



SUBMITTED IN ENTRY TO GJW XIII COMPETITION:
SMALL TEAM CO-OP FICTION

The Mechanic and the Droid

Authors:

Aylin SAJARK (14505)

Elinia REI (5951)

Clan Scholae Palatinae

AYLIN'S SNAPSHOT:

<https://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/members/14505/snapshots/1782/3336>.

ZENTRU'LA'S SNAPSHOT:

https://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/non_player_characters/78/snapshots/1764/3312

August 25, 2019

Zentru'la was used to heavy armour, but this was something else entirely. The weight of the iron plates were as irritating as the perpetually happy little Nautolan applying them to his colossal shoulders. Aylin Sajark took a step backwards and took a holopicture of the awkward Twi'lek. "Looking great Zen!" she smiled, showing the General the holopicture.

"This is a stupid idea Sajark," he growled as he saw just how awkward he looked - a huge, heavy humanoid frame encased in the armour of an HK-series assassin droid. "And why are you so happy?"

"Cause this is gonna work great!" excitement radiated from Aylin. She was protected from his menacing glare by the iron helmet that now covered his face. "Now we just need this voice modulator here..."

Zentru'la's voice immediately turned to a robotic monotone. "The Severian Principate will not be fooled by these stupid ideas."

"Not with that attitude!" Aylin bounced excitedly. "Just stick to the plan. I'm a mechanic, and you're being sold for parts!"

Zentru'la shook his head slightly, as he had little movement available, "I really don't think they will bite."

Aylin readjusted some of the parts and grinned, "It will, it worked before too. Just remember, no huge steps or running." She walked around him and nodded approvingly. "All done."

He moved a bit around the room, trying to see how much movement he had still left, "Can I atleast have some weapons?"

"You do," said Aylin as she pointed to his vambrace part, "It has a stungun built inside, but it doesn't have a lot of power, so use sparingly."

Her little insect droid Siky crawled over Zentru'la's suit and sat down on his shoulder, beeping happily. "Looks like you got a new friend," Aylin chuckled, "He will help you if needed."

Their ship touched down on a landing pad outside the Thillon Research Facility as Zentru'la resisted the urge to swat Siky out the viewport. "Be nice," Aylin smiled. "Once we get inside we can start looking for the artefact."

Zentru'la clicked and clunked as he walked down the walkway towards the facility with Aylin, while Siky beeped away on his shoulder. The Severian Principate soldiers on guard looked extremely confused at the odd group approaching. "State your business," said a guard in a direct, military tone.

"I'm making a delivery!" came Aylin's happy voice. "This droid is malfunctioning and needs to be sold for parts!"

"Error. Error. I am malfunctioning and must be sold for parts," Zentru'la said in his best, not very good droid impersonation.

The guards looked at each other again and raised their blasters. Aylin in turn, glanced at the droid for a moment she shook her head.

"See, that's what I mean, he is crazy in the wires." Aylin said as she circled her finger at the side of her head to emphasize the crazy part.

"Is that all it's doing or are we going to have problems, Nautolan?"

"I assure you the weapon systems are offline, it will only follow me." She smiled, "Trust me, I took care of that myself."

One of the guards shrugged slightly and started to move towards the console to open the door. The other one frowned at her a moment longer before giving in to her smile, "Fine you can go, but we keep an eye on that droid."

Aylin walked further and gave a friendly nod towards the guards with a big smile. Zentru'la struggled a bit to follow her, but got in line behind her. When they got out of hearing distance he let out a sigh.

"Never thought that would work," he said with his metallic voice.

Aylin grinned at him, "Never doubt the power of a smile."

Zentru'la's emotion under his droid facade was a long way from a smile, but he couldn't argue with results. The crazy Nautolan had did what she said she would do, and they were in the Thillon Research Facility. On the inside, security was a lot lighter, as the research facility housed a large number of civilian scientists and other non-military staff: whatever oddballs were needed to make sense of the Galaxy's greatest puzzles like the mysterious crystal shards.

"How long until Collective forces arrive?" said Zentru'la's mechanical voice.

"Intelligence says ten minutes," Aylin replied. "Now we got in quietly, the Collective ambush should be a nice distraction. Hey look! Archaeology research. I bet they have the crystal there!"

The pair raised eyebrows wherever they went, but those inside seemed to trust the outside security to keep them safe. "What's the plan now?" Zentru'la asked, wondering what harebrained idea Aylin had to actually get the crystal before collective forces arrived.

Aylin looked around as they moved towards the Archaeology research and took a datapad from one of the tables. Browsing through it after a moment of getting past the log in, she started to grin a bit and then chuckle. Their network security quickly gave way to more information in the hands of the slicer.

"They made precautions, having two identical boxes, one containing the shard, the other a dummy."

"That still gives us nothing," Zentru'la grunted.

Aylin glanced around, "Oh, but a little chaos will. Which you will provide."

"Me?!" Zentru'la exclaimed incredulously, which earned him more than a few glances. "I can hardly walk in this stupid suit of yours," he hissed quietly at her.

"You only have to be the run-away droid buying me enough time to switch the boxes, get the contents and get out."

He stopped walking and stared at her, "You can't be serious."

Looking back, Aylin nodded, “I am, you got your stungun and Siky. Everything should go perfectly. Besides the ambush could work in our advantage.”

Zentru’la and Aylin had become well past the point where he needed to say what he thought of her ideas. Nonetheless, her ruse had got them into the facility so he was willing to give her eccentricity another chance. Also, her skills at hacking were one thing he definitely knew he could rely on, the archaeology department was exactly as she had described. Two identical boxes, both marked to contain a crystal fragment. “It’s show-time Z3N,” Aylin grinned at her partner.

In the most robotic walk he could muster, Zentru’la walked straight up to one of the researchers as he worked at his terminal. “ERROR. ERROR,” he said before jabbing the stungun into his back. The man fell to the floor as the electricity coursed through his muscles. “CONTROL THAT - where is she?” Another researcher turned to Aylin to criticise her lack of control of her droid, but she was gone.

Zentru’la turned to the shouting researcher. “ERROR! ALL HUMANS MUST BE STUNNED!” he said punctuated by Siky chirping away on his shoulder. The spider droid bleeped excitedly as the second researcher fell to the floor.

“Z3N what are you doing!” Aylin shouted as she ran back to him, hastily stuffing something into her pocket. “Stop that now!”

“I apologise to the humans. I am malfunctioning and being sold for parts.” Zentru’la said through the voice modulator.

Before Aylin was forced to defend her droid’ alarm bells rang across the facility. “ALERT! ALERT! THE FACILITY IS UNDER ATTACK!” shouted a voice on the tannoy. “All combat troops to the main gate! All research personnel, find a place to hide immediately!”

“Well there’s our distraction,” Aylin smiled, “Now I think it’s time to leave.”

Both of them started to move away, Zentru’la having a bit of trouble keeping up with Aylin because of this suit. Glancing back Aylin noticed Zentru’la lagging behind and gave a firm nod towards Siky. The little droid crawled onto his back and released him from

his suit. A few strides further and Zentru'la was completely free and quickly caught up to Aylin.

“Much better,” he said as he rubbed his hands together, “Now to the serious bit.”

Wondering what Zentru'la meant by that she followed him with a little caution as she scooped Siky up from the floor. She was sure she would get paid for this in some way she didn't like, but before she could continue on this train of thought she heard a loud crash and a yelp. When she rounded the corner he had a few moments before, she saw a guard sprawled out on the floor and Zentru'la with his former rifle. The other guard was so taken aback by the sudden attack and the huge Twi'lek standing before him that he didn't even react when he got a stun shot against his chest and just fell to the floor.

“Remind me not to anger you...” Aylin said softly behind him which earned her a grin from him.

“Come on, we need to get back to the ship,” he said as he started running again.

It didn't take them long to get to the landing platform, which by now was littered with more guards trying to find out what had gone wrong.

“My turn,” Aylin said with a grin and pulled Zentru'la along to hide behind some crates and tossed a grenade into the hallway they just exited.

A few commands were yelled and a group went out to investigate the explosion, which left few back on the platform.

After all the subterfuge and trickery, Zentru'la was suddenly in his element, holding a blaster rifle and facing down enemy forces. The pair took the path of least resistance through the facility, avoiding Collective forces where they could, and blasting them to bits where they couldn't with Zentru'la's blaster fire and Aylin's explosives.

As the Collective forces fanned out through the facility trying to find the crystal fragment buried safely in Aylin's pocket, there were only five soldiers left protecting the landing platform. Three precise shots from Zentru'la's rifle, one explosion from Aylin and the platform was clear. “Time to get out of here!” Aylin grinned.

Zentru'la and Aylin ran to their ship, boarding it and swiftly taking off towards the safety of the clan flagship in deep space around the Lyra System.

“You’re crazy, Sajark. But you get the job done,” Zenru'la said plainly. “Good work today.”

“It’s not crazy if it works!” Aylin smiled.