

"I've said it before. Overkill is underrated." He looked sideways at the man, standing still enough to make Doc wonder if he was breathing. His eyebrow went up a touch as he picked up his helmet, his thumb running over the freshly repainted Jaig eyes in a silent prayer. His eyes raised up from the bucket, seeing him continue to stand there, the man eerily still beneath the coat, beneath the beskar, beneath his mind.

The transport shifted, lowering in altitude. Doc felt his ears pop before he pulled his helmet on, watching the systems boot up, the link to his weapons, to his gauntlets engaging. Doc wasn't quite sure why they even were sending them out, but then again, he didn't really understand much of the man's goals even without the complications of the Delta Bravo. Maybe the Clan wanted to send a message. Maybe the other Lords needed perfection, a surgical strike. It didn't matter, he supposed.

Good soldiers follow orders.

"Leena, can I get a check?" He leaned on the comm array, waiting for the gear to finish initializing.

"I've got you both." The Twi'lek's accent was faint, but still there. She was stressed, even though she would stay on the Spear, waiting and watching, coordinating through their datapads. Not that it seemed they would need it. Not on this sort of thing.

"Do you have the target?"

He felt himself dragged off of his feet, helmet bouncing off the bulkhead once before finding himself pulled toward the open door, the warm glow of sunbaked sand reaching his eyes. Doc sneered, twisting himself in midair and bristling with firepower. Blasters filled his palms as he rotated to see the Lion behind him, pitching himself from the ship after him a moment before he saw why. The rockets struck the side of the transport, tearing the fuselage with fire and chaos. Doc thought to himself as he had a thousand times: that the Lion didn't live in the present, but always a few moments ahead. Still, as jarring as it was, he'd rather not go down with that ship. There was a moment of calm, then the fuel cells decided to add to the sound.

Doc shielded his head with one arm, rotating to see the ground approaching fast. He tucked himself in, feeling the patter of debris pepper his armor before the air grew thick around him, slowing his descent. He could barely see the Lion, but his outstretched arm told the rest of the story as he rolled to the ground far gentler than what remained of the transport did.

Static. Doc snarled at the connection. It made sense that they would be jamming the systems, but he didn't have to like it. "We're being jammed." Ashen landed on the sand beside him, turning toward the direction the rockets came from. Sabers floated from his belt to waiting hands, the blades spilling out into the midday sun with electric exaltation.

It was only a moment.

There were four of them.

Crystalline plating seemed as if it had grown almost organically from their armor, longer outcroppings escaping to exaggerate their joints and give them more angles of attack. They erupted from the sand all around them, their blades vitrifying the sand around them as they poured from hilts.

There was more blood and fire in that single heartbeat than Doc had seen in his life. The Lion became a blur as he reverted into what he was at heart, what he had always been the best at.

The one closest to him barely had a chance to let the blade slide from his weapon, coiling out to ready a strike before the violent blade found his throat. The Lion turned, converting the throat piercing to a defensive arc, battering away a blade that had expected no resistance. There was an economy of motion in play, the Lion's movement seeming seamless, rehearsed in an unnatural way. The Lion didn't dodge, he didn't ever need to. He simply wasn't ever where the enemy struck.

He knew.

He knew, and took it from them.

Long used to knowing what would happen a second ahead of time, they had built their skills, their plans on that foundation. It was stripped away from them. They could all but feel it, slipping away from fingertips too soaked in uncertainty, shaking from adrenaline to grasp it. They had killed elders, masters of the Jedi, of the Sith. They had trained to work together, in tandem to overwhelm their foes. But this was something else. The song was muted, the underwater echoes of the Force haunting them. This was dread, this was ruin.

A hand collapsed, fingers crushed into the sparking hilt of a lightsaber, the snap of bones and metal grinding dully in her ears behind the razor hum of the blade that found her heart. It drank deep of her flesh before flicking upward and stopping the pain before it had a chance to register. The cracking sound of her companion's lightwhip was the last thing she would experience.

The Lion's crimson blade caught the whip, drawing it off the centerline, opening the third Ascendant Trooper's guard as easily as he opened up his torso with his other blade. He didn't even feel it at first, but felt sluggish, bogged down by the line of violence left by the violet blade. A moment later, his entrails would spill from him, half cooked by the blade, half from the scorching edges of his ruined armor. But now, he would try to pull the whip free, his other hand trying to draw the blade at his hip. The Lion's blade snapped upwards from the stroke, finding the gap at his wrist, then to the chin to end his struggle. He flung aside the crimson bladed saber, the tangle of the lightwhip still around the blade as he directed the weapon with his mind.

The final one battered away the mess of glowing blades quickly with an ornate blade, his footwork bringing him out of the Lion's threat while keeping the point of his own saber directed at him. It was a twist of the wrist that ended him, shifting the potential angles of attack dramatically and casually.

There was nothing that he could do. He could see it coming, he could feel the Force singing to him again, but it was already too late. The amethyst blade amputated his arm first, drawing his epitaph from his armpit through the front of his throat before he had a chance to adjust. The Lion froze at the end of the movement, letting the world catch up to him.

It took only a heartbeat to end their lifetimes.

The Lion tilted his head slightly, raising his blade in a salute for a moment as they sloughed to the ground. A quick arc swept down from his brow to the ground, the blade retreating into the hilt. He turned as he straightened his back, looking at the Nihilgenia.

Doc only nodded. Overkill was underrated.

—GM Muz Ashen Keibatsu, #3714

