

SPECTACULUM

Written by

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Based on *The Mandalorian*

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**TEASER**

FADE IN:

PRE-LAP: Grogu WAILS.

INT. THE RAZOR CREST - COCKPIT - NIGHT

As Mando pilots the *Razor Crest*, Grogu, strapped safely into his seat, CRIES and waves his arms around and just generally makes a nuisance out of himself.

Mando glances over at the kid and HUFFS.

MANDO

...What's wrong? You sick?

Grogu's sobs are interrupted when the kid COUGHS once, twice, three times. Then, he STARTS UP AGAIN.

Mando continues piloting, doing his best to ignore the kid.

Grogu SNEEZES --

-- and the ship swerves violently off course.

Mando GRUNTS as he wrests the *Razor Crest* back under control, then turns to Grogu in newfound alarm.

MANDO (CONT'D)

Fine. I know someone.

He adjusts a lever on the ship, then...

EXT. SPACE - THE RAZOR CREST - NIGHT

...swings the ship around.

PRE-LAP: the ship LANDS and its engine TURNS OFF.

EXT. TAKODANA - BUSTLING MARKET - DAY

The air fills with the chaotic CHATTER of crowds. Mando stalks the Takodanan market, a SNIFFLING Grogu in his arms.

Aliens of every species form the masses. Colourful banners and flyers are plastered across every available surface. Multicoloured flags crisscross the sky.

Many of the flyers Mando passes feature a zygerrian congratulating a shistavanen crowned in golden laurels.

Those ads read: *"The Traveling Spectaculum Is Back In Town!"*

In a clearing between stalls, a gleaming DROID acts as town crier, performing for a small group made up of every kind of alien one could imagine: kyuzo, human, troig, etc.

Mando pauses by the group to listen in.

DROID

Listen up, folks; listen up! Come see the Traveling Spectaculum, on-planet for one night only; thrown in the honor of the reigning champion, Vuulf! Thrown by Emperor Zinor, of course. There will be a venatio, a hoverchariot race, and a gladiator fight to top the whole thing off! All can sign up to compete to win the oh-so mysterious grand prize. PUGN (ABUNT) - they will fight!

The crowd MURMURS amongst one another. Mando stares at the droid for a moment. He shakes his head.

As Mando trudges further into the market, Grogu COUGHS, then SNIFFLES, then begins WAILING.

Stiffening in alarm, Mando looks down at the kid, then around at market-goers, who are beginning to stare at them.

HUFFING, Mando turns around and begins walking back the way he came. He pats Grogu awkwardly on the head to try and quiet the kid down. He's unsuccessful.

As Mando pulls out his comms, the crowds of the Takodanan market seem to swallow him whole. The comms DIAL and RING.

INT. DOC'S OFFICE - DAY

A run-down, jam-packed doctor's office. Shelves line the walls filled with jars of herbs, salves, and concoctions, but the jars have cracks and the shelves are semi-rotted.

MANDO (O.C.)

...what happened to you?

A curious Grogu, in Mando's arms, makes grabby hands at a nearby shelf, to no avail. Mando, for his part, looks to...

...DOC (133), a tired, grandfatherly, turquoise kyuzo doctor whose temporary, makeshift offices here on Takodana are only mildly illegal. He wears a shield-shaped hat and speaks in Kyuzo-accented Basic.

DOC  
Hello, Doc. Nice to see you, Doc.  
How's the office, Doc?

Mando stares at Doc. Doc, unimpressed, stares back.

Grogu breaks the silence with a SNIFFLE.

Doc and Mando look at him. Doc gestures vaguely at Grogu.

DOC (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
So, the problem's with the little one, then? Good thing I was on-planet, then. How's your leg, by the way?

Mando nods curtly.

MANDO  
He's got a cold. And the leg's fine, thanks.

DOC  
Well, that'll be no problem. Though I do hope you're ready to pay me for curing him.

Mando stares at Doc. He wouldn't be here if he couldn't pay.

DOC (CONT'D)  
Yes, yes, you wouldn't be here if you couldn't pay, I'm aware.

MANDO  
The cost?

DOC  
A favour, today.

Mando nods. Motions for Doc to go on.

DOC (CONT'D)  
I'm assuming you heard about the Spectaculum on your way here?

Grogu slips from Mando's arms and waddles around the office. He pokes and prods at Doc's various herbal accoutrement and glass jars of oils and salves.

DOC (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
 Enter it. I want their grand prize.  
 There's someone I need to find.

MANDO  
 ...And the prize is?

Doc blinks in surprise.

DOC  
 You didn't hear? Word on the street  
 is those bastards got their paws on  
 a Headhunter to offer up to today's  
 winner.

Mando looks at Doc, startled.

MANDO  
 That's a rare find.  
 (considering)  
 This have something to do with your  
 wife 'nd kids not being here?

Doc scowls.

DOC  
 If you must know, my wife and son  
 are vacationing on Chyron.

Mando stares.

Doc shuffles his feet awkwardly.

DOC (CONT'D)  
 ...ex-wife.

Grogu looks up from where he's hanging around Doc's feet.

MANDO  
 And your... daughter?

Doc pointedly averts his eyes, refusing to answer. Mando  
 considers him for a moment, then shakes his head.

Scooping up Grogu into his arms, Mando heads to the door.

Right at the exit, Grogu SNEEZES.

Three of Doc's glass jars of herbs levitate via the Force.  
 They hang in the air for one moment, two moments, three.

The room holds its breath, until Grogu COUGHS and --

-- the jars fall to the floor and SHATTER.

Grogu, in Mando's arms, starts CRYING.

Mando and Doc both stare at the mess.

They stare at Grogu.

They stare at one another.

DOC

...So I'm assuming that's new.

Mando nods slowly.

DOC (CONT'D)

Rrrrrright. Well. How about you give me the little guy, and I figure out how to cure the Force-sensitive toddler, and you go win me that Headhunter, hm?

Mando doesn't love this, but Doc opens his arms invitingly. Hesitantly, Mando offers Grogu to the kyuzo, who cradles the kid carefully.

Once positive Grogu is in Doc's arms, Mando tries to draw away - only for Grogu to WHINE and cling to his wrists.

Mando freezes.

Doc CHUCKLES and gently detaches Grogu from Mando, COOING at the little guy until he babbles out a GIGGLE.

Mando looks at the two of them, hesitant to leave.

DOC (CONT'D)

(wry)

It's not unusual for a sick infant to not want to leave their parent.

Mando HUFFS at the teasing and turns his back.

MANDO

Don't let him out of your sight.

DOC

Who do you take me for?

Mando shakes his head and reluctantly leaves.

MANDO

(muttering)

Got a bad feeling about this...

DOC  
We'll be just fine, you worrywart!  
Now leave! Out! Shoo!

The instant Mando is out the door, Grogu SNIFFLES, then SNEEZES again.

There's an unknown CRASH and Doc's smile tightens.

DOC (CONT'D)  
Probably fine.

Grogu SNEEZES once more, and half the lab EXPLODES with it.

INT./EXT. DOC'S OFFICE - DAY

Doc stands half outdoors his wrecked lab, covered in soot, Grogu in his arms.

DOC  
Uh-oh.

CUT TO CREDITS.

**END OF TEASER**

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. TAKODANA - TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENAS - DAY

An avian alien swoops through the sky.

Beneath it, the three arenas of the Traveling Spectaculum dominate the landscape.

Arena 1: a gigantic glass dome of an amphitheatre. Above the glass floats beautiful abstract glass shapes, hovering via electromagnetism.

Arena 2: a wild, sprawling forest surrounded by imposing wrought-iron gates which a winding racetrack snakes through.

Arena 3: a colossal sandstone structure. Hulking, intricate sculptures of various aliens dot the outside, looming over the tiny people like snakes over ants.

The avian, with a flap of its wings, swings around and changes direction. It soars through the air and into the distance until it's almost a speck.

A lurking shadow dwarfs the speck. It's a ship heading towards the docking area; a shiny, brutalist, silver aircraft with cannons so obvious it's certain the owner is compensating for something.

In its front, a giant window, with a figure at its helm.

The figure - the shistavanen from the market's ads - smiles.

EXT. TAKODANA - BUSTLING MARKET - DAY

For a moment, Mando pauses to watch the ships arriving in the distance, CHATTERING crowds swarming them like paparazzi.

Then Mando shakes his head and continues stomping through the market, ignoring vendors VYING for his attention.

Rounding a corner, he bumps, literally, into RED (12), a turquoise kyuzo in too-big clothes, a shield-shaped hat, and goggles. She falls to the ground with a THUMP.

Mando offers her a hand up, and from the ground she CHATTERS at him in her native tongue of Kyuzo. She seems offended.

Mando stares at her blankly. He doesn't know Kyuzo.

Red HUFFS and smacks the electronic translator fastened around her neck. It BUZZES to life, filtering her words into Basic. She speaks incredibly quickly. All of Red's lines are filtered through her translator unless specified otherwise.

RED

I said, watch where you're going,  
big guy! Oh brother, you coulda  
knocked me right over, like that!

Mando stares again. He... did knock her right over.

RED (CONT'D)

But ohoho, are you ever lucky that  
you bumped into me! I'm made of  
tougher stuff than most folk out  
there! Speaking of, whooey, is this  
market ever busy. You new here? I'm  
not new here, but I don't think  
I've ever seen it this busy! You  
don't talk much, do you? And, uh,  
who are you, again?

While Red's busy jabbering, Mando walks over to one of the flyers advertising the Spectaculum and rips it off its post.

Mando shows Red the flyer and points at the section advertising its location only as "the arenas".

MANDO

Know where this is?

RED

Huh? Whassat say?

Mando side-eyes her. Red slumps, sheepish.

RED (CONT'D)

...I can't read.

Mando SIGHS.

MANDO

The arenas hosting the Spectaculum.  
Where are they?

Red perks back up, ecstatic, somehow talking twice as fast.

RED

Wait wait wait wait wait, hold up,  
hold up, hold up!!! So you're here  
for the Spectaculum, huh?

(MORE)

RED (CONT'D)

Never thought I'd see one of you big armour fellas in town to watch the games. Or play. I mean, you could totally compete and win, now that I think about it. But *you'd* better not think about it! Competing, that is. I mean, you can, I guess, but you'd be competing against me. And I'm the one who's gonna win that grand prize. So don't even bother!

Mando, fed up with this exuberance, spins on his heel and walks away. Red doggedly follows him.

RED (CONT'D)

Hey! Hey Mister Big Guy! I'm talkin' to you!

Mando keeps walking.

RED (CONT'D)

Mister Big Guy! Can you hear me under that helmet o' yours?

Mando walks a little faster.

RED (CONT'D)

Mister Big Guyyyyyy --

MANDO

-- You gonna keep following me around like a toddler?

RED

Yep! Hey, wait; I'm not a kid! I'm twelve and a half!

Mando stops dead in his tracks in disbelief.

MANDO

Kyuzo... exit childhood at forty.

RED

Uh-huh! Exactly! I'm like almost halfway an adult, then!

Mando nods slowly.

RED (CONT'D)

Anyways, whatever you want with the Spectaculum, Mister, you'd better be grateful you bumped into me!

Mando stares at her wryly.

MANDO

Why.

RED

'Cause you're *going* the wrong way,  
dummy!

Mando pauses. Red's STIFLING LAUGHTER.

MANDO

You gonna tell me the right  
direction, then?

Red, for the first time in her life, pauses, considering.

RED

Well, I couldddd... But, you know,  
I can't go around doin' that sorta  
thing for nothin'...

Mando looks to her. To the flyer. To her again. He SIGHS.

MANDO

What do you want?

A devious smile creeps across Red's face.

INT./EXT. DOC'S OFFICE - DAY

Doc smiles tightly in the ruins of his office, still holding Grogu. He's stressed.

DOC

(in babytalk)

Okay! Okay. We're just gonna pop  
out to the forest to grab some more  
herbs real quick to replace the  
burned ones, and those'll fix you  
up nice and neat!

Grogu GURGLES and BURPS. Doc looks around furtively, but no more Force-related incidents seem to have occurred.

Doc SIGHS and wipes his brow.

Doc adjusts his grip on Grogu with some difficulty - whenever he tries to grab the kid anew, his hand bounces off like there's a forcefield around Grogu.

Doc looks around, then grabs a shawl on the coatrack of the half-destroyed office and bundles up Grogu in it.

DOC (CONT'D)

And what we're *definitely not gonna*  
do is tell your grumpy Mandalorian  
dad about our little field trip  
once we're back, okay lil guy?

Doc snags a PETAR (a kyuzo weapon; looks like brass knuckles)  
from his desk, then takes the swaddled Grogu outside, past...

EXT. SPECTACULUM DOCKING AREA - DAY

...the CHEERING crowd swarms the shistavanen's docked ship as  
its gangplank lowers. They CHANT: "VUULF! VUULF! VUULF!"

VUULF (adult), a lean shistavanen with a cruel slant to his  
grin, emerges from the ship. The crowd GOES WILD. They have  
no clue what they're seeing is a pre-recorded hologram.

"Vuulf" basks in the applause, then addresses his fans.

VUULF

(hologram)

Ready for another bloodbath?

The crowd ROARS. "Vuulf" slowly descends the gangplank,  
waving, and is quickly mobbed by his audience - before the  
hologram flickers once, twice, thrice, then disappears.

Around the corner, at the back entrance of the ship, the real  
Vuulf darts out between the shadows, completely un-swarmed.

VUULF (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Holo-decoy. Gets 'em every time.

Vuulf lifts his hood so its shadow covers his face and starts  
off cheerfully towards Arena 1, WHISTLING. Far up the path...

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 1 - DAY

...Red skips joyously ahead of Mando towards the sign-up  
table outside Arena 1, manned by two tired ATTENDANTS.

Mando lets her. He's not gonna skip joyously for anything.

Mando watches as Red chats with the Attendants. One shakes  
their head, only for Red to gesture towards Mando with great  
enthusiasm. The Attendant reluctantly nods, and she runs  
inside the arena.

Mando arrives at the sign-up table and shows the Attendants  
the flyer for the Spectaculum.

MANDO  
Sign-up here?

The Attendants look at one another in confusion.

ATTENDANT 1  
You're... already signed up.

Mando looks at them blankly.

ATTENDANT 1 (CONT'D)  
Your teammate? She already had us  
register the both of youse.

MANDO  
...Teammate?

ATTENDANT 2  
You know, the kid? Red, she said  
her name was? You are her adult  
supervision for entering the games,  
right?

MANDO  
Supervision. Not teammate.

ATTENDANT 1  
The first two rounds of the  
Spectaculum are done in pairs.

Mando SIGHS. This kid is more trouble than she's worth.

MANDO  
Fine. Teammate.

ATTENDANT 2  
Excellent choice, sir.

Attendant 1 cranes their neck to check inside the arena.

ATTENDANT 1  
You'd better get a move on,  
actually. She's prob'ly already  
suing up for round one.

Mando HUFFS, accepting his fate. He walks, annoyed, past the  
sign-up desk and into...

INT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 1 - HYPOGEUM - DAY

...a dusty backstage area, full of BUSTLING ATTENDANTS  
running this way and that.

As Mando steps into great round room lined wall-to-wall with weapons and armours of all shapes and sizes, a THUMP catches his notice.

On the other end of the hypogeum, two Attendants struggle to carry the corpse of a nexu missing its tail from the fighting ring to the arena's backstage.

Vuulf walks in jauntily from the archway leading to the fighting ring, covered in nexu blood. He's WHISTLING.

As Vuulf swaggers his way back to the exit to the sign-up area, grinning, he gives Mando a genial nod.

VUULF

Best of luck in the ring. The  
beasts are mean today.

Mando doesn't nod back. Vuulf's grin widens and he continues on his way.

From amidst the hustle and bustle of the crowded Attendants, Red runs up to Mando, gleefully taking Vuulf's place.

RED

Hey! Mister Big Guy, you made it!  
Who was that, by the way - your  
friend? He looks kinda mean, so I  
kinda hope he wasn't your friend.  
But hey, maybe I'll get to knock  
him out in one of the next rounds!

Mando walks straight past Red to inspect a rack of swords. She follows him.

RED (CONT'D)

Hey! Hey, talk to me, Mister! I'm  
useful! I know stuff! Did you even  
know that you're not allowed ta use  
blasters durin' round one, 'cuz  
it'd make the venatio too easy for  
folks? Betcha didn't know that. Bet  
you're glad I'm here, now. Bet --

MANDO

-- Kid. Leave.

Red twiddles her fingers.

RED

Oh, okay, meanie. I'm not over here  
telling you to leave, am I?

Mando SIGHS deeply.

MANDO

I'm not babysitting a random child.  
Especially not during a fight.

Red starts, offended.

RED

I'm not a --

Mando glares at her and she wilts.

RED (CONT'D)

Okay. Fine. Fine! Maybe I am a kid.  
Maybe I'm a dumb kid who doesn't  
know what they're doing. Maybe I'm  
way in over my head. But I gotta do  
this. I gotta.

Mando is unimpressed. Red speaks more softly, as if scared  
the Attendants will listen in on her.

RED (CONT'D)

Listen, okay, I'm kinda desperate,  
Mister. It's my Pops. He's... well,  
he's *somewhere* out there. He told  
me to bring somethin' back to him,  
and so I gotta- I gotta bring it  
back. But... You're right.

Mando stares at her, confused.

RED (CONT'D)

I'm a kid. I don't know how to  
search across the galaxy. I can't  
fly a ship. I have no money to hire  
a bounty hunter. That's why I *need*  
to win the Headhunter, okay? It's  
the only one this side of Takodana;  
believe me, I've asked around.  
You're the first person who's  
actually let me get them into the  
arena instead'a takin' my intel and  
runnin'. I've gotta trust you as my  
partner. Please, Mister. I need you  
to help me win.

Mando hesitates. This kid knows what the grand prize is. Her  
intel might be useful. Still...

Red, for her part, is on the verge of tears.

RED (CONT'D)

I've been on my own for seven whole  
cycles, Mister.

(MORE)

RED (CONT'D)

Here on Takodana, I know how to take care o' myself. And I know everything there's ta know about the Spectaculum. I'm an asset. I *promise* I'm an asset.

Mando, in spite of himself, folds.

MANDO

...Stay safe. And *out of my way*.

Red nods eagerly, even as Mando slumps in exhaustion.

EXT. TAKODANA - BUSTLING MARKET - DAY

Doc and Grogu weave through the crowds in the direction of the Spectaculum's arenas.

Doc subtly swipes two round, glowing FRUITS from a stall they pass and tucks them into the folds of his robes.

Grogu BURBLES.

A nearby PASSERBY cranes her neck to get a closer look at the kid, eyes wide. Doc shields Grogu protectively in his arms.

DOC

Not for sale.

Doc walks a little faster, sheltering Grogu in his arms.

INT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 1 - HYPOGEUM - DAY

Mando and Red suit up for battle.

Mando straps a shoulder guard on top of his usual armour.

Red struggles into a manica (a piece of plate armour for one's right arm), hopping around wildly as --

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 1 - DAY

-- Doc and Grogu slip past the sign-up area and its Attendants when the Attendants aren't looking.

They round the corner and spot Arena 2 in the distance. They head in that direction while --

INT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 1 - HYPOGEUM - DAY

-- Mando picks up a spear and tests its weight. He shakes his head. Puts the spear down and picks up another.

Mando seems to like this one better. He spins it around with ease but pauses when he sees...

...Red trying and failing to get her helmet/visor combo over the shield-shaped helmet on her head.

Mando puts back the spear. He shakes his head and helps Red --

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST OUTSKIRTS - DAY

-- as Doc and Grogu come into view of the entrance to Arena 2, which is guarded by three armoured GUARDS, who watch over the gated entrance. Beside them: a line of hoverchariots.

Doc leans in close to Grogu and whispers to him.

DOC

Now, I'm going to need you to stay quiet, here, little one.

Doc hands Grogu his petar.

DOC (CONT'D)

Here, play with this a while, won't you? But don't lose it, now. It's very precious to me.

Grogu reaches upwards for the petar.

MATCH MOTION TO:

INT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 1 - HYPOGEUM - DAY

The gates to the arena RATTLE upwards.

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST OUTSKIRTS - DAY

Grogu, successfully distracted by the petar, toddles around by Doc's feet.

Doc glances around. Then, he rubs two of his pilfered FRUIT together, generating a static BUZZ. The second the FRUIT begin gently HUMMING, Doc chucks them one after another...

...right into the hoverchariots.

The FRUITS land and EXPLODE on impact, launching the hoverchariots into the air.

MATCH MOTION TO:

INT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 1 - HYPOGEUM - DAY

Mando hefts a BUZZING, electric trident and a net into the air. He wears a shoulder guard on top of his usual armour.

Red brandishes her own petar and a small rectangular shield. Her manica and her smooth helmet/visor combo make her look like a mini-Mando.

MANDO

Ready?

RED

You know it, partner!

MANDO

...Don't call me that.

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST OUTSKIRTS - DAY

The Guards rush towards the hoverchariots' debris in alarm.

In the commotion, Doc scoops up the petar-brandishing Grogu and runs for it towards the gates to the forest.

The pair slip sideways through the decorative bars of the main gate and fall (a muffled CRUNCH!) into foliage just as --

INT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 1 - FIGHTING RING - DAY

-- Mando and Red step into the arena to a ROARING crowd.

In the distance, two pairs of glowing eyes gleam.

CUT TO BLACK.

**END OF ACT ONE**

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 1 - FIGHTING RING - DAY

Mando and Red step into the dusty, well-worn fighting ring.

Red looks around, wide-eyed, at the CHEERING crowds above them, craning her neck to get a better view.

The zygerrian from the adverts, EMPEROR ZINOR (adult), sits in an elite, comfortable box by himself, presiding over both the crowds and the ring. He nods, and a HORN SOUNDS.

Mando looks around as well - but he's clocking the terrain. The ring is flat and empty. For now.

Aside from where they just came in, there's only one other entrance to the ring: a dark, gated archway. Its gates begin RATTLING upwards ominously.

Mando tugs Red's sleeve to get her attention, then gestures to the imminent threat lurking in the dark, where...

...in the far archway, two pairs of glowing eyes appear.

Then, two SNARLING asharl panthers prowl into the arena. They are ravenous, feline beasts, and they're all skin and bones.

Red is ecstatic to see them.

RED

Asharl panthers! In person! Oh boy,  
and these ones look hungry, too...

Mando tries to block Red with his body. Completely ignoring his efforts, Red ROARS at the nearest panther.

The panther seems to narrow its eyes. It nudges the farther one with its tail. The other crouches, then pounces, as --

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - INNER FOREST - DAY

-- Grogu trips over a branch and falls into a bush. As he no longer holds the petar, he ends up dirty, but unscathed.

He SNIFFLES. Doc looks at Grogu with mirth, but SHUSHES him as they continue to walk through the forest, eyes peeled.

DOC (O.C.)  
 Alright, kiddo. Gotta keep quiet.  
 The deeper you go into this forest,  
 the more the predators hunt using  
 their sense o' sound.

Doc's head is on a swivel. He checks...

...around bushes...

...behind trees...

... and even underneath rocks for the medicinal herbs he's hunting for.

Grogu mimics his behaviour, looking this way and that, pausing every now and again to inspect a strange bug.

DOC (CONT'D)  
 (absent-minded)  
 But you're not gonna get us eaten,  
 are you? Are you? No, you're gonna  
 keep cute 'n quiet when we delve  
 further into the woods!

Grogu HICCUPS - and then GIGGLES as the rogue Force causes him to float into the air.

Doc, without looking, deftly grabs him by the robes just as --

INT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 1 - FIGHTING RING - DAY

-- Quick as a whip, Mando grabs a SNARLING Red by the scruff of her collar and yanks her out of the way of the asharl.

Red pouts as Mando (successfully, this time) shields her from the asharls with his much bulkier self.

The panther that leapt flicks its tail warily.

RED  
 Hey! I totally coulda got that guy!  
 Uh. Girl. Uh. Friend. Whatever. I  
 coulda got them!

Mando ignores her, assessing the situation at hand.

Wait for it... Wait for it... There!

Mando pounces forward with his net and BUZZING trident as --

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - INNER FOREST - DAY

-- Doc struggles to keep a GIGGLING Grogu from slipping out of his grasp as he HICCUPS, as the kid alternates between levitating and obeying the laws of gravity with every hiccup.

HIC! Grogu floats.

HIC! Grogu drops, and Doc scrambles to catch him. A stray plant SNAPS at the duo.

HIC! Grogu floats. The RUSTLING in the background grows.

Doc presses his lips together.

DOC  
(quietly; to Grogu)  
You are underestimating the  
severity of our situation.

Grogu LAUGHS and drops out of the air like a rock once more, forcing Doc to lunge forward.

Doc successfully grabs Grogu before the kid hits the ground.

The pair lies on the ground, now both absolutely covered in dirt, leaves, and muck. Doc's petar has fallen out of his robes and lays a few feet away from the duo.

Above them, the RUSTLING grows LOUDER...

...Doc clamps a hand over Grogu's mouth...

..Even LOUDER...

...Doc holds his breath...

...and then GOES SILENT.

Doc breathes a silent sigh of relief, holding Grogu close.

INT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 1 - FIGHTING RING - DAY

BEGIN SERIES OF SHOTS:

- The asharl Mando shocked stumbles back, HISSING.
- Red whips around and UNSHEATHES a short-sword.
- The untouched asharl rounds on on Red.
- Mando's head whips towards...

- ...Red, who swings wildly at her panther, just barely grazing it.
- Mando lunges with his net towards Red and her panther, completely turning his back to...
- ...*his* panther, which lunges at Mando and catches him by the shoulder.
- Though his armour keeps him from any serious injury, Mando still STUMBLES forward from the impact.
- Mando's shoulder guard gleams in the light. It has deep gauges in it from the panther's claws.
- Red spins around when she hears Mando's steps towards her. She runs towards Mando, desperate...

RED

Mister!

- ...but in the process, entirely misses seeing her asharl lunge towards her.
- Mando SUCKS IN A BREATH.
- Red looks behind her, too late to react.
- Mando's net and electric trident CLUNK to the ground.
- Mando tackles Red to the ground like a quarterback, just in the nick of time. As he curls over her, the panther tramples him, and he HISSES in pain.
- Red's eyes widen from her spot beneath Mando.
- The panthers regroup together.
- Mando gets up and picks up his weapons. As he lifts his trident, its electricity now FLICKERS on and off intermittently rather than staying steadily on.
- With a GROAN, Red pushes herself up from the ground too, grabbing her fallen short-sword.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

Red approaches Mando, brandishing her short-sword angrily.

RED (CONT'D)

Why'd ya have to distract me like that?

MANDO

I told you: stay out of my way.

The panthers lunge at them in unison, and Red and Mando both dive out of their path - Mando more gracefully than Red.

RED

I had it completely handled!

MANDO

(stressed)

Had it handled; sure. You could --

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - INNER FOREST - DAY

Doc pads through the forest on the well-trodden path.

Grogu, now obeying gravity like normal, is swaddled tight in Doc's arms. He holds Doc's petar.

DOC

(stress-whispering)

-- Break a bone, break your spine,  
break one o' those little ears off?  
No worries! Doc can fix you right  
up! But fly off into the horizon or  
get eaten by one of the beasties  
here? That'll be a wee bit trickier  
to explain to your dad...

Grogu struggles to slip out of Doc's arms, waving the petar around. Absentmindedly, Doc pushes the fist clutching the weapon down so it's not in his face and keeps walking.

DOC (CONT'D)

(slight crescendo)

Of course, that presumes I can  
restore my medicinal herb stores  
here without losing my grip on you  
again. You need to stay in my  
grasp, understand? I don't need to  
lose another child.

Grogu BABBLES, then COUGHS twice. Doc looks around and braces himself for Grogu to fly up into the air - but instead...

...finds himself anchored to a slowly falling Grogu as Doc levitates upward by the ankle.

Grogu drops Doc's petar onto a large, Venus flytrap-like plant on the ground.

DOC (CONT'D)  
 (to Grogu; a promise)  
 We're getting you out of here safe.

The maw of the plant swivels upward. Grogu makes grabby hands at it. It SNAPS at him.

DOC (CONT'D)  
 (to Grogu; louder)  
 We're getting you out of here safe!

Using all his strength, Doc tugs Grogu out of the way, still floating gently in the air, and clutches the kid safely out of the way to his chest.

DOC (CONT'D)  
 (in distressed Kyuzo; not subtitled)  
 I am not losing track of you like I lost my daughter!

INT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 1 - FIGHTING RING - DAY

Red and Mando both look the worse for wear - but so do the asharl. The two pairs circle one another warily.

RED  
 We're getting nowhere, ya know.

Mando glares at Red, but she's unfazed.

RED (CONT'D)  
 Those panthers are gonna eat us for lunch if we don't come up with a plan. We gotta work together here, partner; that's the whole point'a this round!

One of the panthers feints a lunge at Red, and Mando shields her with his body again.

MANDO  
 No. You're a kid.

Red flings her hands up in exasperation.

RED  
 See, this is what I mean! You're not workin' with me! I know I'm a kid - believe me, I do. But I've researched these games inside and out. I know everything there is ta know about 'em!

Mando wavers. Red GROANS.

RED (CONT'D)

Look, Mister. You don't gotta make me do the heavy lifting or nothing. But at least let me help with the plan, yeah?

Mando sizes up the panthers.

The arena.

His on-and-off trident.

Red.

He SIGHS.

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - INNER FOREST - DAY

Doc SIGHS, Grogu in his arms as he holds his petar and walks.

DOC

(quietly)

...You remind me of her, a bit. Always so curious. Come now, little one, just a bit further, now.

The RUSTLING GROWS and Doc freezes in his tracks.

It QUIETS, and he continues walking.

DOC (CONT'D)

(quietly)

I wonder what she's doing now.

INT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 1 - FIGHTING RING - DAY

MANDO

Now!

Red throws herself to the side perfectly at Mando's signal...

...and the asharl after her tangles in Mando's waiting net.

With the intermittent electricity of his spear BUZZING in and out, Mando whips around and jabs at the other panther right as the electricity of his spear SIZZLES back on.

The electrocuted panther takes one unsteady, swaggering step forwards. Two. Three. Then, with a deafening THUMP, it falls.

Mando HUFFS from exertion, then turns to the asharl snagged in his net and glares.

The net asharl WHIMPERS, submissive, and backs off. Slowly, carefully, Mando untangles it from the net.

Under Mando's harsh stare, the panther slinks out of the arena and back into the far archway from which it came.

A moment of bated breath silence as Mando looks around the arena, daring anyone to challenge his victory.

Then, the audience erupts into rapturous APPLAUSE.

Emperor Zinor, the solemn zygerrian presiding over the Spectaculum, gives Mando and Red a slow nod --

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - INNER FOREST - DAY

-- as Doc nods encouragingly at Grogu, who's struggling to pick a large, flowering, blue herb from a mound of dirt on the ground.

DOC

(whispering)

That's the way! Here, use the petar to sever it quick and clean, little one. Remember, keep *quiet*.

Grogu grabs the petar out Doc's waiting hand, but drops it on his foot with a CLUNK. The kid begins WAILING.

The herb Grogu was struggling with RIPS itself out of the ground via the Force, hanging in the air.

RUSTLES. Doc looks around in a panic and quickly MUFFLES Grogu's cries with a hand, then freezes.

No threats emerge from between the trees.

Doc snatches the herb out of the air.

DOC (CONT'D)

...You'll be the death of us both.

INT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 1 - FIGHTING RING - DAY

CHATTER fills the air. Other competitors mill about Arena 1 in pairs, the Emperor presiding over it all in his booth.

Red bumps into Vuulf as she cranes her neck in order to get a good look at Emperor Zinor.

As she stumbles, Mando steadies Red by her shoulders. Red changes tactics, jumping in place to get a better view.

Mando SIGHS and picks her up, putting her on his shoulders just in time to see...

...the Emperor CLEARING HIS THROAT into a microphone.

EMPEROR

Pairs who have qualified for Round  
Two of the Spectaculum will see  
themselves appear on the bulletin  
above. As for the others?  
Dismissed. Leave.

The bulletin appears as a hologram in the sky. It lists the names and faces of the pairs continuing on.

Red cranes her neck to scan the list, leaning back so far Mando nearly topples over. He re-balances with a GRUMBLE.

Then, Red spots her and Mando's names on the bulletin. Her CHEERS overpower the DULL ROAR of the audience.

Above their names it seems Vuulf and his partner - a human named EARLE - have also made it to round two.

Red hugs Mando as well as she can from her position on top of his shoulders.

RED

I'm gonna get it! I'm gonna find  
him!

MANDO

...Sure.

He gently drops Red off from his shoulders, patting her on the shoulder.

MANDO (CONT'D)

Be right back.

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - INNER FOREST - DAY

Doc gently pats a SNIFFLING Groggu on the head, holding the herb still, when his comms begin to BUZZ.

DOC

(under his breath)  
Really? Now?

Reaching inside his robes, Doc pulls out his comms with his free hand and accepts the call, making sure to lower the device's volume. A holographic Mando pops up.

For a moment, Mando and Doc just stare at one another.

Finally, Mando breaks the tension.

MANDO  
(hologram; quiet)  
How's the kid?

DOC  
Doing well, doing well.

Unseen, something CHIRPS. Mando HUFFS.

MANDO  
(hologram; quiet)  
There aren't birds in your office.

Doc freezes mid head-pat. He's been caught.

DOC  
...Guilty as charged, Mandalorian.  
Not to worry. The little one merely  
destroyed some of my stash, so  
we're off in the woods restocking.

MANDO  
(hologram; quiet)  
Restocking.

Doc winces, then bundles Grogu up into his arms and rocks him gently side to side.

DOC  
(to Grogu)  
There, little one.

Doc lifts the comms to show Grogu the holo-Mando. Grogu quiets down and starts COOING, making grabby hands.

Doc smiles gently but SHUSHES Grogu still.

DOC (CONT'D)  
See, Mandalorian? Perfectly under  
control.

MANDO  
(hologram; quiet)  
He's really not in trouble?

Doc frowns, turning deadly serious.

DOC

I will not let harm come to a child.

MANDO

(hologram; quiet)  
But he was upset.

DOC

As children get from time to time. But what he also was - and will continue to be - is *safe*. You trusted me enough to leave him with me now. Keep your faith strong.

Grogu HICCUPS and knocks the herb out of Doc's hand. It THUMPS to the ground. Grogu blinks at it, then BABBLES.

Doc starts at that, clapping a hand around the kid's mouth.

DOC (CONT'D)

Oh dear. Goodbye, Mandalorian! Gotta go before something else happens.

MANDO

(hologram; quiet)  
Something else --

DOC

-- Faith, Mandalorian! I've lost a child once. *Never again*. Buh-bye!

Doc HANGS UP.

INT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 1 - HYPOGEUM - DAY

Mando contemplates the call's end in silence, still in his additional armour, when Red rushes up to him, manica half-off and trailing behind her.

She gives Mando a hug and SLAPS his back.

RED

Why are you lookin' so weird all of a sudden? Well, weird behind that mask. Hey, hey, do you wear that all the time? Even in the shower?

Mando, hesitant, pats her on the shoulder.

RED (CONT'D)

Ooh, speaking of: I was super duper wondering! What are you gonna do with your Headhunter once you get it? You know what I'm doing with mine, so it's only fair, really...

MANDO

You know there's only one Headhunter, right?

RED

Yep! And I'm gonna get it!

MANDO

We can't both win one.

RED

We'll figure something out, partner. I'm sure we will!

Mando CLEARS HIS THROAT and looks away guiltily.

Red pauses, confused, then perks back up.

RED (CONT'D)

Oh! By the by, Mister Big Guy! I overheard that scary shistavanen telling his partner about what happens in round three of the Spectaculum! So I figured I should tell you about it, too! Wanna know what's what?

Mando SIGHS. He pulls out his comms and CLICKS a pre-recorded hologram of Emperor Zinor on so it projects in front of them.

EMPEROR

(hologram)

The third round of the Traveling Spectaculum is the gladiator duel. For the honor of getting the Headhunter, the top two pairs from the hoverchariot races of Round Two fight in a battle royale to the --

Mando CLICKS the hologram off. The penny has finally dropped.

RED

You got it, Mister! Fight to the death for the Headhunter! Only one of the final four can win!

Red SHIVERS exaggeratedly, still in great cheer.

RED (CONT'D)  
Boy, am I glad I ended up with such  
a good buddy here with me! I'd hate  
to be in that third arena with  
anyone else! Right, partner?

Red pats Mando's knee, but gets no response.

RED (CONT'D)  
(uncertain)  
...right, partner?

Mando remains stone-faced.

MANDO  
(muttering)  
"Never again", huh?

RED  
What was that?

Mando shakes his head.

CUT TO BLACK.

**END OF ACT TWO**

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST OUTSKIRTS - DAY

A small crowd made of up the various pairs who've progressed to round two (including Mando and Red) loiters, inspecting the hoverchariots, looking on into the forest, and CHATTING.

The rubble from Doc's explosion earlier has long since been cleared away in the bustling forest outskirts - but there are notably now fewer hoverchariots in the starting lineup than before. Attendants 1 and 2 WHISPER to one another, concerned.

A hologram of the Emperor APPEARS. He CLEARS HIS THROAT.

EMPEROR

(hologram)

Friends. Foes. Countryfolk.  
Welcome... to the second round of  
the Grand Traveling Spectaculum!

Red taps Mando excitedly on the shoulder and motions to the Emperor. Mando nods. He's tired.

EMPEROR (CONT'D)

(hologram)

Those pairs of you who've made it  
this far? Congratulations. In round  
two, your pairs will remain the  
same, and you shall venture forth  
into the forest on hoverchariots.

From the crowd, a human - EARLE (40s) - elbows Vuulf gently, then motions to Mando and Red. Vuulf looks their way. Smiles.

EMPEROR (CONT'D)

(hologram)

The first two pairs to pass the  
racetrack's finish line shall  
continue on to the final round.

Red is oblivious to Vuulf's gaze. She's mouthing along with what the Emperor says, stars in her eyes.

EMPEROR (CONT'D)

(hologram)

Should one's partner perish  
throughout the course of the race,  
their corpse must still pass the  
finish line for a pair to qualify.

Mando glowers at Vuulf. Vuulf shrugs and turns back to Earle.

EMPEROR (CONT'D)

(hologram)

All manners of weaponry are allowed  
in this round. Now, without further  
ado, let the race --

The Emperor pauses. He leans to the side as if someone off-hologram is whispering in his ear.

The competing duos exchange confused glances, MURMURING.

EMPEROR (CONT'D)

(hologram)

I see. As there has been fairly  
significant damage dealt to some of  
our equipment prior to the  
commencement of the race, every  
pair will race together on a single  
hoverchariot instead of each having  
their own racecart.

The crowd erupts into OUTRAGED TALKING. The Emperor silences them with a single raised hand.

EMPEROR (CONT'D)

(hologram)

Rest assured the investigation into  
the perpetrator of said damage is  
well underway and retribution shall  
be swift and violent. And with all  
that dealt with, let the competing  
pairs proceed to the starting line!

The crowd CHEERS. The competing pairs begin funneling out of their amorphous blob and towards the line of remaining hoverchariots, CHATTING EXCITEDLY as the hologram SHUTS OFF.

Red catches up to Mando as he joins the flow of folks.

RED

Isn't this neat, Mister? We get to  
ride together, partner!

Mando HUFFS.

MANDO

You even know how to drive?

RED

I absolutely don't!

Out of the throng, Vuulf emerges, catching Mando's eye.

VUULF

Say there, Mr. Armoured Fella,  
what's a big guy like you doing in  
a death game like this?

(beat; sardonic)

And why the babysitting gig?

Red cranes her neck to get a better look at Vuulf, but Mando grabs her arm and makes them both walk a little faster.

Vuulf, undeterred, matches their pace.

VUULF (CONT'D)

Fine. Be like that. I know the  
whole "babysitting" deal isn't  
exactly a new development for you,  
anyway.

For a fraction of a second, Mando is caught off guard and pauses. Then his walls go back up and he shrugs.

Vuulf smirks, all teeth.

VUULF (CONT'D)

Yep, that's enough of an answer.  
See y'around, Mandalorian.

And with that, Vuulf disappears back into the crowd.

Red disentangles herself from Mando's grasp.

RED

What was that about, Mister? And  
what's a Mand-oh-lore-ian? Kinda a  
weird soundin' nickname. Is that  
your nickname, Mister Big Guy?

Mando shakes his head as the two arrive by a hoverchariot.

All around them, fellow pairs mount their vehicles.

Mando hops on the front of the hoverchariot. He gestures at Red for her to get on. Red HUFFS.

RED (CONT'D)

Fine! Be like that. I'll have your  
secrets someday, Mister. You've got  
some o' mine, anyways, so it's only  
fair.

Red settles herself, clambering onto the vehicle. She pats Mando's shoulder, leaning into him.

RED (CONT'D)

So! What's the plan for this round?  
We gotta be reaaaaal quiet in the  
forest, y'know.

Mando nods. He unhooks his blaster and hands it to Red.

MANDO

I drive. You shoot. Neither of us  
fall off.

Red beams. She opens her mouth to say something, but is cut  
off by the sound of...

...a HORN BLARING.

Engines all around REV. One by one, the pairs take off.

RED

(in Kyuzo)  
Crap! Crap crap crap--  
(through translator)  
-- go go go!!!!

Mando steadies himself.

MANDO

Hold on.

Mando revs his engine, and the pair shoot off into the woods.

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - INNER FOREST - DAY

Doc struggles to juggle carrying both Grogu and an armful of  
medicinal plants they've collected...

...when ENGINES' ROARS ring out in the distance.

Doc pulls Grogu closer.

DOC

(in Kyuzo; not subtitled)  
Crap! Already?  
(in Basic)  
Don't tell your father I said that.  
And for the sake of my sanity: be  
careful around the racers!

Grogu BURBLES in response.

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST RACETRACK - DAY

Mando and Red dodge and weave around...

BEGIN SERIES OF SHOTS:

- Fellow competitors as they catch up to them.
- The Venus flytrap-like plant, which snaps at them.
- More competitors, who shoot at them with blasters.
- Red shoots back one-handed, clinging onto Mando as she misses by a long shot.
- Mando concentrates, everything sharply in focus as RUSTLES GROW LOUDER AND LOUDER.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - INNER FOREST - DAY

Doc struggles to quietly BUSHWHACK his way out of the forest using his petar - given the flora and child in his arms.

Grogu isn't helping. Every other minute he opens his mouth - and whenever this happens, it's a tossup whether he lets out a happy BABBLE or not. Whenever Doc notices this, he pauses and shifts everything in his arms to cover the kid's mouth.

They proceed along their makeshift path, far from the noisy racers. Faced with one particularly stubborn branch, Doc's focus on Grogu is momentarily broken.

Doc fumbles with his petar, trying to WRENCH the branch out of the way, and it nearly slips from his grasp.

He catches it and SIGHS in relief.

Then he notices Grogu - who he accidentally dropped.

DOC

Oh. Oh no.

A moment of silence.

Then Grogu WAILS, and, with a POP, ricochets away from Doc like a shot out of a canon: into the depths of the forest.

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST RACETRACK - DAY

Vuulf and Earle are slightly ahead of Mando and Red.

Earle, in the backseat, taps Vuulf on the shoulder and motions with his blaster. Vuulf looks back to see...

...Mando driving erratically as he and Red BICKER INAUDIBLY.

Vuulf's grin turns feral and he WHISTLES sharply at the pair as he, Earle, Mando, and Red all make to overtake another duo in a hairpin turn.

Mando's attention snaps to Vuulf and he GASPS as --

-- Vuulf pulls a dangerous swerve and Earle's neck CRACKS.

Distracted by the stunt, Mando doesn't see the third hoverchariot until it's almost too late.

MANDO

Hold on!

Mando puts his arm around Red like he's pulling out of a driveway and sends their hoverchariot into a wild SPIN.

BEGIN SERIES OF SHOTS:

- Red SHRIEKS, clinging on for dear life.
- Mando wrenches the hoverchariots' reins.
- The hoverchariot they nearly crashed into swerves offtrack and the RUSTLES INCREASE.
- Mando braces himself against the centrifugal force.
- Red fumbles Mando's blaster and it goes flying off the track, where...
- ...a shadowy silhouette ROARS and POUNCES on...
- ...the third hoverchariot and its riders.
- Mando and Red's hoverchariot GRINDS to a halt.
- Red PANTS.
- Mando HOLDS HIS BREATH and CLAPS a hand over Red's mouth.
- The silhouette in the woods rears up and its head snaps to Mando and Red, eyes glowing.
- Red bats Mando's hand away.
- Mando points frantically but silently to the creature.

- The creature SNIFFS. Takes a step forward. A step to the side. A step further.
- Mando and Red remain frozen, clinging to one another.
- In the distance, engines ROAR.
- The creature's attention snaps to the noise, and it POUNCES off towards the sound. Finally, the RUSTLES QUIET.
- Mando and Red LET OUT A BREATH IN UNISON and relax.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

Three hoverchariots ZOOM past where Mando and Red are parked.

Mando glances at Red, then notices...

MANDO (CONT'D)  
Where's the blaster?

RED  
Well, gosh, excuse me for not  
managing to keep a hold on it and  
on you!

MANDO  
You don't even --

RED  
-- Whatever! Whatever. Just drive.

Mando HUFFS and STARTS UP THE ENGINE, driving off.

MATCH MOTION TO:

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST RACETRACK - DAY

Grogu SHOOTS halfway across the track, crashing into one of the hoverchariots racing there with the force of a bullet.

Grogu, protected by a Force field, drops into the middle of the track and starts SNIFFLING.

Racers, mistaking the kid for local fauna, SWERVE to avoid crashing into him and the wreck he created.

As the hoverchariots pile up behind him, Grogu HICCUPS again.

A chariot driver, seeing the kid in the middle of the track, frantically pulls his BRAKES.

Grogu stares him down.

The driver tugs his reins harder.

Grogu SNIFFLES loudly.

Just as the driver is about to hit Grogu, the kid COUGHS and is enveloped in a bubble-like Force field - and the impact sends him shooting once again down the track.

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - INNER FOREST - DAY

Doc, medicinal herbs falling out of the pockets of his robes, walks through the forest, uncaring of his volume.

He DIALS Mando over comms, frantic.

DOC  
Come on; pick up...

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Grogu BOUNCES down the track, slowly losing momentum until he arrives at...

...a clearing in the woods, where camera drones are pointed towards a finish line and the hologram of Emperor Zinor watches the scene from his lavish box in the third arena.

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST RACETRACK - DAY

Mando's comms BUZZ.

Mando ignores them as he concentrates on the race and swerving fellow drivers and the increasingly bold alien FAUNA snapping at him and Red.

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - INNER FOREST - DAY

Doc continues racing through the woods on foot, DIALING.

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST RACETRACK - DAY

As Mando and Red continue racing, they argue:

MANDO  
Can't believe you lost the blaster.

RED  
Oh, enough with your precious blaster? Why do you even care?

MANDO

We lost our only weapon!

Red pulls out her petar and waves it in front of Mando.

RED

We have my dad's --

MANDO

-- Our only *useful* weapon.

RED

How *dare* you?

Mando swats her hand away from his line of sight, taking a sharp right.

MANDO

Petar are meant to be dual-wielded.

RED

Yeah? Are you saying I can't do anything with just one? I'll have ya know I survived by myself with just one o' these for seven whole --

PRE-LAP:

DOC

-- cycle through your footage and you never caught the child causing chaos on the track?

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST OUTSKIRTS - DAY

The Spectaculum Attendants shrink into themselves, rows of holographic footage of the forest cycling through various feeds from various camera drones, as Doc yells at them.

DOC

How have you not found him by now?

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Vuulf's hoverchariot pulls up to the finish line. Vuulf is still the driver. Earle, limp, dangles from the back seat. They're the first there.

Vuulf's hoverchariot crosses the finish line and Vuulf gently swerves, braking the vehicle. He flashes the cameras a grin. Makes Earle's corpse wave in their direction.

Then he hears SNIFFLING, and looks down to see...

...Grogu, toddling around the forest.

Vuulf, intrigued, hops off his chariot.

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST RACETRACK - DAY

Mando and Red motor into the clearing in stubborn silence - before Mando brakes to a dead stop when he sees --

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST CLEARING - DAY

-- Vuulf at the finish line, holding Grogu in his arms. He's surrounded by the fallen bodies and hoverchariots of other racers. He points a blaster at Mando and Red.

VUULF

So. Mandalorian. Let's make a deal.

Red cranes her neck to look at Vuulf, eyes wide, as she and Mando slip off their hoverchariot.

RED

Who --

Mando raises a sharp hand to silence her. Red shuts up. Mando makes sure she doesn't step any closer to Vuulf and his blaster.

VUULF

Smart move.

Vuulf stretches languidly, joints popping with a CRACK. He shifts a curious Grogu from arm to arm.

VUULF (CONT'D)

Word on the street is there's an  
awful lotta people in the galaxy  
who'll pay a lot to get acquainted  
with this little guy, Mando.

Mando takes an involuntary step towards Vuulf, hackles raised, and Vuulf raises the blaster.

VUULF (CONT'D)

Ah-ah-ah! Not so fast, there.

A beat of silence. Mando doesn't come closer - but he doesn't retreat, either. This is a standoff.

Vuulf rolls his eyes and SNORTS.

VUULF (CONT'D)

Here. How about this. I'm a reasonable guy, and I don't particularly want to piss off a Mandalorian today. So I'll give you a choice. Let me take the little green guy. Or let me take the kid you're riding with.

Mando lets out a sharp BREATH.

RED

What? Why?!

VUULF

The kid wants in on negotiations? Cute.

Mando puts his hand on Red's shoulder, but Vuulf acquiesces.

VUULF (CONT'D)

If you gotta know, Kyuzo children are a decently rare find for collectors. Heck, I might even help little Red here find her dad with the Headhunter - if he pays me before anyone else gets the chance.

MANDO

What do you know about her --

VUULF

-- Father? Nothing. But the rumour mill's been going nuts about some scrappy toddler travelin' 'round these parts chasing the Spectaculum so she can win the grand prize and find dear ol' Dad. And I make it my business to know the motivations of everyone who enters these games.

Red looks at Mando, and Mando shakes his head. He's not gonna let either kid get taken. She smiles weakly.

Mando remains stony-faced as ever. He doesn't see a way to save both Red and Grogu.

He's stuck.

Hoverchariots APPROACH in the distance. Vuulf SIGHS, cocking his blaster. In an instant, he changes its aim...

...to point it directly at Grogu.

VUULF (CONT'D)  
Well? Who will it be?

CUT TO BLACK.

**END OF ACT THREE**

ACT FOUR

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Mando and Vuulf continue the face-off/hostage situation in the finish line clearing. Bodies of fallen racers and pieces of wrecked hoverchariots are strewn about, creating an artificially oppressive, craggy landscape.

Mando looks between Red and Vuulf. He refuses to let the shistavanen take Grogu.

But he doesn't want him to take Red, either.

Red tugs at Mando's armour, worried.

RED  
Mister --

MANDO  
-- I'll make the trade.

Red GASPS sharply, even as Vuulf grins.

VUULF  
Knew you'd make a good decision.

Red rounds on Mando, terrified.

RED  
What are you doing? We- we were supposed to be *partners!*

Mando stays silent.

RED (CONT'D)  
You said you'd help me out; you said we'd figure something out!

Mando's clearly aggravated but keeps quiet.

RED (CONT'D)  
Is this about the Headhunter? You can have it, Mister; you know I just want my --

MANDO  
*Kid!*

RED  
*What?!*

Mando struggles for a moment, at a loss for words.

Then he pulls Red into a fierce hug.

For a moment, Red's eyes well with tears.

Then, Mando leans in right to her ear.

MANDO  
(whispering)  
I trust you. Partners?

Red looks down to see Mando tapping her petar.

She doesn't need to say anything. She just grips the petar and hugs him tighter.

Mando allows it for one moment. Two.

On three, he shakes Red off and pushes her towards Vuulf.

Vuulf, for his part, sets Grogu warily on the ground, keeping his blaster trained on Mando. He gestures for Red to move forward with his free hand.

BEGIN SERIES OF SHOTS:

- Grogu toddles towards Mando, looking around in curiosity.
- Red looks back to Mando, feigning uncertainty.
- Mando nods at her to go.
- Grogu continues towards Mando.
- Red kicks her feet, slouching in Vuulf's direction.
- Grogu and Red step past one another. Red looks down at him.
- Grogu looks up and meets Red's gaze.
- Red SWALLOWS and nods at the kid. Then she keeps walking.
- Grogu looks past her to see Mando and toddles a little faster towards him.
- Grogu arrives at Mando...
- ...just as Red arrives at Vuulf.
- Mando steps in front of Grogu and...

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

Mando CHARGES towards Vuulf.

Vuulf hoists his blaster, getting ready to shoot.

Mando, having crossed half the distance between them, prepares himself to take a hit.

Vuulf squeezes the trigger, just as --

-- Red snags her petar from its hostler and SLASHES Vuulf's blaster arm, throwing off his aim.

Mando, for the quickest of instants, feels relief as the BLASTER SHOT goes wide.

Then, he raises his shoulder and --

-- TACKLES Vuulf to the ground.

Mando PUNCHES Vuulf in the face and he HOWLS in pain.

One more PUNCH for good measure, and Vuulf goes limp.

Mando pushes himself to his feet, grabbing Vuulf's fallen blaster, only to spy Red already REVVING their stranded hoverchariot with Grogu in her arms.

MANDO (CONT'D)

You can't drive!

RED

What happened ta trustin' me,  
Mister?

HUFFING, Mando hops on behind her and the unlikely trio SPEED PAST Vuulf's body and across the finish line, continuing onto the path that leads out of arena two.

Vuulf's body twitches. Twitches again.

Then, with a bitter ROAR, he pushes himself to standing and straddles his own hoverchariot.

PRE-LAP:

Vuulf's engine REVS and ROARS.

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - WINNER'S TRACK - DAY

The procession of Mando, Grogu, and Red race out of the forest towards the ever-elaborate third arena --

-- but Vuulf's trailing not far behind.

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST OUTSKIRTS - DAY

Doc watches all this play out on the holo-feeds, getting more and more angry.

ATTENDANT 1

Sir, please, you've got to --

DOC

-- No! You know what? I'm out of here! Doc? Out!

Doc pushes past the confused Attendants and storms toward...

...one of the remaining hoverchariots, neither destroyed nor used in the race.

Doc smiles even as the Attendants rush towards him.

Then he jumps on the hoverchariot and TAKES OFF into the woods, engine ROARING.

EXT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 2 - FOREST'S END - DAY

The procession BLASTS out the the other end of the gated forest that makes up the second arena towards the Spectaculum's third, final arena.

Mando's trio leads the way, driving inside the arena.

A few moments later, Vuulf follows them, into...

INT. TRAVELING SPECTACULUM - ARENA 3 - FIGHTING RING - DAY

Dust swirls in the air as two abandoned hoverchariots block the only entrance to the arena.

VUULF

Those little...

Vuulf angrily gets off his own hoverchariot and squeezes his way between them on foot to enter the arena's fighting ring.

The ring itself is rocky; cragged boulders dotting its floor, perfectly obstructing any possible lines of sight. Weapons of all kinds suspended on hooks dot its walls.

From above the arena, a glimpse of Emperor Zinor.

Vuulf shakes his anger off, face bloody, face hardening to steely rage. Then he snags a lone blaster off the wall.

Hoisting the blaster, he stalks into the rocky labyrinth.

From around a corner: FOOTSTEPS.

Vuulf's head SNAPS towards the sound. He heads that way.

BEGIN SERIES OF SHOTS:

- Vuulf peeks around a corner, blaster raised.
- Vuulf hurries through a straightaway.
- Vuulf spins on his heel, looking around frantically.
- Vuulf crouches to the ground, listening intently. In the distance, more FOOTSTEPS - this time distinctly HEAVY.
- Vuulf whips around a corner to see...
- ...Mando, backed into a dead end, Grogu in his arms.
- Vuulf smirks, raises his blaster, and FIRES.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

The shot carries along its course, from the tip of Vuulf's blaster through the air all the way to Mando's...

...shoulder - the one the asharl clawed at.

Mando HISSES.

Vuulf cocks his blaster, ready for another shot.

And all that gives the previously-forgotten Red enough time to snag Vuulf in a net (like Mando's from the first arena).

Vuulf whips around but only succeeds in tangling himself further in the net.

RED

Ha! Knew the net was a good call!

Then Mando head-butts Vuulf from behind with a CLUNK, knocking him entirely down and out.

Red CHEERS. Mando HUFFS contentedly, patting her on the back.

Then: ENGINES.

FOOTSTEPS RACING THROUGH THE BOULDER MAZE.

And skidding into the dead end...

...Doc, who looks from Mando, to Grogu, to Red, to Vuulf.

DOC  
What *happened* here?

MANDO  
Hello, Mandalorian. How's the death game, Mandalorian?

Doc raises an eyebrow.

DOC  
Ah, so he has *jokes* now, does he?

MANDO  
Enough. Can you help the kid?

Doc looks between Grogu and Red.

DOC  
Which one? They seem to have multiplied.

Red sticks her nose in, indignant.

RED  
Hey, I'm not a- wait, hold up! Mister! You're hurt! Get help for yourself!

Mando turns towards her.

MANDO  
I'm fine --

RED  
-- No you're not! You're hurt! You're hurt and you gotta- you gotta get better, y'hear me? Now!

Red marches up to Doc.

RED (CONT'D)  
Fix him. You're a doctor, right? Fix him, now! Then you can look after the- the green kid.

Doc opens his mouth to answer, but before he can: a BOOMING voice rains down from above.

EMPEROR (O.C.)  
(magnified)  
Pleasant as this is, we are still in the middle of a match.  
(MORE)

EMPEROR (O.C.) (CONT'D)

No one is getting healed until a victor is declared.

RED

But I --

The Emperor CLEARS HIS THROAT. Red shuts up, sheepish.

Mando looks from her...

To Grogu and Doc...

To the Emperor, presiding above them all.

DOC (O.C.)

(to Red)

In any case, little one, the Mandalorian knows what he owes me to save the child. Here, how's this for a deal? If he gets me the Headhunter, I'll make sure the *both* of them are returned to perfect health.

RED

Wha- But that's not fair! What could you possibly need it for that you'd risk Mister's life over! Or the little guy's life, for that matter?

DOC

(in Kyuzo; not subtitled)

You have no idea what I would do to find who I am looking for!

RED

(in Kyuzo; not subtitled)

Well then maybe I oughta find someone right up your butt --

DOC

(in Kyuzo; not subtitled)

-- Doc thinks you're a bit too little for such big words --

MANDO

-- Enough!

Both kyuzo look to Mando, where he holds Grogu in his arms.

MANDO (CONT'D)

(to Red)

You. Kid. You're too naive.

(MORE)

MANDO (CONT'D)

The only one way Doc gets the  
Headhunter is if you yield or if  
you die.

Red starts to PROTEST, but Mando holds up his hand.

MANDO (CONT'D)

(to Doc)

And you said never again. You goin'  
back on your word so quickly?

Doc glares at Mando.

Mando shakes his head, looking meaningfully at the children.

MANDO (CONT'D)

Have faith.

DOC

I...

Doc SIGHS, slumping over.

DOC (CONT'D)

(in acceptance)

I have a bad feeling about this...

Mando HUFFS, shifting Grogu in his arms.

Then he addresses the Emperor in his box.

MANDO

I yield.

DOC

What?

RED

What?

MANDO

Kid's the victor. She gets the  
Headhunter.

The Emperor's eyes gleam.

A moment of silence, then he nods.

EMPEROR

I'll allow it.

Red WHOOPS, but Doc grabs Mando roughly by the shoulder.

DOC

Tell me what you're playing at this  
instant, Mandalorian, or I'll --

MANDO

-- I'm a *bounty hunter*, Doc. I'll track down whoever you're lookin' for as your payment. I don't need a Headhunter for that.

Doc releases him in shock.

DOC

That is... unusually good of you, Mandalorian.

A HICCUP. It's Red, whose eyes have welled with tears.

RED

You're gonna do that? Just so I can have the Headhunter?

Mando SIGHS.

MANDO

Pipe down. I don't want a philanthropic reputation..

Doc and Red look at one another.

Eventually, Doc nods.

DOC

Well, I suppose if I have the great Mandalorian under my employ, then I may not be needing the Headhunter after all.

He shakes his head, HUFFING, then turns to Red.

DOC (CONT'D)

Congratulations on your win, little one. It's all yours. And don't worry about either of their health. I...

(slight chuckle)

...have everything under control.

INT./EXT. DOC'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Doc pats Mando on the hurt shoulder with a satisfying CLANG.

DOC

There! Good as new.

MANDO

Appreciate it. Guess I'll hold up my end. Might take longer than the Headhunter would, though.

Doc smiles as Grogu runs around the half-repaired lab and GIGGLES. No Force reaction. He's cured.

DOC

That's alright. I... must admit, I lost myself in the arena, in the end. Thank you for reminding me of who I am.

Mando HUFFS, shifting uncomfortably as Grogu clings to his leg armour.

DOC (CONT'D)

Take care, Mandalorian. I mean it. And if you don't take care of the little one...

Mando nods at the implied threat. He scoops Grogu into his arms and trudges off.

EXT. TAKODANA - BUSTLING MARKET - NIGHT

Mando GRUMBLES to himself as he makes his way back to his ship. He's not pleased about having signed himself up for another fetch quest.

Then, he stumbles as someone runs into him - literally.

Red rubs her head with a GROAN of pain. She lights up when she realizes who she just ran into.

RED

You're still here! Ohohoho!

Mando looks at her blankly. From his arms, Grogu COOS.

RED (CONT'D)

Well ya see, I thought I'd have to commandeer a whole ship to use this Headhunter thingimajig, but I haven't suuuuper been able to figure out how to stop it from --

MANDO

Kid?

RED

-- and then there was this actually  
really really annoying beeping  
noise that it won't stop --

MANDO

Kid.

RED

-- and I really gotta figure out  
how to find money for a mechanic  
droid or someone to fix this thing  
up before I start goin' off and  
looking for my --

MANDO

-- Kid!

Red cuts herself off. She looks at Mando.

RED

Yeah, Mister?

Mando gestures towards the BEEPING Headhunter.

MANDO

I might be able to get it working.

RED

Oh, yeah, sure thing! Here ya go!

She offers him the Headhunter.

Mando examines it for a moment. Then, he presses an  
experimental button, and the BEEPING QUIETS.

MANDO

Thing was set to a planetary scale.  
Whoever you're lookin' for is here  
already. Lemme zoom in.

Red brightens up, eyes gleaming.

RED

Oh, I'm gonna find him; I'm  
actually gonna find him! What's he  
gonna look like, do you think? Is  
he gonna sound like me? Is he gonna  
smell like me? Do you- do you think  
he's gonna like me --

Mando CLICKS another button: BEEP. He looks at the device.

Looks at Red.

Looks off into the distance, exasperated.

MANDO  
(to himself)  
So I was right.

RED  
What was that?

MANDO  
Nothing.

A beat of silence. Then...

MANDO (CONT'D)  
Hey. Kid.

RED  
Yeah, partner?

Mando points towards Doc's offices.

MANDO  
Your dad's a kilometre this way.

RED  
What?

Mando hefts Grogu and starts to walk in Doc's direction. Red scrambles in an attempt to catch up.

MANDO  
It's late. You have an incredibly valuable item on you. I know the way. C'mon.

RED  
Really? Thank you! Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you!!!

Red runs to catch up to Mando.

Grogu BABBLES and reaches out to take Red's hand (or, well, her finger). Mando SNORTS and shakes his head.

And with that settled, they trudge out of the market.

Together.

FADE TO CREDITS.

**END OF ACT FOUR**