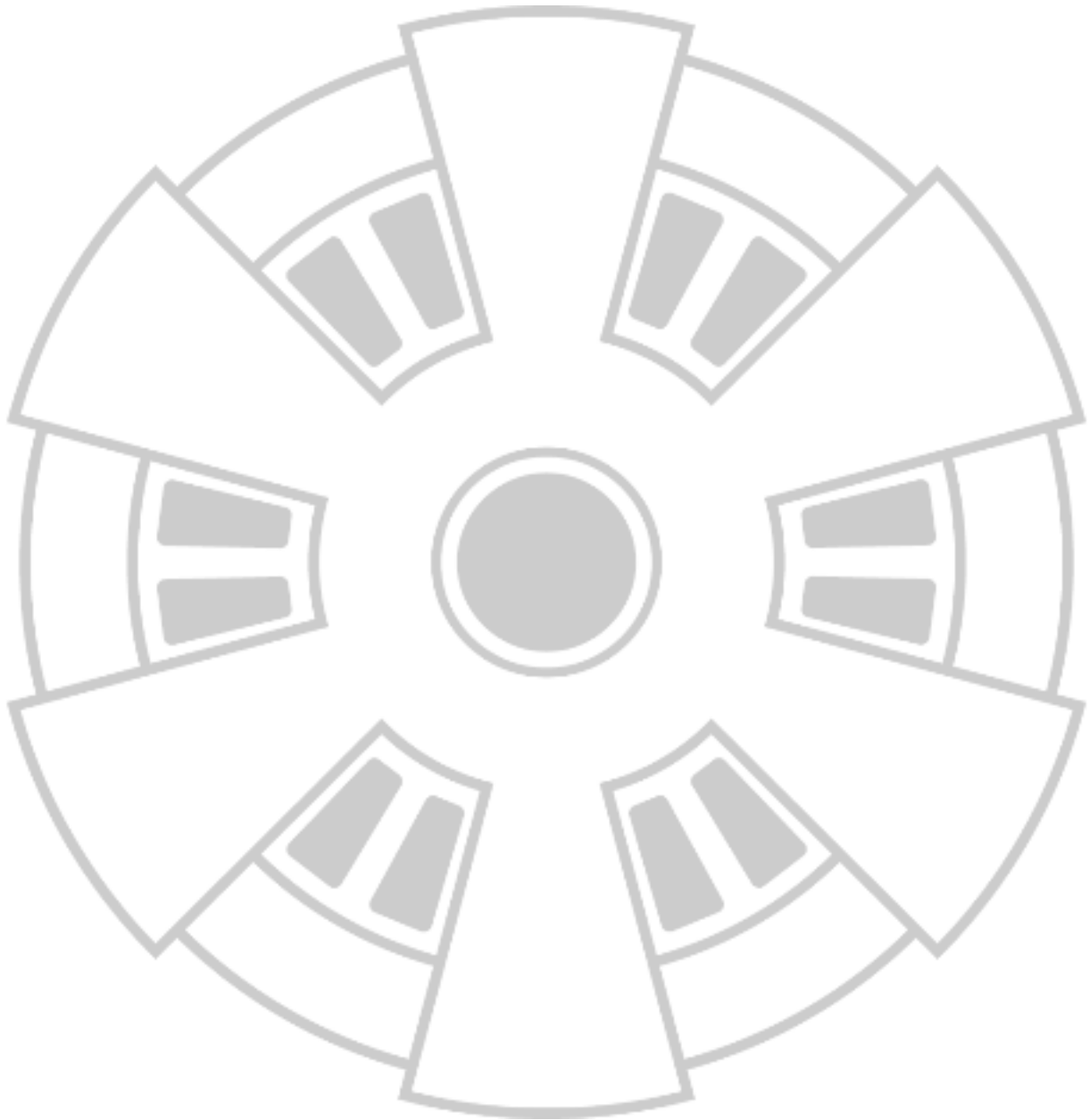


The Janitor



By Aylin Sajark

Aylin had no idea what she was thinking when she signed up to do this. Mission command assured her she would be fine, that with her skill getting inside would be easy.. Getting inside hadn't seem to be the hard part, it was getting around that proved to be more difficult. There were guards and the likes everywhere around her and she needed a password for every room she wanted to enter.

'Someone is paranoid around here..' she thought as made her way towards the mess hall.

She had gotten inside as a janitor. Every building needs one and it would have been the easiest way to get around the complex. In a normal situation, that is. This was anything but normal.

"Clearance code CV-34927," Aylin said with a monotone tone.

"Clearance code accepted, enjoy cleaning this mess up," the guard answered her with a pitiless smirk.

Frowning, Aylin entered. The stench hit her and her eyes started to water.

"What the f... happened here?!"

Glancing around there were gruesome, rancid, steaming mounds of unidentifiable food. Liquid spills all over the place, glistening like tar in the low light. In the far corner there was a cleaner droid, wheezing and glitching back and forth greedily in one spot.

"If even the droid gave up.. How am I to get this done?" *And get the information*, she added silently.

Aylin walked over to the droid and put a hand on it, trying to stop it's movements long enough for her to shut it down. It beeped and whirled and stopped moving. With a smirk on her face she swished out her favored tools and started slicing into the droid's core programming.

The droid was a surprisingly good source of information, containing data on the routines of the trainings and when meetings were held. A grin grew on her face when she found out that some areas were off limits for most units. Bingo.

"You've been snooping, little droid."

Satisfied, she inserted some memory chip and activated the droid again. It started up without a hitch and set off to cleaning the mess hall again. And properly this time. Gathering her stuff she got up and walked off to one of the little consoles on the wall, hoping it was still in working order. Upon getting closer look she didn't even dare to touch it with all the goo sticking to it.

"What are they training here? Gamorreans? I bet that that would even be an insult to them..."

Sighing she searched for another way into the system, all the while pretending to be cleaning up as well.

This isn't working. I need to find another way to get the info...

The droid started to move towards the door, a warning light on it blinking that it was completely full. Quickly Aylin grabbed a big can full of junk and followed after the droid, wrinkling her nose at the smell of it. The droid zoomed down a few halls, with Aylin tracing its steps while struggling to keep the can upright. She was happy that she didn't need more clearance codes this time, probably because they were going straight towards the waste disposal. As the droid disappeared into a room, Aylin shoved the can after it. Then, moved further down the hall. Glancing on her datapad she noted a duct that should not be far from where she was standing. With luck, it might lead to the more secure floors. She quickly found it, but to get access would be trickier. People kept coming and going through the hallway, which would getting into it without getting noticed difficult.

"Frack..." she muttered as she walked back to the mess hall. *I need to find a different access point...*

"Hey you! What are you doing here?" an officer yelled after her.

'Crap' she hissed under her breath as she turned around, "I was just returning to the mess hall after doing away with a large can of gunk..."

"You seem to be quite a bit far off from both the mess and the waste disposal." the officer said with a frown.

Aylin grinned sheepishly, "Yeah... I kinda lost track of the cleaning droid. Then got lost. I'm new..."

"Shut it, turn around and get moving before I report your sorry hide," the officer barked.

Taking a step back at the sudden command, Aylin spun on her heels and started to walk down the hallway. The officer followed her and barked a few more orders to her until they were back at the mess hall.

"Now, get back to work. We want a clean mess room before the evening." With that the officer stomped off.

Getting back into the mess hall, Aylin sighed in relief. *That was to close for comfort.*

The cleaner droid was also back and still toiling away, but it looked as if it had made some good progress. Walking past the droid, Aylin grabbed her datapad again and searched for another way to get to the information. She plopped down and immediately regretted it, feeling the icky gooey stuff move against her.

“Gross!” she squealed as she jumped up, “When I’m done with this, I’m taking a bath and never get out of it again!”

Wiping most of the icky stuff away, she got back to the task at hand. She finally found a different way to get the info. It needed some more slicing, her specialty, and for that she needed a bigger terminal. She needed to get out of this room again, but the door wasn’t an option anymore. They would get her locked up again if she tried for sure. Looking around she found a ventilation shaft, hidden behind some of the muck. It was smaller than the duct she found earlier. It would be a cramped fit but it was the best she’d got.

Shoving the muck aside she pried the roster of the duct and crawled into the tight space. Lucky for her, she wouldn’t need to crawl that far, but the narrow space didn’t make it any easier to get forward. It was a painful push, with rivets scrapping at her, but she eventually reached a somewhat wider part and stretched a bit. What a welcome release it was.

“This is getting annoying... Wait, I might have a solution for this.”

Squirming her arm down her body, she grabbed a bottle from her pocket and grinned, “Always keep your lubricants with you.”

Squirting the contents down the shaft she had to crawl through, she now was able to slide down more easily and got to her exit.

“Finally...” she whispered to herself as she glanced into the room. All she could see from this angle was a desk with chair and a few cabinets. There was a dim glow in the room, which suggested the terminal was just below her on the wall.

Carefully she removed the grating and slid a bit further forward, getting a better view of the room, she now saw that the terminal would be around a corner in the room. Without a sound she dropped herself from the air shaft and moved over towards the terminal. Taking a quick glance towards the door, she fished her slicing tools from her pocket and inserted it into the terminal. The terminal beeped a few times, but then it was hers to do with as she wanted.

“Now let’s see what they are planning in the near future,” Aylin said as she started to type away.

It didn’t take her long to find the more secure data stored on the mainframe. A grin crept over her face as she forced her way into the security system. For her, it was like cutting cake. Lists of files scrolled on her screen, all coded names for whatever they held inside them. A few of them

were less obviously encrypted, but to be safe she copied everything to her datapad. She was just about finished and cleaning up her traces as she heard footsteps near the door.

No! No, no, no, no, nooo! Stay outside! she screamed inwardly and quickly retreated back to the air shaft. Reaching up, she found the edge to be too slippery to get a good hold onto it. In panic she dove under the desk and hid herself as good as she possibly could.

“Hey! Just a sec,” a guy said as the door opened, “I will be with you in a moment.”

Hurried feet were heard through the room and something was snatched up from the desk, before they disappeared again. The door closed and Aylin let out a sigh, not realizing she had held her breath the whole time.

“It’s time to get out of here,” she muttered as she shoved a chair under the air shaft entrance and climbed inside. Sliding through the shaft she quickly got to the wider part and glanced back, wondering how long it would take for the guy to notice the grating missing on the air duct. Quickly she moved further, running out of her applied lubrication the last part was getting harder to crawl through, but she finally got out and replaced the grating on the air duct.

“Glad that is all over now...” she said as she wiped her brow.

The droid was still scrubbing away at the mess, having now cleaned the major part of the room. Aylin grabbed her cleaning cloths and started to wipe the tables clean, having done her infiltration part, she now had to play out her janitor part so she could get out safely.

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“Hey! How did your mission go,” Zehsaa asked as she saw Aylin emerge from the shuttle and looked curiously at the state of her uniform. “Uh... that bad, eh?”

Aylin just looked at her for a moment, before she grabbed the datastick she had transferred the files to during flight, “Here is everything I could find from their secret files, I’m sure there must be something useful between it.”

Zehsaa nodded as she took the datastick from her, “Thank you, I’m sure we can make it up somehow.”

A smirk crept over Aylin’s face, “You can find me in the bathtub, cause I won’t be getting out of there for a long time.”

With that she left, leaving Zehsaa standing there on the platform with a frown on her face.