

# The Bounty Hunter Association

By Bryan Clark

## **Chapter 1**

Vludoc paced back and forth in the common area marking in a grove five feet wide contemplating what to do next. Taiah, his partner in crime and notorious bounty hunter, sat relaxed on the couch observing his annoying bantering and consistent movements. "Give it a rest Vlu, we lost the prize and lost the day. The best thing we can do is either move on or risk our lives again. But they will be prepared should we go back."

Vludoc stopped suddenly and caught a glimpse of a shadow out the window. "We've got company. Looked like a Chancer from the Ville." Without hesitation Taiah jumped up from the couch and bolted for her control room. Vludoc withdrew his blaster pistol from his side arm and did a barrel roll behind the wall next to the opening of the front door.

Taiah pushed open the door to her control room, upon entering she saw a dimly lit room with computer monitors lined against the entirety of one of the 6 foot wide walls. Another wall had a neatly list of papers with individual faces and some with just company names on them, all marked with a red x, except for one. The third side of the room was where she had her overnight bunk and gear for her late night days in the "office".

Taiah realized who ever was invading knew where to find her power supplies, defensive cameras, and weapons lining the territory surrounding their base of operations. She had been betrayed. Quickly she flicked on all the back up power supplies and back up weaponry. Immediately, as her control room came back to life, alarms sounded from every direction. Turrets started firing in different directions, minor explosions sounded and the cries of men screaming in agony could be heard every where. As a final comfort of good measure, she released the hounds to defend the area. Then suddenly she heard a loud BANG and came rushing out of the control room already withdrawing her double pistols.

Vludoc, already impatient from losing his fortune, had enough waiting for the intruders and charged the door. At that exact moment, a Chancer burst open the door just in time to get tackled by Vludoc. They both went outside and off the porch, rolling locked into each other exchanging elbows and knees to the gut. The two finally crashed into a tree. Vludoc hit the tree first and harder, taking the wind out of him and his blaster pistol sliding off just out of reach as the Chancer pounced on his chest and started throwing punches as Vludoc struggled to defend himself. The Chancer started getting excited and lifted himself off Vludocs chest a little too high to throw the next punch; feeling this lift of pressure, he shoved his knees into the Chancers back, flinging him from atop Vludoc. Vludoc immediately rolled over to his side and grabbed his pistol and made a precise shot between the Chancers forehead.

As the excitement of the first encounter faded, Vludoc noticed the sounds of gun fire and dogs barking and men screaming everywhere. He quickly got to his feet and headed outwards into the dense forest to meet his opponents on his terms in his battlefield.

Vludoc darted through the shadows easily blending in under the cover of darkness due to his dark jeans, black long sleeve shirt, and silky black hair concealing his tan skin. Unsatisfied with even this level of concealment, Vludoc pressed a button on his tightly form fitting watch. Within a second Vludoc vanished from sight as the optical engines engaged throughout the area and pinged onto his vanisensors. Vlu and Taiah's territory are hard wired with state of the art optical engines, allowing users to set up an entire range field that will activate patches called vanisensors that, when attached to a part of the body, will cover a certain height and width of the user, combined with patch registration and a supporting field, vanisensors conform the entire body leaving no awkward bulky square invisibility other users have to deal with.

Finally achieving complete invisibility, Vludoc reached his first waypoint. He quickly found the switch he was looking for and jammed the button in, activating all the bullet-proof flood lights. With a sly smile, Vludoc raised his gun forward, firing a blaster shot right in the back of an unsuspecting Chancer who tried with great urgency to no avail to shoot out the light revealing his location. As the Chancer fell to the ground, Vludoc saw the Chancers' head disappear as it hit the ground. Quickly, he fired again, this time adding an electric shock charge to the bolt. In an instant, electricity engulfed an entire area he just shot six feet tall and three feet wide. "You guys are making this too easy..." Vludoc said coolly as he walked over to the now crippled body and fired a lethal unforgiving shot to the back of the Chancers head.

Taiah rushed back into the common area where all this begin and saw the front door open and a dead Chancer on the ground by the porch. Taiah grunted and check her ammo packets in her gun while muttering "Alright let's get out there and take my home back. Weston, inject the area map and all hostiles and friendlies to my uplink." Weston her autonomous AI quickly responded in its grizzly voice. "And what of your traps and weaponry in the area?" "No need, I know exactly where they are." On her way out the door Taiah saw herself in the mirror and stopped in a brief shock.

She was wearing a silver backdoor military grade issue vest fitted with her own version of useful gadgets. Underneath she wore a dark red tightly sleeved shirt to increase her maneuverability. She had no problems with her hair because she enjoyed her right to keep it short and dark blue, stopping just below her ear lobe. Her face was something to be desired by many women she ever met, revealing a soft complexion blue eyes and defined lips. She was utterly beautiful with the exception of one key thing about her. Her left eye was completely replaced with a false electronic eye that appeared exactly the same as a normal one would. Three wires extended from where crows feet would come in. One trailed to her temples, another directly to her ear, and the third followed her jaw line ending right before her dimple. The cybernetics were detailed and refined but most people are still having problems trusting cybernetics as the new frontier of human evolution. Taiah was not one of those people. As she continued looking down she saw that her right leg was missing and jumped a foot in the air and quickly realized what happened. "Damn it Vlu". Taiah quickly used her uplink and detected the vanisensor on her leg and removed it as she ran out the door to accompany Vludoc.

## **Chapter 2**

Leth peered outside the top floor window of the General Merchant Traders compound, analyzing the latest attack that had recently occurred an hour ago. He watched as his men ran around the five acre perimeter putting out fires and double checking all entry points. Four large

buildings stretched out past the tower. Each one stood three stories high forming a diamond pattern circling the GMT tower, which stretched itself another twenty stories high. The land outside the GMTs perimeter constantly battled with the thirty foot electric fencing, constantly zapping the infestation of shrubbery and dense forest. Despite the aftermath and chaos, the environment continued on with the serene warmth emitting from the settling sun in the west marking dusk. The sweet embrace of the night breeze was nullified to a dull roar as a full moon began to rise from the east.

It was probably the sloppiest most unprepared response he had seen his men take since he became the CEO of GMT. If it had not been for him taking control of the situation and seemingly knowing exactly where they'd go and meeting them at every turn point, he probably would've lost the compounds' fortunes and been forced to retire early. They were good, all three of them, Leth thought as a knock on the door invaded his thought process. "Come in."

The faint sound of metal colliding with the ground and dull twists of gears accompanied every other step. "Sir, we've successfully fended off the invasion of the compound and detected their entry point. Our forensics division is scouring their known whereabouts looking for DNA samples to identify who they were. What are your orders?" Asked the Watch Captain as he stood firmly at attention. "There is no need Captain. You won't find anything of use except from the one you captured and if they are as good as they demonstrated they wouldn't have been careless enough to give us anything of use. Besides, I've already won. Prepare your men for retaliation." Leth said confidently. The Watch Captain looked confused in his bosses' direction. "Sir, we have nothing and we are just now about to bring the prisoner to the interrogation chamber to reveal where they are hiding and their known affiliates."

Leth turned around finally facing the man he had been talking to. He towered over the five foot seven man. He had broad shoulders and a muscular physic. His hair was black, forged into a high and tight. His skin was dark and his face was calm even with an outrageous scar starting from his left brow down to his right cheek and his rugged jaw line intimidated cowardly men. "Prepare your men." Leth said colder and a little harsher.

The Watch Captain took a step back and quickly nodded firing back his response. "Yes sir, we will be ready to go in an hour once the safeguards are back up."

"We will leave in thirty; whatever you haven't brought back online will have to suffice."

"Yes sir."

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Voldiur started regaining consciousness, his vision was blurry and the sounds around him were muffled. He could barely make out what they said. Solitaire? Collar tear? Then, a jolt shot to all his nervous systems and everything became clear as he clicked his heels together. Suddenly he was hyper aware and knew this time without a doubt. Solitary. He was being dragged by his arms. One man to each limb and another two a couple paces in front of him and two more behind him walking right by his knee caps. They didn't see the sudden movement in his feet. They were being sloppy because they won. Voldiur continued to feign his unconsciousness and he quickly observed through the slants in his eyes and his rabbit like hearing. The two holding him had their blaster rifles on their back and the other four were at a relaxed carry looking forward. Each one

had a side arm on their legs. They were even more careless not to bind him. A cold chill brushed through his neck, we are about to go outside. "Let's make this quick, if boss sees us using this shortcut again we are dead." Stated one of the guards up front.

The two in the front row opened and moved quickly through the open field to the next door as one of the men in the back row held open the door to the exit of the hallway. Now's my chance thought Voldiur. In a blink of an eye Voldiur pulled his feet inward and sprang forward shoving both shoulders into the sides of the two men carrying him. As Voldiur broke free of the men he disarmed their side arms and quickly fired two shots forward hitting both men towards the next door in the back as he rolled forward. The men holding him fell forward, dropping their rifles as the man behind Voldiur rose his weapon to fire. Voldiur halted himself in mid roll so his back was facing the ground and quickly put two blaster bolts into the readying guards face and stomach. He then turned over onto his left side and put one more shot to the guard holding the doors' face before he could react properly. Voldiur then kicked his legs out into a hurricane like spiral and propelled his body off the ground to meet his final two opponents.

The guards quickly reacted in unison as one activated his energy shield with electric short staff while the other drew his dual electric eskrimas. Voldiur instinctively shot at the dual wielder. The shielder gracefully moved in front of him jamming out his left forearm to deflect the bolts while conducting a 360 degree spin slapping the two blaster pistols out of Voldiurs' hands. The dual wielder was already in a mid roll as the shielder was completing his spin readying to sweep Voldiur low. Seeing this he jumped as high as a five foot eight man could jump and tucked his legs up high as the dual wielder passed from under him. He fell back towards the ground and kicked off the dual wielders' back springing him forward and dived under the shielders' shield and jolted himself up, upper cutting the man and disorientating him enough he dropped his electric short staff.

Voldiur quickly grabbed the staff on the ground as the dual wielder caught Voldiur in the back as he threw one of his own eskrimas. Voldiur reeled back in brief agony as he rolled a few feet away from the men. All three of the men stood up ready to begin the second bout. The dual wielder picked up his second eskrima and went back into formation with his shielder. Voldiur readied his short staff and charged before he could give the two another chance to regroup. This time he was ready as he anticipated the shielders opening move and instantly stayed just out of distance of the swing and saw the dual wielder dived towards him again. "Didn't anyone ever tell you not to use the same technique twice in a row?" Voldiur said smugly as he jammed the short staff in the dual wielders face instantly knocking him out. Without hesitation Voldiur picked up one of the eskrimas and quickly deflected the shield with the staff and stabbing the shielders elbow with the eskrima discharging the power supply on the energy shield. Voldiur then slammed the short staff to the guards' neck, leaving him to suffocate on his wound.

Voldiur took the short staff sheath of his opponent and put away his new weapon while grabbing a blaster rifle off the ground. "Better go check if the others are alive." Muttered Voldiur as he then fired his rifle into the back of the unconscious mans head. "Don't take it personally; your boss would've done the same." Voldiur said to the suffocating man while he applied his patches and activated his reserve vanisensors and vanished from sight.