

Akhera Nol
6377

Drinking Hall
Saga
Zsoldos

A woman sat off in a corner of the drinking hall, sampling the local brews. She glanced at the familiar T-visored mask that sat on the table across from her and stared back. The black and blue patterning of her armor was not the most pleasing aesthetic, but it worked for now. The only other things of note about her were the large hammer strapped to her back that was nearly the same size as she was and that she was nonhuman. Akhera was used to the stares and the curiosity of what she was. As likely the last of her kind, she was frequently given long looks and asked questions. It was not like the Togorians who had friends and family among their own people. She was a Cathar, the last of a proud and dying race. Mandalorians had stormed her planet in the past and decimated the people. Butchered, enslaved and overall wiped from existence, Akhera had become one in a long line of slaves that had been born away from her home planet. Her mother had taught her everything she knew, but in the end, she was barely even that. A human with fur, with no past and no real future. It should be no surprise that she was not working with nor adopted by a clan of Mandalorians and their mercenary cohorts. Clan Vizsla was the newest in a long line of employers and she found herself frequently impressed and exasperated by them. Their sense of honor was similar to her own and how she was taught, but they could do things counter to that honor if the money was right. Today, however, no honor needed to be bent.

One of many hunters who had descended on the people of Ullr, Akhera was there for one purpose. Nnelg Nosliw. The man was a stain on the otherwise primeval woods that made up the area surrounding Saga. She took another drink and scanned the drinking hall again, amber eyes searching for the appropriate target. She had asked around and gathered that the man would be making an appearance eventually as he came to get more supplies. Wanted for murder and defiling a corpse, she knew he would not be simply walking into any of the stores. He would likely wait for nightfall and get supplies needed for his rough existence in the surrounding forest. The Cathar finished her drink and set the glass on the table before she picked up her helmet. As she walked past one of the serving girls, Akhera generously tipped the girl with a smile and tossed more credits to the man pouring out the drinks. With her helmet securely in place, the woman touched the haft of her hammer with a grin hidden behind the mask. Tonight would be the night; the hunt would begin and the thought of it made her blood rush.

She walked slowly through the surrounding streets, watching the shadows get longer. Watched the alleys between buildings darken into pitch. Those bits of darkness could hide a great many things. She always preferred hunting at night; it was always just a little easier to give in the dark, a little easier to let everything go and just exist with nature. Once she was on the

trail and away from the prying eyes of civilization, the Cathar could do exactly as she was meant to do. Reaching to her belt pouches, Akhera pulled out the scanner she had lifted from a dead Inquisitor while she had still worked for the Jedi of Odan-Urr. She had all sorts of trinkets and trophies like that, but this one was always just a little more useful. The device beeped softly, showing lifeforms in states of rest, unmoving and peaceful. The night was going to be anything but that before she was finished. As the day waned, the Cathar angled the scanner down and examined the foot tracks in the dirt and mud lining every street in Saga. She closed the scanner and put it back in the pouch before looking up at the sky. Night was falling and the faintest glimmer of stars were peeking over the horizon.

It was time.

Forest of Ullr Zsoldos

The nights in Ullr were dark, scary things. Nothing really lurked within that she could not handle, but the intensity of it was something very few were ever used to. There were things that went bump in the night and one of the most dangerous ones was her target. His knowledge of the forest was second to none and his brutality made him a target to be cautious of at the best of times. Akhera had stumbled, almost entirely by chance, upon a large man who fit the description and began to follow him at a distance. Nnelg had hit several businesses to get his supplies and moved with such intensity of purpose, Akhera was almost sad she had to kill the man. But, the business was business and she could not just let him go because of how efficient a predator he was. Which was how she had come to be fairly deep in the forest, tracking down a man who would never think twice about protecting himself from any threat. She stalked through the forest, keeping watch of the man as he moved deftly between the trees and over roots. As she watched him, she realized he was one with the forest, moved so easily through it even in the darkness that it was breathtaking. He had the advantage of knowledge, years of learning and training within these conditions, but the Cathar could see a little better in the dark and natural hunting talents.

Akhera stalked her quarry on silent feet, her eyes focused on the man as he moved forward on his own path. She pulled her hammer from its holder on her back and grinned behind the visor. It was time. With a burst of natural speed, she ran on silent feet and leapt into the air towards the man. The brutality of her hammer striking the ground behind him shattered roots, felled a nearby tree and caused the man to stumble. He spun on his feet, his eyes wide with surprise for a moment before his own instincts kicked in as he dropped his supplies and wrenched his axe from his belt. The Cathar stepped back and whirled her hammer around her quickly, her eyes watching the man who stood before her. He was very handy with that axe of his, but she was easily just as skilled with her own weapon of choice. She grinned as she surged forward, the head of her hammer removing a large section of a nearby tree as Nnelg backpedaled from the sheer ferocity of the massive hammer. Before her was a very bad man and he deserved no chance at rest of survival. Each strike of the hammer left devastation in the

Cathar's wake and drove the prey further back. He lashed out with his axe, scoring the chestpiece of her armor with a grating sound of steel on steel.

Akhera stepped back and tilted her head slightly as one hand traced the mark on her armor. The man eyed her for a moment before taking another step back as her grip on the hammer's haft tightened. Her voice came from behind the mask in a purr of violence.

"You should run."

Before the man could respond, she whirled and felled a large tree with a single blow as she advanced on the man slowly. The hammer glinted in the moonlight breaking through the trees, the mirrored black visor of her helmet shining in the dark. Nnelg tightened his grip on his axe and charged forward with a roar of defiance and bloodlust as the Cathar surged forward at the same time. The Human lifted his weapon above his head and brought it down in a vicious chop, aiming to split the woman down the middle. Expert reflexes honed over the years and a natural talent for speed intercepted the blow on the haft of her hammer and hooked the blade in place. In spite of her small size, Akhera had trained with individuals more powerful and larger than she was to compensate for the lack of bulk she could put into a fight, but even backed by that training, the size and ferocity of the man forced her down to one knee.

Even in the dark, the hideous grin that split Nnelg's face was easily seen. The look of triumph as he continued to bring his size and weight to bear on the smaller woman. The blade of the axe lowered almost inexorably towards Akhera's helmet before all resistance disappeared. The man's weapon bit deep into the helmeted face of the Cathar before her muscled bunched and she pushed back against the weapon with all the might she had within her. Nnelg staggered back a step as the woman rose quickly to her feet and lashed out with the length of her hammer, catching him in the ribs. The sickening sound of metal striking flesh with an almost wet slap was accompanied by the snapping sounds of ribs giving way to the superior force of the blow.

As the man fell to the ground gasping and groping at his chest with his free hand, Akhera ripped the helmet from her head and tossed it to the ground. The right side of her face would be swollen for a while yet, but she stared down at the man and gripped her hammer in both hands as she stood over him. Her hands twisted on the haft, setting them in place as she prepared for the final blow.

"Nothing personal."