

The Deadly Assassin

Submission for the fiction competition: "The Deadly Assassin"

Written and Submitted by Adapt Kamjin "Maverick" Lap Lamiz

She hated this place. Even through her helmet the smell was pungent. Seated against the wall she took in the bar and fought her gag reflex. It was dimly lit yet she could see the various assortment of aliens, more overweight and unclean than not. While she hoped the general haze in the room was from the various intoxicants being smoked but she wouldn't put it past some of the people to be adding their own fragrance to the room.

A group of men sauntered by and, turning to look at her, gave out a low whistle. It was times like this she wishes they could see the glare she was shooting them. Despite being armored from head to toe in a mismatched suit of Mandalorian armor it still clung to her body in all the right ways. Men, despite the danger of messing with a Mandalorian, can't resist being disgusting. She gave them an ill-mannered hand gesture and they laughed as they continued on their way. *I will not kill people randomly*, she had to remain herself. Looking at her vambrace she checked the chronometer. *Where is she?*

As she was beginning to stand to leave a Gand came shuffling into sight. She sat back down relieved that she wasn't going to have to make another trip back here for this meeting. The Gand bunched up her robes as she settled into the seat on the other side of the table. "You would not believe the traffic today," the Gand offered as she rummaged through her sack and started laying out bounty pucks on the table.

"D'kex, I don't care about the traffic. This is costing me credits just sitting here," she leaned forward and started looking through the pucks.

"You know, we've been doing this for a while now, you could share your name with me so I can contact you when I'm running late," D'kex gently probed as she grabbed a puck from the Mandalorian's hand and started to arrange them on the table.

"I'm not going to share my name with you. Just call me..." she was cut off by a brawl breaking out on the other side of the room that drew D'kex's attention.

"Fine," D'kex said over her shoulder. "I'll just keep calling you Mando. Not like that'll get confusing."

"Just show me the bounties," the Mandalorian said in exasperation.

"Alright, we've got some good ones here," D'kex ran her gloved finger down the row of pucks she had set up queuing the holographic projection to spring to life. The bounty value and details flashed in front of the pictures, reflecting in the darkened visor of the Mandalorian. "Now, here's a nice little bail jumper that might be good for you," D'kex pushed forward a puck showing a Zabrak.

The Mandalorian looked at the puck and shook her head. "The bounty's not worth the fuel cost. He's supposedly a dozen systems away from here." She leaned forward and looked through the next few. A Mon Cal domestic abuser might be worth it. The Ortolan counterfeiter was a hard pass. There was no way she was dragging him around if he put up a fight and the bounty was only for him alive. The next few she passed by quickly before coming up short. "What is this?" she said, pulling closer a puck with the face of a handsome middle-aged man in an Imperial uniform.

“Ahh...let me look,” D’kex said, adjusting her goggles. “That’s Sector Admiral Kamjin Lap’lamiz. Apparently goes by the alias Maverick,” she chuckled. “‘Maverick’ what a name. He must think of himself as some hotshot.”

“I can read all of that,” the Mandalorian snapped. “What is the bounty for?”

“Hmmm,” D’kex pulled out a datapad to pull up the additional details. “Well, he’s got a pretty extensive dossier. Sector Admiral with the Emperor’s Hammer Strike Fleet. A founding member of some clan with the Dark Jedi Brotherhood. Take your pick here as to why someone would put a bounty out on him. He seems like your typical Imperial bad man.”

“Why is it so high?” the Mandalorian asked. “500,000 for a ‘typical’ Imperial doesn’t make sense.”

The Gand made a wheezing sound as she read further. “Nothing else here. But it is clear; they want him dead.”

“Dead?” the Mandalorian blurted out. “Why dead?”

“It doesn’t say but it’s a bounty on an Imperial. No offense but they’re all better off dead,” D’kek leaned in closer to the puck. “It’s a shame though. He is good looking for a human.”

“I’ll take it,” the Mandalorian scooped up the puck and placed it into a pouch on her belt.

“Now wait a minute!” D’Kek tried in vain to grab the puck from her. “That’s a large bounty puck and you haven’t exactly proven yourself.”

“I’ve completed my last few bounties,” her voice jumped a bit as she stood up to leave.

“Uh-huh, as part of a team. Who’s going with you this time?” D’Kek scrambled to put the other pucks back into her bag.

“Me. I’ve got this one.” The Mandalorian quipped over her shoulder. By the time D’Kek had collected her pucks and untangled herself from the chair the Mandalorian was already gone.

“Well sister, you better have it. Whoever put that bounty isn’t going to accept failure.”

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The Mandalorian dropped into the seat of her ship and queued it for take off. The good thing about seedy backwater planets was she didn’t have to waste time with complicated landing and take off protocols. Once she had cleared the atmosphere she pulled the puck back out and activated it. *Okay, where are you at*, she started pulling up various sources searching for the name Kamjin Lap’lamiz.

After several hours she threw her arms up and screamed *He could be anywhere! He’s involved in so many operations and appearances it’s a poodoo shoot as to where he’ll end up*. She leaned back in her chair and kicked her feet in the air in absolute frustration. *Fine, FINE!! Maybe I won’t be able to find him*, she thought as she keyed up the holonet. *I’ll just take a short break and then come back to finding him*. Searching through the various feeds she brought up her favorite program. Even though it was low quality and completely off the rails she couldn’t help but watch it.

A series of exotic animals flashed across the holoprojector before a voice boomed out, “So, here I am. Standing with you. My true loves were meant but I’m just like you.” She sighed at the crooner’s sultry tones played through the ship’s speakers. As the song continued she curled up on her side to watch the show. As the song came to a close a panning shot of an exotic

creature zoo flew by before ending with a Mandalorian clad in beskar armor flashing in the light except for several stripes painted throughout the armor.

“Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen from around the galaxy and welcome to ‘Jo’ Tigris’s holocom series. Right off the bat I’m going to get into what’s wrong with this sithspawn galaxy and that’s our holomessage 109,” Jo said pointing a finger at the audience. As the holo dissolved it was replaced by footage of Jo walking around an enclosure with his Vornskr. “A little while ago I did some work with one Kamjin Lap’lamiz.”

At the mention of Kamjin’s name she sprung up and sent the holoprojector skittering across the floor of the cockpit. *Dank Farrick, where is it!* She scrambled on the floor searching under consoles before finally finding it.

“And that’s why I’ll be battling him one on one, if he’s man enough to take on a TRUE Mandalorian in two days at the battle chains!” Jo thumped his gloved hand against his breastplate. “You can’t fool me, Kammy! I know who you are and now the rest of the galaxy will too in two days!”

Sweet! Thank the Force. This’ll be easier than I thought, she thought as she pulled herself back up into her seat and started plugging in the coordinates for the jump. *Maybe it’s a good thing I paid those credits to make a connection with Clan Vizsla after all.* With that final gleeful thought that she’d get to her query she pulled the lever and watched the stars blend into hyperspace.

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The Mandalorian smiled inside her helmet. All around her were other Mandalorians! She felt so comfortable amongst this crowd. No one was staring at her. No one was whistling at her. While there was plenty of head butting and raucous this felt right. She was so glad she had spent those credits she had a skip to her step as she went about navigating the crowd.

Up ahead in the distance were several massive pillars stretching out of a deep pit. Strung between the massive pillars were hulking chains. Each link was easily the size of two humanoids. She pushed down the scope on her helmet and zoomed in on the pillars. On opposite sides she could see Jo and his companions prepping for the match. In contrast, Kamjin stood silently on his pillar. No one was around him. She stared at the face of the middle aged Sith for a moment before assessing him as a threat. He appeared to be wearing simple robes. Clearly there were two lightsabers clipped to his thighs but she had expected that he’d be armed.

She needed to find a vantage point to take her shot. There were several rock formations around the area that might work if she could get to them. Most already had Mandalorians upon them preparing to take in the sight. As she was about to pick one several basilisk’s flew into position around the pit and an announcer came over the speakers.

“We come here to settle the challenge of honor by Jo Tigris who claims Kamjin stole the honor of the Mandalorians by wearing beskar!” Jo pumped his hands up in the air. Then, in an exaggerated motion, started pointing at Kamjin and then down to the pit. Kamjin, on the other hand, remained stoically unphased. *Heh, doesn’t surprise me,* she thought while looking at Kamjin. The crowd roared in approval at the taunts making it harder for her to push her way through towards her desired position.

A basilisk rider hovered near to Jo and offered him a polearm. As Jo grasped it he activated some trigger as twin blades cascaded outward. She whistled to herself, *A Mythosaur axe! That'll at least make things even with those lightsabers.*

Over the announcement speakers Kamjin spoke, "Jo, I meant no disrespect. I still wish to seek an alliance with Clan Vizsla for the mutual benefit of both our Clans!"

"It's too late for that Kammy. You can't win me over again with sweet words. You beat me here the Clan will listen. You die here and I promise I'll make you look pretty for your funeral!" Jo retorted as he leapt down onto the chains and began advancing upon Kamjin. Kamjin sighed, shaking his head. Reaching down he activated his scarlet blade. With abundant grace he almost floated down onto the chain taking a defensive posture, his robe fluttering in the breeze. Jo stood crouching with both hands holding the massive axe. Time stood still. The noise of the crowd quieted and she took the opportunity to make progress towards her vantage point. She was very near when she heard a gasp from the crowd.

Twirling to face the pit again she couldn't see Jo at all. Kamjin was peering over the side. *What is he looking for?* She didn't have to wait long for the answer as Jo came racing up from the pit with his jetpack blazing. As he passed near Kamjin he swung the axe at Kamjin's head. Kamjin parried with his blade but was knocked backwards and fell onto another chainlink. The crowd cheered as their clansmen drew first blood.

Don't kill him before I kill him! She had reached the rock formation and started to climb. *Maybe I'll buy a jetpack with the credits from this bounty,* she thought as she sweated from the effort of racing up the rockwall. This time she ignored the reactions from the crowd as the fight continued. She could hear the clang and hiss as the lightsaber matched the blows from the massive axe. Judging by the boos and groans from the crowd Kamjin was still alive and holding his own against Jo.

With one final reach she found her way up to the top of the rock formation. *Ugh!* Another Mandalorian was already standing on the formation hooting and hollering at the fight. She didn't have time to wait but hated herself for what she was going to do. Sashaying over to the Mandalorian she slid her arm around his waist. "Hey, how about after this you and me find somewhere private," she said with a sultry voice. As the Mandalorian turned around in bewilderment and excitement of the offer she pushed him off the cliff. "Oops," she said casually as she crouched and drew her weapon. No one took notice. These were Mandalorians, weapons were their religion.

Zeroing in on Kamjin with her scope she exhaled her breath as the wind died down. She steadied her body and squeezed the trigger. A elongated blue bolt of energy whizzed over the heads of the gathered Mandalorians. Passing between two basilisks it flew straight and true towards its target. She let herself feel elation for a moment that she had done it before dread set in. At the last moment Kamjin had pushed Jo back and brought his blade up in time to deflect the bolt. His parry sent the blast rebounding into one of the basilisks which sputtered as its engine died as it spiraled out of control.

Icy fear ran through her body, *He knows it's me.* Turning she started to rappel down the rock face to escape to her ship. She heard the announcer over the loudspeakers, "Kamjin is disqualified for leaving the arena."

Jo screamed in triumph, "Kammy, you no good Sith! You're no better than that Caro Bas'keen! You better run! You're not getting out of here alive!"

She had to hurry. She heard the sound of blasters firing and the panging sound of a lightsaber deflecting them. Further off in the distance she heard the whirling engine sound of an Imperial shuttle. Someone must be coming to retrieve Kamjin. She blended into the crowd and disappeared.

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As her ship broke orbit she unclasped her helmet and set it on the console. Her sandy-brown hair fell like curtains over her shoulders. Reaching up she tucked it behind her ear. Sitting down in the chair she pulled out the bounty puck and activated it. As she stared into the face of the man she had failed to kill a series of conflicting emotions ran through her. Finally she sighed, "Well, Dad. I guess I'll kill you next time."

Komilia deactivated the bounty puck and began scanning the holonet for where Kamjin had gone off too.