“Keep them coming.”

Arden couldn’t help but mutter to himself as he stared down the barrel of his rifle. The Nancoran sun glinted off the armor of the two so called huntresses he’d already dispatched. He could sense more in the vicinity, but their numbers and precise locations were eluding him. Perhaps it was their superior knowledge of the terrain, perhaps it was his growing thirst, but something was throwing him off. Still, his aim was true and with good cover and the camo netting he’d packed in his mission kit before his ship managed to get shot down, Arden figured he had a good chance of dropping enough of his pursuers to give himself some time. He couldn’t tell from here, but he had to imagine the huntresses had supplies, maybe even comms. All he had to was be patient and wait for their compatriots to come out.

Or sneak up behind him.

Arden got sufficient warning from the Force to roll out of the way of the first strike from some sort of whip. Dropping his rifle, he quickly pulled his pistol but before he could aim a shot, he could see the cord of the whip wrapping around the weapon. With a swift tug, the pistol was yanked from his hand by what appeared to be a female Chiss. As he got up to make a run for it, he could feel the cord of the whip wrapping around his thigh and a split second later, a painful shock running through his whole body. As he faceplanted into the sand, he could make out two other huntresses approaching, energy bows pointed directly at his head. Before he could move or say anything, another came shock from the whip. As he blacked out, he could hear a dissatisfied chortle from his assailant.

When he came to, the first sensation he got was that of the sand that was up was up his nose. As he reflexively pushed up a bit to sneeze, he could feel a heavy weight force his body back into the sand. As the sensation became clearer, he could feel what was clearly the heel of a boot on his shoulder blades while others had a firm hold of his arms. A moment later he heard the all too familiar clicks of binder cuffs locking into place. As they did, the boot heel released from his shoulders and he was jerked up into a sitting position. As he blinked the sand from his eyes, he could see two more armed huntresses with their bows in a ready position as well as the form of the Chiss from earlier. Arden then heard her speek.

“This is Icasta. We have the target, requesting pickup.”

After getting a curt affirmative response, the Chiss looked at Arden.

“Two days. You made me track you for two whole days.”

The disdain was clear in her voice, he had killed two of her soldiers, it was only fair. Heck, he’d be crotchety after spending two days outside on this rock.

Arden shook his head slightly. “Had to make you work for it.”

The Chiss responded with swift kick to his solar plexus. After a couple breaths she looked him straight in the eye, her artificial eye making her already intense glare that much more penetrating.

“While I’m sure others will have many questions for you before your execution, I only have one. Why the flare? Why give away your position?”

Arden looked up at the Chiss to meet her gaze and smiled. “So you’d catch me and then give away yours by calling for extraction.”

Iscata looked at him confused, “What do you mean?”

“My people are capable of cracking comms too you know. I was making progress after only 6 hours. You really don’t think they haven’t been looking just as hard for me? I didn’t have long range comms, you did. I bet she’ll send Ronovi, you’ll like her. And I better be alive when she gets here.”

Iscata glared at Arden. “Then I guess the race is on.”

Arden nodded. “50 credits on Ronovi.”