

He didn't even raise a finger.

The Huntress didn't have a chance to give the order. They were too far away for the attempt to reasonably succeed before she felt his eyes, black as the void and just as unfeeling.

No, that wasn't right. There was hatred behind them, a fire that burned hotter than the stars. She barely had the chance to signal to her sisters before the weapons dropped around him, blades screaming from their slumber, seething toward them. It drove her mad, wondering how he had seen them, how he had time to even react. Something trickled in the back of her mind, a familiarity with the name of her target, something she had read in a dossier somewhere before. She was supposed to have been guarded by a former clone soldier, one with beasts and a mask, not whoever this was.

It was chaos. Chaos and fear.

The sabers carved through them like grass, precise strokes and speed that cut her sisters down. She pressed past the fear, beyond the sight of her fallen, letting purpose drive her beyond the static snares of lightsaber blades and flesh connecting, past the muffled cries of her sisters. She glimpsed around. Four blades whirled through the landing zone, but none in her vicinity. She turned away as another of her sisters fell, seeing that she alone was positioned, she alone had the opportunity to complete the mission. Her fingers found strength in her bow, the non-conductive guard on the plasma string comforting her fingers as she drew it back, as her eye sought the target.

She was smiling.

The woman smiled at her, at her impending death. She crossed her mind again, remembering the orders, the images of the Sadow Proconsul. It had to be her. The faint breeze moved her long coat, black and leathery, long auburn hair drifting along with it. There was no mistake. Then why was she smiling?

That was a thought for afterward.

Exhaling, she loosed the string, felt the bow hum, the thin violet bolt flashing forward, seeking the heart of her prey. She barely moved, a half smirk on her face as the bolt stormed toward her.

Until it didn't.

The bolt stilled, frozen in midair, little specks of unconstrained plasma flickering away from it. The sound of metal hitting the decks around the huntress jarred her senses, the lightsaber hilts falling inanimate with the sudden shift of attention. She raised the weapon to her eye again,

only to feel it ripped away from her as he flung his hand to the side, flicking his wrist to call one of the hilts from the deck.

Her mind assembled the clues quickly, as the purple blade erupted in his hand. Her target wasn't just another Proconsul. She was the Lady Keibatsu which meant...

"Who are you?"

He raised his hand, the metallic prosthetic opening as she felt the air thicken around her. There was a deep sound, a vibration within the world as she felt herself dragged toward him, her boots scraping against the deck. He didn't answer. It didn't matter. She knew him.

His name was a war chant, a song for the afterlife. He was an avatar, of vengeance and strife.

Her throat fell into his hand with a start, fingers starting to close as her mind began to spin. Her hand flailed backwards, reaching for the gilded vibroknuckler at the small of her back. She felt the cold metal beneath her fingertips only a moment before the heat at her shoulder. She blinked, and the blade moved back away, the violet casting shadows across eyes that could not have been darkened any further by rage.

She heard her arm hit the floor as she saw the saber flow beneath her, heat crossing her thighs before her legs fell. Her weight now fully resting in his grasp, she struggled to breathe. She blinked twice, and saw the Proconsul at his shoulder, azure eyes regarding her, then looking at her husband.

Words went unspoken, judgement passed. She writhed as much as she could, struggling to get the words out. It wasn't supposed to be like this. He turned, her field of view taking in her dead sisters, the flickering beam of plasma still hovering, buzzing angrily as he walked her toward it. She heard the lightsaber blade evaporate, heard the clicking of the other hilts skittering off of the floor and flying to him, the snaps of holsters securing them in their homes at his belt. She felt her pupils dilate with the brightness of her own bolt as he brought her ever closer to it, the warmth of it feeling like sunshine on her face.

It was the last thing the Huntress ever saw.