

Lyra Colony

Kalan Amak burst into the Vizsla command post, dragging a Zygerrian man by the scruff of his neck.

"Mr. Roark. I caught this pile of sithspit watching the perimeter. He had a commlink on him. I think he's a scout."

Declan Roark turned to look at the man as Kalan pushed him down to the floor.

"And who are you?" Declan asked, smoothly.

The Zygerrian stared up at Roark and spat at his feet. "Trip. M'eero Trippani. And I have news for you, Brotherhood scum."

Declan Roark stood and walked forward giving Trip a swift kick in the gut as he passed. Trip gasped for breath while Roark moved to the door of the command post.

"I'm sure the news involves my imminent assassination. We monitor your communications, *Trip*. We know what you are up to. We aren't here for the Principate, the Collective, or the Brotherhood. We're here for credits. And there's plenty to be made in war. So how about you tell me how much your Collective friends are paying you, and I'll see if we can make a deal."

Trip stared up at Declan. "A million. Just to locate you."

"A MILLION? That's impressive. I didn't think I was worth that much."

"It's a million for you and your team. We know you are all here in force. Kill one, the rest will come. Job isn't over until the clans are destroyed. Vizsla is my target."

Kalan drew his pistol and aimed it at Trip's head. "Want me to put a bolt in his brain, boss?"

Roark put his hand on Kalan's pistol and shook his head, a sly grin forming on his face.

"No. I have a much better idea. Our friend says we are worth a million. That means he is probably worth at least that." Roark turned back to Trip. "When are they coming?"

"Now," Trip growled.

"Well then. Let's give them what they came for! They want Clan Vizsla? They'll get it."

Roark turned to Kalan, and said in a voice so quiet nobody but the two of them could hear, "Mr. Amak, take our new friend to the edge of the perimeter. Let him go. Follow him until he links up with the Collective forces. Let them pay him. Then put a bolt in his head and use this—he indicated a bag of thermal mines—on the rest of the Collective fools. Once we hear the mines go off we'll reinforce you."

Kalan nodded and grabbed the duffel bag filled with mines.

"Alright, Mr. Trip. I'm turning myself in. I'm in this for the money, not the war. You promise me that I'll live, you get paid, everyone is happy."

Trip glared at Roark, but nodded.

Kalan led him out of the command post and out to the edge of the perimeter. "You're free to go. I'll be defusing our defense system. Tell your Collective friends we'll go without a fight." Kalan patted him on the back, secretly attaching a tracking device to the Zygerrian's jacket.

Trip took off immediately. Kalan watched as he moved into the wooded area on the outskirts of the perimeter. He then pulled out his datapad and monitored Trip as he moved to a clearing approximately a kilometer away. Kalan took off at a run. He had to emplace the mines quickly, or else the man would be paid and gone before he had a chance to take him down.

It's payday. Kalan laughed as he took off into the woodline.