



AN IMPACTFUL EVENT

Written by:

Eminent Zxyl Bes'uliik

Son of Taldryan,

The Iron Beast of Mandalore

Planet Nau'ur
Mandalore Sector, Outer Rim Territories
ABY

Rain pitter-pattered on the transparisteel glass of the structure, running down the outside in streams and soaking the pale red ground as a small ion storm raged off in the distance. A single young, gray-skinned Zabrak boy with stubby little gray horns stood at the closed doorway wearing traditional Dathomiri Nightbrother garb, mostly rags and a dark blue tunic. He was slim, malnourished, and struggled to stand.

Although only several weeks prior had he been freed from servitude at the hands of some wanna-be crime lord, the boy hadn't yet regained the strength his people were known for. He felt weak, body verging on trembling. The Dathomirian needed to be strong, for what was to come. His eyes rested on the floor, admiring the handiwork and craft of the structure. It was clear it had been painstakingly constructed with the utmost care, with the signet of a Basilisk War Droid imprinted at the entrance.

Drums began to beat from outside the door, *boom... boom... boom...*

The door in front of the boy opened revealing low winds, light rain, and a small cadre of Mandalorians wearing all manner of Mandalorian armors lined on either side of the door, down a set of ornate stairs, and a few dozen meters towards the lake. The sound of the drum beat now rang throughout the Dathomirian's ears, his pulse increasing. Some held a banner pole attached to a flag that moved lightly in the strong breeze, each bearing the same signet as the floor inside the structure behind him. Taking a breath, he stepped forward two steps - stopping with the briefest moment of hesitation - before continuing. The Mandalorians gathered there studied and observed him, their visors staring piercing his soul.

The boy descended the stairs, approaching the ripping waters of the lake at a slow but constant pace. The air was cool, the breeze giving him small goosebumps along his bare arms as his simple boots pressed into the moist red dirt beneath his strides. The drumming continued as he moved, with a few Mandalorians falling in behind him.

A single figure stood waiting in the shallow edges of the expansive lake. Clad in a suit of tailored Mandalorian armor full of orange hues, he waited patiently with arms folded behind his back for the boy to arrive. When he did he wade his feet into the water, stepping ahead of the man and turning to face the assembled group. The beating drums stopped, with the sounds of the light rain connecting with the armors in the area breaking an almost eerie silence that then filled the air.

The armored man standing in front of him, back turned towards the crowd, broke his silence. His voice boomed.

“I have sponsored this foundling, the boy known as Zxyl, to join our clan and covert. He has suffered, and it is time he had a proper family. *Our family.*”

The boy’s eyes shifted momentarily to the group on the shore, before returning to the man.

“To join our *Creed*,” the orange-armored man began again, staring directly at the young Zxyl through his helmet, “You must recite the words of the *Creed*, and vow to follow its tenants as if it were your life. Do you agree to these terms?”

The Dathomirian nodded, his eyes meeting the onyx-black visor above.

“Very well... repeat after me. *I swear on my name and the names of the ancestors...*”

“That I shall walk the Way of the Mand’alor... And the words of the Creed shall be forever forged in my heart. I vow to never remove my helmet, by choice or by force.”

“*This is the way,*” the man concluded.

“*This is the way,*” Zxyl finished, unflinching.

The drums started beating again lightly, as the man reached up with an *Architect*-style Mandalorian helmet grasped within his hands and carefully placed it on Zxyl’s head, with several holes in the top sliding tightly over the boy’s small horns. It pressurized a moment later.

The Mandalorian reached up, holding the gray-skinned Dathomirian behind the head and laid him back in the water. It was *freezing cold*, and Zxyl’s body tensed as it was submerged. When he resurfaced, born again as a member of the *Mandalorian Creed*, those gathered cheered. A single tear ran down his gray cheek.

“You are now Zxyl **Bes’uliik**, of **Clan Bes’uliik**,” the man said firmly. The newly christened boy nodded. The two left the waters, with several approaching and patting them on the back. The work was not yet done. They continued upwards back to the structure, a beaming beacon of Mandalorian artistry and determination. Dark beams separated large panes of silvery but translucent glass, reflecting the red-dirt and pale sky world outside.

The Iron Forges

Bes'uliik Ancestral Home, Planet Nau'ur

Mandalore Sector, Outer Rim Territories

Two Mandalorians - the newly inducted Zxyl and the large, orange Mandalorian-armored man that accompanied him - entered into the Iron Forges, known as the heart of Clan Bes'uliik's ancestral home. It was here that the clan known for producing adept Mandalorian Armorers had forged beskar from the mines of Mandalore for centuries. The sound of hammer blows and metal sizzling filled the room, with the heat nearly unbearable for the unprotected skin of the Dathomirian as members of the clan continued preparing what beskar they had re-captured from The Great Purge for future foundling and born Mando'ade warriors.

They proceeded over to a small reclusive area with a free forging station, free from interruption.

"It is here," the larger Mandalorian began, picking up a beskar ingot and placing it in front of the young Zxyl, "That you will undertake your lessons to learn how beskar was sourced from the Mines of Mandalore, the arcane secrets of our craft - the *heart* of our culture - and the history of all of Mandalore. The secrets that have gone into the forging of countless armors and weapons in the Great Forge of Mandalore. It is here that you will eventually craft your own suit of armor and serve as a full member of our clan. You begin immediately."

The larger Mandalorian was not one to mince words, and the young Dathomirian had indeed begun immediately. Many sleepless nights carried on from that day forward, with the new Mandalorian spending nearly every waking moment in the Iron Forges. He studied the craft, the histories, and the cultures of Mandalore, making it as much his own as a born *Mando'ade*. He became a *bearer* of the culture itself, and ardently followed the *Way of the Manda'lor* as he did so.

Almost a year later, the time had come. With a growth spurt and adequate nourishment paired alongside consistent physical training, Zxyl had grown several inches and increased his body muscle. While there was more work to be done, he was adept in the craft and knowledge of Mandalore as a whole. The time had finally arrived for him to craft his own suit of armor. Pulled aside by his sponsor, the two stood inside a display room for previous members of Clan Bes'uliik.

The sponsor began pulling a set of armor off of display, laying out each piece in front of the Dathomirian-Mandalorian. It appeared ancient in its design, paired with subdued paint of golds, copper-reds, and blacks. When he was finally finished, the orange-armored Mandalorian motioned to each piece to explain its significance. Collectively, the armor plates were over four thousand years old, having served many prominent Mandalorians during such time - including to Mandalorian Armorers who had served alongside Manda'lors.

Zxyl Bes'uliik was tasked with forging his own armor from this set, starting a new chapter for the beskar it was made of. He did just that - spending a full day inside the Iron Forges alone melting down the existing pieces to forge his own suit. His hammer swung true and hard with the knowledge and technique he had learned, with the occasional blow causing him to reminisce and return to a previous time in his life. A time of great peril in his previous life, when he was rescued by his sponsor from an unforgivable deed, and his Mandalorian initiation ritual, all caused him heavy reflection.

The newly armored Dathomirian-Mandalorian emerged from the Iron Forges to return to the rest of his clan and covert with many waiting to see what he had chosen to do with the ancient armor he had been gifted. The result of his labors was a suit of Mandalorian armor that featured a traditional chestplate, thigh plate, kneepad, shin plate, and boot design, but differed from regular Mandalorian armor by featuring an oversized bell pauldron on one shoulder and a helmet tailored to his horns - with a separate mask that was reminiscent of ancient Manda'lors of legend. Two air lines ran from below the chin and over the collars to attach to a plate on the back. The armor was mostly gray in color, with a striped trim of red and gold running across several pieces.

Zxyl Bes'uliik was *finally* a full member of the Mandalorian culture, with a suit of armor to call his own. Now he just had to perfect his trade.

**Exchange Asteroid Facility *Hephaestus*
In High-Arx Orbit, Arx System
41 ABY**

As Zxyl finished the swinging of his beskar-forged gravity hammer *Nau'ur*, the flashbacks to his time as a Mandalorian foundling stopped. They were vivid memories, ones he re-lived frequently. He had come a long way since those days, having suffered much but growing stronger by ten fold. Clan Bes'uliik and its covert was no more, eliminated by a powerful Imperial Remnant group hellbent on gathering beskar for its own soldiers. The Dathomirian-Mandalorian was not alone, however, surrounded by many who shared the values of Mandalore and followed the *Mandalorian Creed*.

His armor had changed much, going through three additional iterations since his time as a foundling to the start of his third year as Regent of the Brotherhood. It now more closely honored the ancient Manda'lors of legend, nearly unrecognizable from the first time he had forged it.

Removing a rounded and concave-shaped thick rectangle of beskar from his anvil, he dipped it in the cooling agent to harden its shape. Once properly cooled, the piece was brought over to the nearby workbench, where he fitted it to the bottom of a complex but parallel piece, forming a vambrace. The Mandalorian Armorer slipped it over his wrist, ensuring proper fitment and comfort before squeezing his hand into a tight fist. The forward-most portion of the top of the vambrace snapped upwards, with an ashy-gray shoto lightsaber blade activating with complete silence a moment later, brightening his dark crimson visor.

It was a new time. Time the covert was reborn.