

COMPETITION: [GJWXV PHASE I]
COMBAT FICTION ENTRY
TAKING IT TO THEM
AUTHORED BY
WARLORD DARKHAWK SADOW #264
DARKHAWK'S SNAPSHOT
TYTUS' SNAPSHOT
HIGH VALUE TARGETS UTILIZED
EQ: JEZORA ZOSH JM: STARTOUCHED RESEARCHER

Bright Jewel System
Mid Rim Territories

Twenty four hours ago...

The *Tãron*, a blacked out VT-49 Decimator, made the jump out of the hyperspace lanes before slowing to a crawl. Orbiting the planet of Ord Mantell, the planet's vast size filled the Decimator's command section view ports. Tytus O'Baieron piloted the vessel, along with Ellee, a custom pilot droid who helmed the copilot controls.

"Why in all the bloody galaxy does this bloke have to be on Ord Mantell?" Tytus scoffed.

"You really despise that place don't you"

"You have no idea, lass."

"Inquisitorius reports say he is here at some card tournament," DarkHawk said, pointing at a holographic map of the city.

"What is the play, boss?"

"Put those sharpshooter skills of yours to good use, that's what. I will draw him out, no need to be subtle on this one. I want him to know who he is dealing with today. Ellee, you keep the ship ready, we will need a quick ride out of here. Savvy?"

Ellee answered with her mechanical hand and a thumbs up gesture.

"And once you draw him out, then what?" asked Ty.

"Sheer devastation. The Children of Mortis need to feel this."

Ord Mantell City
Northwest Quadrant

Ranger Jezora Zosh held his Sabacc cards near his chest, peeling them forward enough to peer at the stellar hand he was holding. His deep green eyes gave no indication of glory, although inside he was an ocean crashing against the rocks. A pudgy Rodian, two Mantellians and a Devaronian card dealer occupied the card table. The establishment, one of the more upscale seedy gambling hot spots of the city. The room surprisingly sweated with the aroma of quality tobacco and top shelf whiskey.

“Call...”

The Rodian tossed his cards on the table, “Mee got nothing!”

One of the Mantellians threw down his cards with a count of twenty, the second dropped his cards over his opponent’s, “Read and weep boys! That right there is twenty three!” Assured of his win, the man reached across the table to collect his winnings.

“You may want to slow your roll there partner, cards are still in play.” Jezora said.

The man looked up at the dealer, the horned Devaronian nodded. The man pulled his hands back to his side of the table. “I do not see the point, you can’t beat that.”

Jezora stared at the man for a few moments before he cracked a small deceptive smirk. Then tossed his cards across the table landing in front of the boujee dressed Mantellian. His eyes widened as the cards landed on the table, a two, a three and the illusive Idiot. The Idiot’s hand trumps all.

The Rodian gasped, which sounded more like a snort. “Idiot’s Hand for the win ladies and gentleman!” The dealer used his croupier’s stick to push the winnings in front of the Ranger.

“Forty-five thousand credits to the winner!”

The Mantellian slammed his fists on the table, “Cheater!”

Jezora leaned back deep in his seat, “If you’re that convinced I was, I suggest you pull that blaster and demand your money back. If not, best you take a sip of that whiskey and ante up or kindly walk away. Either way, I do not give a wamprat’s rear end what you do.”

The man stared intently into Jezora’s deep green eyes. There was no emotion, a sea of jade nothingness. He immediately lost his bravado and slowly slid his chair back and removed himself from the table.

“Well now, we have a fresh seat available if anyone wants to ride the waves of chance” the dealer announced.

The distant sound of blaster fire began to leak into the establishment. Jezora raised an eyebrow as the distinctive whinging of ricocheting blaster fire became more apparent.

The murmured screams of men nearby echoed through the streets and of course peaked the attention of Ranger Zosh. The door to the private gambling room burst open and a distraught Startouched Researcher stumbled in. “Sir, there is something cutting through our garrison and is headed this way!”

Jezora collected his winnings and stood up from the table. “And this something is?”

The Ranger’s minion simply pointed at the saber attached to the Ranger’s belt. “It moves like a Nexu. It’s at the footbridge around the corner.”

Jezora raised an eyebrow, anticipation grew. A full smile broke across the Ranger’s face, welcoming the inevitability of a fight. “Let us welcome our new guest then.”

Exiting the building the sounds of violence became more distinctive. At the end of the block Jezora turned the corner and what he saw was both invigorating and gave him a moment of pause. On the half constructed foot footbridge, a black clad figure was blitzkrieking through a band of his troops.

Jezora moved closer down the street. A group of his minions were poised at the unfinished landing of the bridge. Separating them from all the action was a six meter deep storm basin and a nearly fifteen meter gap to the unfinished bridge. Jezora gave the command to a faction of his troops “Circle around and flank him from the other side of the bridge!”

DarkHawk squared off against the last two troops standing around him. Their Z6 riot batons had little impact slowing the assassin down as he cut through them with his saberstaff. One took a wild arcing swing at DarkHawk’s head, easily ducking and sidestepping underneath the attack. The momentum of the missed blow caused the wielder to overextend and lose his balance.

DarkHawk capitalized, his feet floated across the coarse terrain like a choreographed waltz. Continual movement and foot transitioning positioned himself to the rear of his assailant’s unprotected right flank. Immediately executing a roundhouse kick, the blow sank deep into the man’s exposed lower ribs and hip. The kick nearly toppled the man over before the assassin dealt the killing blow with one of his crimson blades.

The second assailant charged in catching DarkHawk in the small of the back with the electrified emitter. A flood of electricity burned through the assassin’s body. His muscles constricted, back arched, he writhed in pain as the electricity continued to flow through him. He could feel the intense heat of the emitter through the armor. DarkHawk began to draw strength from that pain,

focusing his anger. Internally the assassin was a symphony of emotions creating his own sonata of hatred. Externally, he showed little emotion allowing the controlled passion of the battle guide

his movements. Twisting away from his attacker, the assassin came down with a forearm strike to the baton. The blow careened against the central shaft, slamming it against the ground.

The man's torso now completely exposed, trading sheer power for the inevitable result of landing a killing blow. DarkHawk executed a myriad of high and low strikes with alternating blades. A blur of red and black motion, the assassin's strikes were surgical in nature. Circling his prey finding the "gap" in the tan and white Jedi armor. The assassin never stopped moving, changing positions with each strike, rapidly pirouetting the saber staff around his body after each strike. One final blow across the chest and the man slowly slumped to his knees, DarkHawk kicking him off the bridge into the basin.

Jezora watched this take place with both pleasure and disdain. Now, movement from the other side of the bridge caught his eye. A wave of researchers were moving up to ensure no escape route was available. The Knight was confident that his flanking maneuver would contain this threat. What he did not factor in was the assassin having back up.

DarkHawk deactivated his sabers, clipping the hilts back on his belt. He began to pace the ledge of the bridge. The comlink squawked, "You have company headed your way from your six." Ty said.

"Nevermind them, you got your eyes on the target?"

Ty securely tucked away inside the third floor of a building roughly two hundred and twenty meters away. He adjusted the J19 electroscope on his MK sniper rifle, Tytus could almost count the eyelashes on Jezora's eyelids. "I have our bloke dialed in. Give me the word and I will send him to his maker."

"Stand by. Let's see what he does next. Then let him know how vulnerable he is. Take both sides"

"Copy tango. Standing fast."

Jezora moved closer to the front of his surrounding brood, cautiously stopping two rows short of the front. "Something I can do for you?" he asked. DarkHawk continued to pace the edge, never saying a word.

"I don't know you friend, but the way I see it, you owe me a good sum of money for cutting my men down. How about I give you a sporting chance and we settle this over a hand of Sabacc? Winner takes all?"

DarkHawk continued his pacing, never acknowledging either the group of Jezora's troops closing in behind him or Jezora himself. Jezora became increasingly more impatient, "You're wasting my time here friend. I do not like my hot streak being interrupted. That is very rude and I must say, it diminishes your life expectancy."

DarkHawk kicked rubble off the bridge, a blatant show of contempt towards the Knight's comments. Jezora's frustration boiled inside, there was no tolerance for a lack of decorum. He began to move forward, that's when DarkHawk gave the signal. "Now Ty!"

From the back of the vacant room, Ty had his rifle set. With his cheek resting on the rifle's riser, Ty controlled his breathing, deep in slow out. His target filling the center of the scope's reticle, the trigger pull was smooth as silk. Two rapidly fired shots exited the suppressor, *Pffft, Pffft*. Before Jezora took another step, he heard *Thump, Thump!* The two men on his right and left took head shots and dropped like wet bags of meat.

"Sniper!"

Jezora and the rest of his brood began to scatter like roaches. That's when DarkHawk went into action. Augmented by the Force, the assassin took a running jump over the gap, charged with fury, he landed in the middle of the scurrying flock of enemies. Slamming his right hand into the ground, it began to erupt with a rippling blast wave. The wave nearly ten meters in diameter caused those in its path to flail about before slamming to the ground. Struggling to get to their feet the assassin had already begun his onslaught, his crimson blades cutting them down in their discombobulated state.

Still watching all this unfold on the footbridge, Ty began targeting his fire at the group. A series of headshots dropped researchers in their tracks. After Ty emptied the rifle's clip, he knew it was time to move to the secondary location. Snipers more times than not would attempt to have more than one "hide sites" to avoid being pinned down or captured. And the rear fire egress was a perfect escape route out of the building.

DarkHawk whirled his saber around before stopping at a ready stance. A one-handed high guard with the blades held horizontally above the head and pointed to the side. The two long hilted sabers connected as one paying homage to the ancients, were perfectly balanced in DarkHawk's hand.

By this time Jezora was fuming. He was able to scamper back out of the wave of the assassins telekinetic onslaught. One of the store fronts' metal marquee made a solid perch. The Ranger executed a creative half twisting flip off the marquee landing three meters away from the assassin.

"I think that is just about enough of your intrusion. I don't know what you want or who you are seeking. But I am afraid your travels end here." Jezora looked up at the blue sky and breathed in the stench of death around him. "Lucky for you, today is a good day to die..."

"I have accepted my fate, have you? Although today is not my death date." DarkHawk thought to himself.

At first glance the Ranger sized up the assassin. Jezora saw the hulking assassin and concluded he was powerfully built, a juggernaut with reinforced Dark Armor. With a devilish smile and narrowed brow Jezora grabbed his saber activating it. *Schvrmmmmmmmm!* The green blade sprung to life, *"An easy victory..."* he thought. Holding his lightsaber above his head, tip angled to the rear, the Ranger went into action.

Jezora now backed by the Force leapt at the assassin striking down with an overhand power blow. DarkHawk sprung to his right while bringing his blade up to parry the Ranger's powerful blow. Immediately Jezora countered with a wide, hearty backhand strike. The assassin vaulted over the top of the blade, laying himself out flat. The blades buzzed by narrowly missing its target. However, the emerald blade did manage to sever one of the tassels on DarkHawk's lower tunic.

DarkHawk transitioned into a one handed cartwheel positioning himself up at the Ranger's backside. The assassin wasted no time and moved in, his insides frothing with excitement. Jezora had little time to react as DarkHawk attacked with sheer furocity. Wielding the saberstaff high and low, each strike setting up the next. Spinning and vaulting over and around Jezora, the assassin managed to pin the Ranger's blade down against the ground. A quick backfist to the mouth caused the Ranger to retreat back. DarkHawk spun towards his prey whirling his blades around striking in rapid succession.

Jezora swung his blade around parrying the onslaught he was facing. The Ranger grossly underestimated his opponent. That underestimation was solidified after overextending one of his blocks. The assassin capitalized of the off balance Ranger as a spinning heel kick connected to his jaw with a loud *CRAAAAAAACK!!!!*

The Ranger staggered back his vision became blurry. He shook his head trying to regain his bearings. His mouth filled with blood before spitting out a wad towards the assassin in anger. His mental resolve not backing down from the fight drove his desire to be victorious. Jezora spun his saber around and moved to a reverse grip. He charged at the assassin and began a flurry of long sweeping strikes aimed at the legs and midsection of his opponent. Jezora whipped his blade forward as if he were throwing a punch. DarkHawk maintained a solid train of concentration, with tightly controlled parrying motions he weaved his blades and body as two separate entities. Adapting to each incoming attack, biding his time to unleash his own counter attack.

Jezora pushed himself, confidence building as he continued his powerful blows one after the other. The blades clashed *Kksssshhhh, Kksssshhhh, Kksssshhhh* sending emerald and crimson sparks flying around them. DarkHawk pushed off against the Ranger only to catch a spinning side kick to the abdomen in return. The blow staggered the assassin back, the pain

resonating through his body. That slight hesitation allowed Jezora to plant a downward blow to the left pauldron of the assassin.

DarkHawk tumbled backward before rolling away to a safe distance. Jezora felt the tides turning and knew he would obtain yet another kill. Switching hand positions he held his saber close to the emitter. Again with an overhead stance and blade to the rear assuring himself this was the killing blow, Jezora once again drank deep from the Force. The Ranger leapt at the assassin bearing down with all his might.

As Jezora soared through the air, DarkHawk reached out with the Force and grabbed two wooden construction barrels. With a waft of his arm the barrels hurdled towards the Ranger smashing into him. The barrels splintered sending shards of wood everywhere, some impaling deep into the Ranger's exposed skin. He careened into the side of one of the storefronts with a loud and painful *CRAAAAASSHHH!* The Ranger's saber fell from his hands and rolled into the street.

DarkHawk was barely able to kip up to his feet. The pain in the left shoulder was harrowing. Moving in on the Ranger, the assassin sent Jezora's saber sailing with a wave of his arm. Jezora got to his feet concentrating to restore his blurry vision. Barely making out the wraith coming towards him, he bound forward and away from the assassin.

DarkHawk adjusted his stance going into a deep backstance, off hand out forward and his saber at waist height, horizontal with the ground. He watched Jezora float a dark gray cylindrical hilt into his hand. The distinct hum of a saber activating flooded the street. A nearly six meter light whip slithered out from the emitter. A quick twirl of his arm and the lightwhip reached out latching on to DarkHawk's hilt with a loud *SNAAAAAP!*

Jezora yanked back snatching the assassin's saber and sent it sailing down the street. Another quick whip of his arm and the lightwhip went streaking back toward the assassin. DarkHawk parried the attack by bringing his right arm up letting the Beskar coated vambrace take the brunt of the blow. The lightwhip wrapped around the vambrace and Jezora began to pull the assassin towards him.

"I don't need my saber to finish you off!" Jezora growled.

The Ranger went to execute a Force pull only to find his ability to connect to the Force had been stalled. Now with both arms outstretched, the assassin labored to maintain his hold on the Ranger. Digging his heels into the ground the assassin leaned all his body mass backwards avoiding the Ranger's unabated tow. He could feel the shoulder begin to separate from its socket. DarkHawk floated one of his throwing knives into his offhand. With a hampered sidearm throw he released the blade towards the Ranger. Then with a quick waft of his hand the assassin pushed the blade accelerating the throw. The whistle of steel lacerated the air seconded by the crackling hum of the lightwhip. Jezora watched this take place in disbelief.

The throw teetered on being egregiously wide, the Ranger instinctively twisted his flank from left to right as he watched the blade sail by. Readdressing his sights back on the assassin Jezora primed himself to strike. In the Ranger's jubilation for his kill, he overlooked the assassin's subtle finger weave. The unseen grasp of the Force wrapping around the steel as DarkHawk wrenched the stray weapon back on course. The distraction forced Jezora to move in an unorthodox manner leaving a void in his defense. The knife made a harsh dogleg turn to find its target. The blade sank into the exposed flesh of Jezora's neck. Jezora staggered as he attempted to pull the knife from the flesh. His body began to feel numb, knees began to quiver, the toxin already taking effect. The Ranger's feeble attempt to cover the wound soaked his tunic sleeve. Dark red blood began seeping through the neatly woven cloth before dripping puddles splashing against the ground.

Jezora slowly relinquished his grip on the lightwhip before it finally slipped out of his hand and fell to the ground. DarkHawk immediately leapt towards Jezora. Consumed by the fury seething out from his racing heart. An immense feeling of power raced down his arm, searing his senses as it burned through his flesh down to his fingertips. DarkHawk gritted his teeth, fixating on the pain, the invisible restraint of the Force holding back the white hot electricity. DarkHawk's knuckles cracked as it landed squarely against Jezora's chest. The assassin unleashed a blinding storm of exploding hatred. Scintillating tendrils of lightning danced across the Ranger's body as the impact sent him careening rearward.

DarkHawk dropped to one knee, taking in deep breaths of replenishing air. There beside him laying on the ground was the lightwhip hilt. DarkHawk recognized the intricate Nightsister glyph's neatly engraved into the metal. He picked it up pausing to admire the hilt's ornateness. Then carefully stowed it into his utility belt. "You do not deserve such a gorgeous weapon."

More researchers from the Ranger's garrison were advancing down the street towards DarkHawk. The assassin turned to begin a hasty retreat only to be cut off by three researchers with the business end of their batons pointed at his face. The assassin flipped backwards separating himself from the researchers. The assassin reached out for his saber, the long hilt resting across the way. Quickly was pulled by the Force back to the assassin's hand.

Before the assassin could activate the weapon, out from behind the baton wielding researchers three quick blaster shots rang out.

BANG! BANG BANG!

The front of the researchers' heads exploded, spewing blood and brain matter in the street. The three fell like timbers dropping face first to the ground. There stood Ty, both his BlasTech DL-44 Heavy Blaster barrels emanating trails of smoke.

"Sorry ol'boy, we don't have time to muck about. Plus, you can't have all the fun." Ty paused for a moment, sizing DarkHawk up, "My god man, you look horrible!" Before DarkHawk could reply,

the Duros held up a pausing gesture. Eyeing the downed Ranger before looking back at DarkHawk. "You poisoned him did you not?!"

"Of course..."

Ty shook his head, "You giant skiver, you! Could you not moxie up enough of the ol' fisticuffs and finish him off?"

"Thanks I guess? He was quite spry, thank you very much. How about we get out of here before those clown-shoes behind us have a field day at our expense."

"Jolly good idea," Ty replied. Activating his comlink he hailed Ellee back on the *Tãron*. "I say lass, could I trouble you too much for a hot extraction?"

"You two actually lived!?" Ellee exclaimed.

"Sorry to disappoint. No time to chit chat, we could use your assistance at the moment. We have some salty blokes bearing down on us."

Ellee had been waiting patiently. Ship at the ready, she immediately pushed the throttles forward and headed to Ty's location. She activated the ship's droid brain as well as the weapons system. The *Tãron* raced over the rooftops before dropping down in the street just ahead of her comrades. Ellee targeted the incoming reinforcements unleashing with the ship's heavy rotary cannon. Ripping through the front echelon of troops before the rest began to scatter from the deadly barrage.

Ellee opened the cargo ramp, dropping down enough for Ty and DarkHawk to jump on. The two entered the ship and Ellee slammed the throttles forward and raced up and away from the city.

THE END

