

Target Acquisition

A Submission to the Competition:
[Celebration: Mandalorians] Become the Hunter



Written by
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37 ABY

Coruscant, Level 2565

The city-planet of Coruscant truly never sleeps. No matter the time of day, there's always something going on. This was something that Reiden Karr had learned firsthand years prior to his current visit, during a brief time when he called the world home. Between the various work shifts of the populace and the seemingly never-ending nightlife present on the mid and lower levels, people were always milling about. However, one should always remember to be careful when deciding to venture lower — there was also a healthy criminal element that became more prevalent as the levels progressed.

That underworld is what Reiden was counting on for his mission. He still had to be careful of the Coruscant Security Force, but he was confident that things would work out, even if he couldn't quite put his finger on the why of it all. He thought that perhaps it could have been the Force reassuring him. It worked in rather strange ways at times. The mission at hand would be the capture of an asset that the Brotherhood's Inquisitorius Network had located. Reiden glanced at the dossier that had been provided and was met with the image of a pudgy Twi'lek named Manu Maurfai, a man that made a living as an information broker. The report indicated that he had ties to the Collective, which made his importance – and the need to capture him alive – immediately clear. The man could very well have information as to the whereabouts of Deputy Grand Master Evant Taelyan and representatives of each of the clans. Having been captured when the Brotherhood last clashed with the Collective in the Lyra-3k-a system a few months ago, there have been few substantial leads in the search efforts to locate them, making this mission one of the utmost importance.

With such a critical mission, and one where the team needed to be small, Reiden could only bring along the people he trusted most. This meant bounty hunter and friend Orion Gale and newcomer slicer Kal Arias. Rounding out the team was a member of the Imperial Scholae Army that Reiden trusted the most, Captain Jake Sloane – although the man was presently dressed as a civilian rather than in the full armor he was accustomed to. Reiden and Kal were sitting in a rented room in one of the countless buildings this level had to offer and were looking over a datapad displaying a feed from the Ryn's droid. The droid served as the team's eyes as it stuck to the shadows as best it could to observe their target from a safe distance. Luckily for them, there were plenty of other droids roaming around, so it didn't stick out too much on this level. Reiden watched the feed intently, trying to go over every detail.

"Do we have eyes on the target?" he asked over his comlink to the two out in the field.

"Nothing here," Orion responded from his position.

"I think I have something," Captain Sloane replied, his voice sounding hopeful.

“What do you see?” Reiden inquired.

“Someone resembling the subject’s image just walked out of a bar. This might be our guy.”

Reiden nodded to Kal, who tapped out a few commands on his datapad. The view gradually shifted focus as his droid moved to a new position. They had previously taken note of various establishments in the nearby area, so it was a simple matter of locating the right location. The scenery panned about until the view settled on the entrance to a bar, a glowing sign hung above the doors that read *Gorg & Grog*. Reiden moved forward in his seat in anticipation, belying his usual calm in such situations. There was indeed a Twi’lek male ambling away from the bar. His eyes darted from the screen to the dossier image and back again. It was him. They had found Maufai.

“Watch things while I’m gone,” Reiden spoke to Kal as he stood from his chair, an edge of excitement to his voice. “It’s time to set the plan in motion.”

“You got it, mate. I’ll keep things covered here and let you know if anything changes.”

The Palatinaean nodded and left the room, heading to the turbolift and stabbing his finger at the call button. He waited a moment, but the lift was busy elsewhere. With little time to waste and not wanting to miss the opportunity, Reiden found the stairs and flew down them. Fortunately, the room he and his team had rented was only on the fifth floor, and he could move pretty quickly — the adrenaline beginning to course through his system didn’t hurt, either.

Jake Sloane did his best to appear casual while he waited for the target to approach his position. He watched Maurfai passed by then made a show of checking the time before following behind the man. It may not pass scrutiny to someone looking out for a tail, but that wasn't an issue. As fate would have it, this location worked out well for them. The bar that Maurfai had just left was situated on a long stretch of street, with more establishments off to the left and lead further away from the city center and its amenities, while the right brought travelers closer to the city center. Maurfai had decided to head to the right upon exiting the bar.

Murfai seemed to pick up on the fact that he was being followed and increased his pace. Sloane followed suit, taking note that Reiden was in the Twi'lek's path up ahead. Reiden took out his small datapad and examined it, then studied Maurfai as the man approached, glancing back and forth, being obvious about the fact that he was checking what he was seeing against an image on the screen.

Murfai took note of that and his head began to swivel about, likely seeking an escape route, or at least a less public spot — his dossier had been quite detailed and indicated that he wasn't above attacking someone before finding out what they wanted, if at all. The information broker spotted an alleyway off to the left. Increasing his speed again, he darted towards it. Sloane and Reiden took a beat before giving chase.

The pudgy Twi'lek rounded the corner of the alleyway and stopped short just at its entrance. Orion stood there, a grin on his face and his arm held out in front of him, aiming his vambrace at the other man.

Orion offered a quick wave with his other hand. "Hey there. You're gonna need to come with me, okay?"

"I don't think so," Maurfai retorted, his hand going for a blaster. But his fingers grasped at nothing but air. He looked down and saw that his weapon was missing from his belt. Instead, it floated in the air a few feet away, right into the waiting hand of Reiden. "What the..?"

"Like my friend over there said, you're coming with us. We need to have a talk," Reiden stated plainly before giving a curt nod to Orion.

The bounty hunter pressed a button on his vambrace and fired something at Maurfai. The man clapped a hand to his neck, his fingers closing around a small object — it was a metal dart. He opened his mouth to say something, but found that no sound would come out. He tried to move, but his limbs were feeling heavy and sluggish, and his eyelids suddenly felt heavy. After a few moments, the Twi'lek slumped to the ground.

"Take him to the speeder," Reiden ordered. Orion nodded and grabbed the unconscious man under the arms while Sloane took hold of his legs. Together, the two brought their quarry to a "borrowed" airspeeder they had waiting nearby.

A few hours later, Manu Maurfai awoke to new surroundings. His eyes filled with panic at first as he failed to recognize where he was, but soon his features changed to one of realization — he had been captured. He was in a holding cell with a man in a chair on the other side of an energy barrier.

“Did you have a nice nap, princess?” Orion asked with a chuckle.

“Do you know who I am?” Maurfai spat. “Do you have any idea who my friends are?”

“Yup, I do. And, frankly, I don’t give a flying frak,” Orion replied. He held a blaster in one hand, twirling it around his finger before aiming it at his prisoner. “The Collective can’t help you now. The sooner you realize that and cooperate, the better.”

“Oh yeah, and what if I don’t?”

“Trust me,” Reiden said as he stepped into view. “We have ways of making you talk. It won’t be pleasant and I can pretty much guarantee you won’t like any of them. But that’s not really my department. I was given a mission to bring you in, and that’s what I’m doing. We’re onboard a ship right now and in hyperspace. You have been searched and all of your belongings have been confiscated.”

“Thanks for the credits, pal,” Orion interjected, another wide grin spreading across his face.

“You don’t even have your own clothes anymore, and you’ve been scanned for any sort of trackers or signaling devices. You officially belong to us now. Just enjoy the ride while you can. I imagine you’ll be quite busy in the coming weeks,” Reiden added, a solemn tone to his voice.

The Force user turned around and went to the bridge of the ship. With the mission completed, all that was left now was to report in and make their way back to Brotherhood space. There was no way of knowing what kind of information Maurfai had, but Reiden was sure that the people put in charge of dealing with him would get what they needed, one way or the other. It was time to get their allies back from the clutches of the Collective, and maybe even deal out some revenge along the way.