

"Reflections"

"He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster... When you gaze long into the abyss the abyss also gazes into you." -Nietzsche

Vic gazed into the reddish-black orbs of the Terminus helmet. It stared back at him impassive, his reflection distorted in its dead gaze.

"Who's going to be next?" Kets words echoed through his head as he ran his tongue over his newly chipped tooth. He leaned down and fished a bottle of Soccoran Rava from under his bunk and tried to wash the taste of the Sentinel IV out of his mouth.

He had sat for the better part of an hour trying to pull the trigger, but for the first time in his life lacked the guts to do so. He tossed the bottle back under his bunk and caught the faint glow of a name on his datapad.

Trevis Lorn.

Just a guy, doing a job. He could have been like any of us, Vic thought. And in the blink of an eye he sprayed the mans brains across an alley without even a thought. And he didnt even feel it. It had been so easy.

So Easy.

Just like killing the Dark Jedi Anjhai a month back. Vic felt a shiver run up his back when he thought about it. Coming up behind Anjhai, seeing the big cat with his lightsaber sparking and glowing, high above his head, ready to drop a killing blow on his friend Baal.

It had never been easier to pull the trigger. And he did, sending three bolts with marksman like precision into Anjhai's back, liquefying any major organ worthy of note, and snuffing the life out of the huge cat instantaneously.

It was then that he heard the voice.

So easy. So very easy. It was a cold lifeless voice, one that Vic didn't recognize, but was in his head nonetheless. It prodded him along, to use his power, his ability to kill. Not even to think, just to shoot.

And it hadn't gone away. For the last month it had echoed throughout his mind. Especially when he slid his head into the tight glove-like fit of his Terminus helmet. Its

anonymity allowing him to do things that no normal man should take any sort of pleasure in doing.

And so it happened again. On a routine information gathering trip with Baal, Vic had donned the helmet once more and headed out into the world. Not as Vic Palisades, or Rodbo Valance or any of a number of aliases he had been using to cover his ass.

He was Terminus.

Everyone became a target, everyone a potential shooter. Anyone could have been Ket. Upon receiving the pelt of a former team mate in the mail and a holovid of his rebel control being beaten like a dog in an imperial prison yard, Terminus took no chances.

Baal had decided to go along, and Terminus had made his contact and gotten his information. It was at that point that Vic became detached. Like he had been pulled from his body and dropped into a holovid theater in the front row. The man had turned his back to Baal and Terminus. Had gone to walk away. Had divulged information that would only go to help the group.

And became a target.

A liability.

Another loose end.

Vic watched with horror as two Sentinels cleared their holsters and Terminus brought them up inches from Tervis Lorn's head.

Baal's eyes grew wide as energy burst from the barrels, two shots that glowed and eerie red and lit up the alleyway like a slaughterhouse. They slammed into the skull and split it open, spraying brain matter across the walls and covering Terminus in a fine red mist.

Baal walked away muttering something about not killing, but it was clear the act had not registered with the Cat. Not completely. Terminus stood looking down at the smoking hole that used to be the man's head.

So easy.

Too Easy.

Terminus's voice.

"Whos going to be next?" Vic dropped the helmet to his chest and could almost see Ket laughing at him. Just a slight pull in the red and black mask he wears to let you know he's grinning.

"Bastard" Vic muttered to himself.

He closed his eyes and thought of Vol Kol.

The planets lush green forests, the glow that seemed to hang over the Royal Palace from the sun glinting off of the white marble structure.

He had honor then. And friends, and family. A Lieutenant in the Ivory Brigade, the elite military unit sworn to protect an entire planet.

His armor was white. Clean, polished to a mirror like sheen and dapper than the most expensive robes.

It was a royal military parade. He could see his mother and father and sister in the stands on the royal courtyard, cheering him on. The rows upon rows of white armored soldiers glinted like diamonds in the bright noon sunlight. Next to him Sadik murmured under his voice.

"Whats wrong Tailgunner?" Vic asked, using a nickname Sadik received due to his twi'lek origins.

"This armor makes my eyes hurt,always has." The twi'lek responded, squinting.

Vic felt laughter rising up inside of him and repressed it. "Dont worry pal, when we get to the reception, I'll buy you enough Corellian Brandy so that you wouldn't notice a White Dwarf sitting across the table from you."

Sadik, still squinting, smiled back, his razor sharp teeth showing between his lips, "I hope you brought lots of credits my friend" he responded.

It was a good day. They had spent the remainder of it drinking and laughing. Vic could still see Rico and Sadik swapping boot camp stories while Zarius complained he looked like a cloud formation, his large solid frame almost bursting from the white armor.

Then the dark times came. And Vic found himself exiled, drifting from one odd job to the next, from one crime lord to another. Working as protection just to try to save some money, just enough to make it to the next job. Just like Trevis Lorn. Just some guy trying to make it on his own in a big universe.

Vic squeezed the helmet in his hands and felt the harsh sharp ridges digging grooves into his flesh. The Weeuqay top knot fell down across his hands and he could still feel the stickiness of Trevis' blood in it.

Somewhere on the ship Chance cursed out loud and threw what sounded like a hydrosponder against the hull.

"Master?"

"Yeah?"

The droid pointed to the helmet in Vics hands. "I was just wondering, do you need me to do some routine maintenance on your helmet?"

Vic looked back down into the helmets dead gaze.

So easy.

"No. No that wont be necessary Tenspot." Vic said and slung the helmet across the cabin, where it banked off of the lid of his spacers chest and dropped down with a mettalic "clank" on top of his light repeating blaster.

"As a matter of fact," Vic said, pulling a fifty cred chip from his coveralls and tossing it to the droid, who barely managed to catch it, "Head over to the repair bay and grab some grey paint. I want you to repaint my armor , Im tired of black."

"Consider it done boss," the droid replied and began to hover off.

"Oh, and Ten Spot...."

The droid stopped and turned back towards his owner. "Yes?"

"Pick up some white paint too."

The droid tilted his head. "White?"

"Yeah," Vic said leaning back in his bunk, "Just in case."

THE END