

DARTH MAUL

Book I, Part III

Jedi Padawan Eldra Kaitis is the prisoner of profiteering gangster Xev Xrexus. Xrexus has gathered the most dangerous crime bosses in the galaxy to participate in a nefarious auction to purchase the Padawan.

Little does Xrexus know, Sith apprentice Darth Maul has infiltrated the auction. With a group of bounty hunters – including Cad Bane and Aurra Sing – Maul plans on purchasing or kidnapping the Padawan. Maul plans on kidnapping the Padawan, and then killing her, in order to satiate his desire for vengeance against the Jedi.

But Maul's Master – the mysterious Darth Sidious – has forbidden Maul from interacting with the Jedi. Maul operates in secrecy, knowing that he will face severe punishment if Sidious discovers his disobedience....

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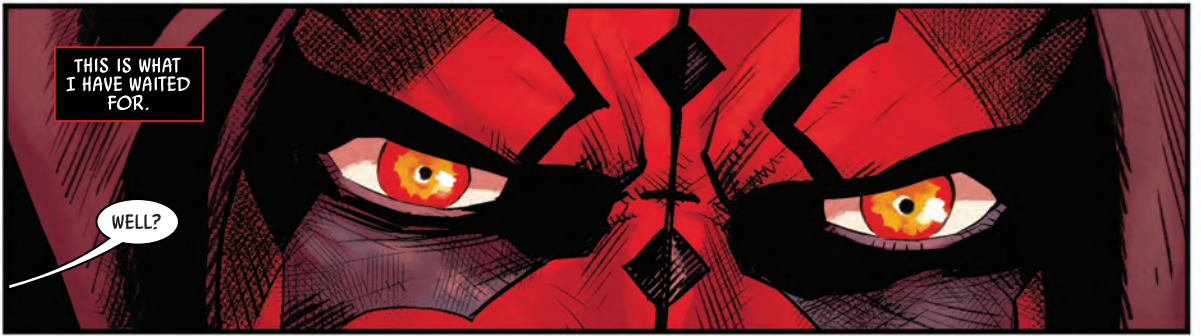
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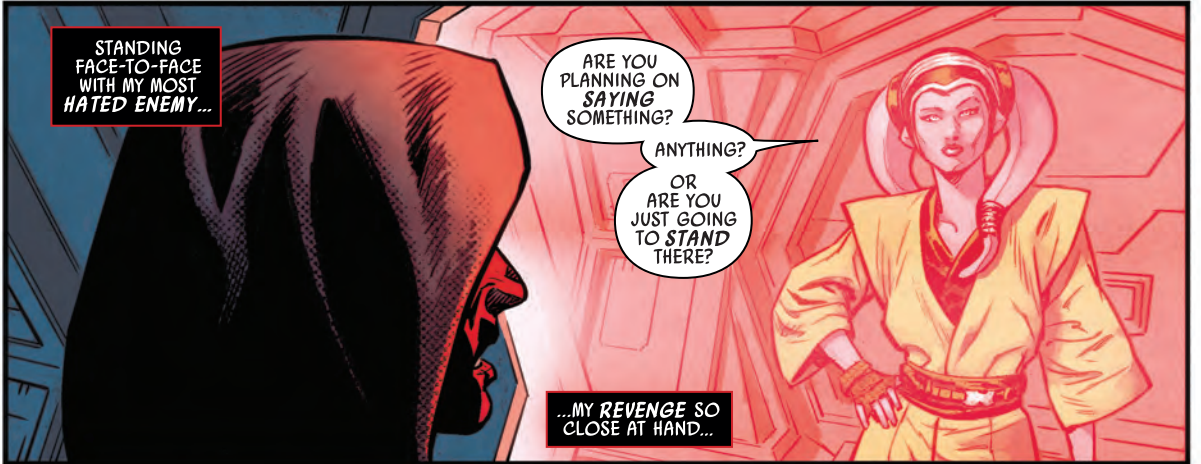
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THIS IS WHAT I HAVE WAITED FOR.

WELL?



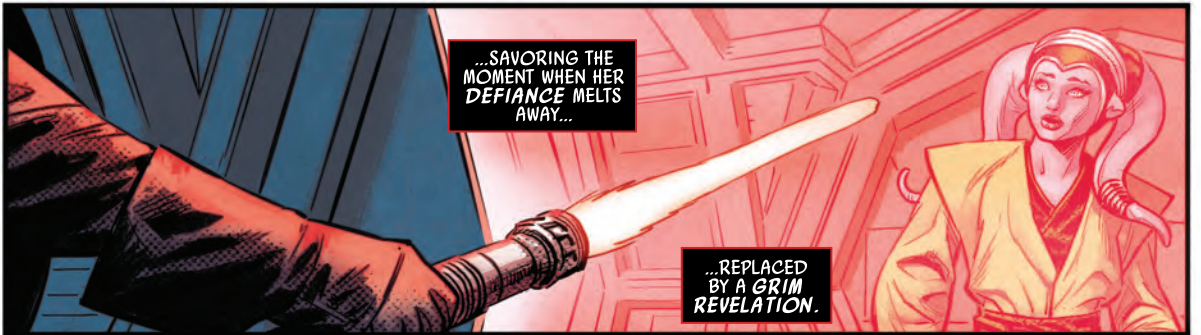
STANDING FACE-TO-FACE WITH MY MOST HATED ENEMY...

ARE YOU PLANNING ON SAYING SOMETHING?

ANYTHING?

OR ARE YOU JUST GOING TO STAND THERE?

...MY REVENGE SO CLOSE AT HAND...



...SAVORING THE MOMENT WHEN HER DEFIANCE MELTS AWAY...

...REPLACED BY A GRIM REVELATION.



SHE DOESN'T FULLY UNDERSTAND WHO IT IS THAT STANDS BEFORE HER...

WHO...
...WHAT ARE YOU?

...BUT COLD FEAR UNCOILS WITHIN HER. SHE UNDERSTANDS ON A PRIMAL LEVEL--



--THE SITH HAVE RETURNED.



SHON SHONSHO

TUT-TUT, OH,
TUT-TUT.

I'M AFRAID
THIS IS AN
EGREGIOUS
VIOLATION OF
PROTOCOL.

YOU'RE
NOT ALLOWED
HERE.

THIS AREA
IS STRICTLY
OFF-LIMITS,
BUT I'M SURE
YOU KNEW
THAT.

MY...
APOLOGIES.

MY ACTIONS
WERE RASH,
I KNOW.

BUT I SIMPLY
HAD TO SEE THE
PADAWAN FIRSTHAND
BEFORE THE AUCTION
BEGAN.

RASH,
INDEED.

MY OTHER
GUESTS WOULD BE
OH-SO-DISAPPOINTED
IF THEY KNEW THAT ONE
OF THE OTHER BIDDERS
WERE AFFORDED SOME
PRIVILEGE THEY
WERE NOT.

AND I
DON'T THINK
ANYONE WOULD WANT
TO DISAPPOINT
CLIENTELE OF THIS
CALIBER.

IT'S SIMPLY
BAD FOR
BUSINESS.



WHO ARE YOU?

MY NAME IS...SERIS MADRETH.

I REPRESENT THE HADDREX CONSORTIUM.



"CONSORTIUM"? DEAR BOY, LET'S CALL YOUR EMPLOYERS WHAT THEY ARE.

A GANG, YES?

AND I'M ASSUMING THEY WOULD BE NONE TOO PLEASED WITH ONE OF THEIR REPRESENTATIVES RUNNING OFF ON WHAT LOOKS LIKE MUST BE AN UNAUTHORIZED EXCURSION.

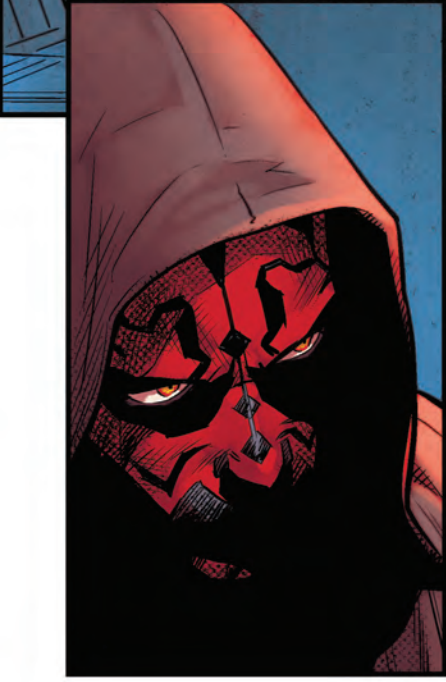
IT WOULD BE...FOR THE BEST IF THIS COULD BE KEPT BETWEEN US.



I SEE NO REASON WE SHOULDN'T AVOID ANY UNPLEASANTNESS. AFTER ALL, I APPRECIATE A LITTLE RASHNESS EVERY NOW AND THEN.

JUST MAKE SURE IT DOESN'T HAPPEN AGAIN, YES? I WOULD SO HATE TO VAPORIZE YOU.

BUT MY FORGIVING NATURE HAS ITS LIMITS.



PATIENCE,
THEN.

ALWAYS
PATIENCE.

MY MASTER...IF HE
KNEW ABOUT MY
PLANS...WOULD LIKELY
FIND THIS *AMUSING*.



I'VE RUN THE
CALCULATIONS,
AND I'M AFRAID
YOU WILL NOT BE
PLEASSED WITH
THE RESULTS.

KEEP
TALKING,
DROID.

BASED ON
THE FUNDS
WE HAVE
ON BOARD...

...AND COMPARED TO
APPROXIMATIONS
OF THE FUNDS THE
OTHER BIDDERS WILL
HAVE AVAILABLE...

...THE PROBABILITY
OF OUR PLACING
THE WINNING BID
IS BARELY WORTH
MENTIONING.

