



Futuristic Cybernetic Faerie Assassin Hasballah

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I ONLY TOOK THE JOB BECAUSE I NEEDED THE MONEY. I ONLY needed the money because Bunny needed the money. Bunny needed the money because she owed it to Kleigschtomper. Kleigschtomper wanted his money.

Regardless, it was a warm, sunny day when I sat on a rock in the open field we always met in and talked to Jenhoff, my agent, about the job itself.

“Hasballah, I couldn’t give less of a damn about why you’re taking the job . . .”

“I’m telling you about Kleigschtomper here. He . . .”

“I know Kleigschtomper. I’ve worked with Kleigschtomper. Bunny should have known better than to get in debt to Kleigschtomper.” Jenhoff shook her head slowly, her sharply sloping ears poking out under her long dark hair. Her wings buzzed annoyance and she fidgeted with a folder that sat in her lap like a bomb.

“Fun name though, isn’t it? Kleigschtomper. I just like saying it.”

“You like saying it when it isn’t being gasped out of you with his hand around your neck as you beg for life.”

“I don’t deny this. Fine.” I ran a hand through my shoulder length blond hair and took a deep breath, settling my own wings so their movements wouldn’t betray my anxiousness to get the job and get it done. “You don’t care about the deeper causes and meanings of my existence, or Bunny’s.”

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“What’s the job?”

“It’s shit.”

“Thanks, Jenn. Build morale some more, why don’t you?”

“Not my job. My job is to hand you, Mister Killer man, a file.” She tossed a folder into my lap. “And tell you to kill someone. Him, in the file. Kill him.”

With that, she got up and left me alone in the field, folder unopened in my lap. Sighing—I did a lot of sighing, it felt like—I stood and wandered out of the field, flipping through the folder as I went.

The target’s name was Ugh, no last name given. He was an Ogre. I mean a real Ogre: large, smelly, lived in a cave, tusks . . . the works. I felt another sigh coming on. Ogres weren’t exactly easy to kill. Not even for the best of the best. Which would be me.

There weren’t many assassins who were faeries to begin with, these days. We were considered too small to be a serious threat to the larger races. All too often, it was one of the larger races someone needed assassinated.

Since the fall of Man and the return of Magery and our older ways, most disputes were settled in a civilized manner: sword to the face, mace to the neck, acceptable societal situational handlers.

It just so happened, though, that sometimes it didn’t work too well that way. You might have the moral high ground, but a weak sword arm. Times like those, you wanted an assassin. If you were really smart, you wanted an assassin who was small enough and fast enough to not be caught. Too many people didn’t think of that part.

Furthermore, the really critical point, you wanted an assassin who had cybernetic implants and fought dirty on your behalf. Sure, I traded in my left arm for a hunk of metal and wires, and an eye, and my liver and right foot and a few other bits and pieces here and there, all in the name of old Man tech. It made me a whole lot more fun to be around, but we all had to make a living.

I filled a niche.

I took to the air and buzzed my way back to the tree. Flashing my metal eye at a sensor hidden under a leaf deactivated the security. I walked in to see Bunny sitting around, counting what was left of her money.

“Hasbutt,” she said merrily, kicking her feet against the legs of her chair, “did you get a job?”

“I got,” I said, waving the folder, “a job. Ogre, though.”

“Ooo man, I hate Ogres.”

“You don’t have to kill this one.”

“Well that’s good, considering that I hate them and wouldn’t want to even get close to it. Besides, you’re the guy.”

I walked over to her and ruffled her hair, laughing. What most people never realized was that Bunny was the dangerous one. Oh sure, I can take down a bunch