

STAR WARS

DARKNESS RISING

2-1.2: SECRETS & LIES

BY STEPHEN J DUTTON



STAR WARS

DARKNESS RISING

2-12: SECRETS & LIES

When Teron Sharr is located the crew of the *Swift Exit* rush to capture him. However, Teron is willing to go to extreme lengths to avoid this and in the process exposes a secret the Jedi Order tried to keep hidden...

Darkness Rising is available from:
<http://thehazugfiles.uk/Index.htm>

Copyright notice:
Star Wars is the intellectual property of Lucasfilm Ltd. This story is completely unofficial and Lucasfilm has not endorsed or approved of any part of it.

1.

"I don't know." Krovak said as he and the leader of his gang, Teron Sharr, as they both peered through macrobinoculars at the government storehouse. According to local records it contained emergency medical supplies for disaster relief missions, but if Teron's own master was correct then for many centuries it had held something far more sinister, "Are you sure that guy knows what he's talking about?"

"My master has never been wrong." Teron replied.

"Yet." Krovak said, "His information is more than a thousand years out of date."

Teron shrugged and lowered his macrobinoculars to look at Krovak.

"Supposing he is wrong." he said, "We can still take what we want from the emergency stores. All those drugs will command a decent price on the black market. More than enough to cover our costs and still come out ahead."

"I guess so. But the security down there doesn't look like what you'd expect from a place like what he says this is." Krovak said as he also put his macrobinoculars away and then started to walk towards the repulsortruck they had stolen where the rest of the gang members they had brought along with them lurked. With Teron sat beside him Krovak drove the truck along the single dirt track road that led up to the storage facility and brought it to a halt at the main gate where a single security guard armed with a blaster in a holster emerged from the guard house.

"What are you doing here?" he asked as Krovak leant out of the window beside him.

"Delivery." he said.

"Delivery of what?" the guard said.

"Don't know. I just deliver the boxes, I don't look inside."

"Let's see some scan docs." the guard said.

"Sure. I've got them right here." Krovak responded as he picked up a large datapad and held it out of the window. The guard took this from him and frowned when he saw that the display was blank.

"What's this supposed to-" he began but as he looked up Krovak grabbed hold of the guard with one hand and pulled him sharply towards the truck. At the same time he used the datapad as a shield to hide the knife he held in his other hand as he thrust it forwards into the guard's chest, twisting the blade to open the wound more and the guard coughed up a mouthful of blood.

"Go." Krovak said and Teron leapt out of the other side of the truck and rushed towards the guard house.

There was no-one else inside this and Teron was able to just press a single button to cause the gate to slide open. Leaving the dead guard lying where he fell, Krovak drove the repulsortruck through the gate into the compound while Teron followed on foot. As they approached the main building that had been highlighted by Teron as the one his master wanted then to investigate two more armed guards appeared. Both of them were also armed with blasters that were still holstered but they had their hands resting on them, ready to draw if needed.

"What's going on here?" one of them demanded before he noticed the body of their comrade in the dirt beyond the perimeter fence, "Holy kriff!" he exclaimed as he drew his blaster. Teron was ready for this, however and he extended his empty hands in front of him to unleash a storm of bright blue lightning that engulfed both of the guards simultaneously. The two men screamed as the lightning burned them and Teron snarled as he kept the energy flowing until both lay dead in front of him. Then he calmly started to walk towards the door they had left open behind them.

There was a second door just inside the first and when Teron opened this he was hit by a sudden wave of cold from inside the main storage area. All of the drugs stored here were kept cool until they were needed and the double door system made it easier to regulate the temperature. However, Teron was uninterested in any of this and it was Krovak that began to instruct the rest of the gang about what types of drugs they should be looking for. While the gang began to search through the stacks of medical containers Teron and Krovak instead searched for the turbolift he had been told to expect. However, there were no signs of anything remotely resembling a turbolift and Krovak began to think that his view that the storehouse was not all that they had been told it was had been correct.

"There's nothing here." he said to Teron, "At least nothing your master is interested in."

"Oh yes there is." Teron replied without looking at Krovak and it was then that Krovak noticed how Teron was staring at a blank section of wall. Then with a flick of his wrist he sent a nearby container flying into the wall with a loud 'crash' that made the rest of the gang stop and turn their heads. Meanwhile Teron and Krovak looked at the hole that the impact of the container had created.

"There's something behind that wall." Krovak said and he rushed forwards to start ripping pieces of the lightweight wall covering away while Teron just looked on a smiled.

In just a few moments Krovak had exposed the entrance to a short passageway that led to an open framed

turbolift and Teron smiled.

"Just as my master predicted." he said and then he strode forwards, walking down the passageway and entering the turbolift, "Well?" he then said to Krovak, "Are you coming to see what we've found?"

"Of course. I want to make sure I get my share." Krovak replied.

"Don't worry. We'll all get what's coming to us." Teron said, smiling and as soon as Krovak stepped into the turbolift Teron activated it.

There were only two floors connected by the turbolift and when Teron activated it the ancient mechanism came to life immediately and the two men began to descend rapidly towards the concealed underground level. Then when the turbolift came to a halt ceiling mounted lighting panels came to life automatically and they found themselves in a small room filled with shelves. However, of greater note was the large blast door at the opposite end of the room. This was painted bright yellow and a large bio hazard warning sign cautioning against opening was marked directly onto this background.

"I hate to ask," Krovak said as he approached this door, "but are you sure this thing is safe?" but Teron did not reply. Looking around Krovak saw that Teron was not beside him as he had expected, instead the younger man was stood beside one of the shelves with a small box in his hand that he had taken a small piece of crystal from and was now staring at, "Hey!" Krovak called out, "Isn't this what we're here for?" and he pointed at the blast door.

"Of course." Teron replied, putting the crystal back in the box and then slipping it into his pocket. Then he walked over to the blast door with Krovak, "Do you think you can open this?"

"It's a thousand years old. If the security system was any more out of date it would rely on a mechanical key." Krovak replied as he took a compact datapad from his pocket that had a cable wrapped around it.

Unwrapping this he quickly located a nearby computer port and plugged into it, gaining instant access to the security network. Just as Krovak had expected the system was centuries out of date and the slicing tools loaded onto his datapad had no difficulty in locating the control functions that operated the blast door, "Are you sure about this?" he asked and Teron nodded.

"Do it." he said quickly and Krovak sighed.

"I hope you know what you're doing." he said as he brought his finger down on the button that would operate the door.

There was a hiss as the blast door started to slide open, splitting down the middle.

"Halt!" a mechanical voice called out as soon as the door opened and a bulky battle droid disengaged from a wall mounted charging point before it started to stride towards the open doorway, raising the arms that mounted powerful blaster cannons, "You are in violation of planetary statute trill herf xesh one-one-three-eight. The maximum penalty for this is-" but before the machine could finish Teron extended his arm and unleashed a telekinetic blast that was powerful enough to hurl the battle droid back towards its charging point. The impact was powerful enough that the casing of the charging point was split open, exposing the power carrying cables and when these came into contact with the metal casing of the droid the power flowed through it. The droid shuddered as power arced across its surface and through its internal systems before it burst into flames.

Meanwhile Teron smiled.

"Let's find out what someone decided needed to be hidden away down here with that thing on guard." he said.

The vault behind the blast door was mainly filled with large black drums marked with the same warning symbol that was marked on the outside of the blast door. However, on the other side of the room there were also several smaller cylindrical containers. These were each filled with a cloudy fluid and just about visible inside them were dark shapes drifting around slowly.

"We'll need a cart." Krovak said and Teron nodded as he walked up to the row of transparent containers and picked one up.

"We'll take one of these each back up with us." he said, "Then we'll come back with a cart and the others and grab as many of those drums as we can fit into the truck."

In a darkened control room a row of military technicians monitored security feeds from numerous facilities located around the planet. One of them frowned when a warning message that he did not recognise appeared on his screen.

TAMPER ALERT – VAULT 16

"General I may have a fault here." the technician called out and the facility's commanding officer walked over to him.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"General I don't know what this means. Is it-"

"Kriff no!" the general exclaimed before the technician could finish and he rushed back to his own desk where he grabbed hold of the communication handset, "This is General Jaras, put me through to the President's office immediately. Tell him that Vault Sixteen has been breached."

2.

When the YT-700 class freighter *Swift Exit* dropped out of hyperspace in the Veletar system it was obvious almost immediately that something was seriously wrong here. A ring of warships was positioned in geostationary equatorial orbit so that they covered the entire planet while fighter patrols operated over the entire planet in a lower orbit. On the other hand there was no civilian shipping whatsoever over the well developed and heavily populated world in the Colonies Region.

"I've got a very bad feeling about this." Tylo Kurrast, the *Swift Exit*'s owner said and he glanced the jedi knight Jayk Udra who was sat beside him, "Nothing in that briefing pack said anything about a full naval blockade. Stang, they must have their entire defence force out there. How can a sighting of Teron Sharr provoke all of this?"

"I sense a great deal of fear for this situation." Jayk replied, "The Veletaran government must consider Teron a much greater threat than they have admitted."

"Attention YT-seven hundred freighter." a stern voice said over the communication system, "Veletar is under full planetary lock down. If you continue on your present course you will be fired on."

"This is Jedi Jayk Udra aboard the the freighter *Swift Exit* operating under the authority of the Republic Judicial Department." Jayk responded, "We are here at the request of your government."

There was a brief delay while this claim was confirmed with the planetary government before the voice spoke again.

"Confirmed *Swift Exit*. Follow beacon zero one. You are cleared to land on platform three-two-seven."

Entering Veletar's atmosphere the strange state of the planet became even more apparent when not a single civilian aircraft of any sort appeared on their sensors. A pair of cloud cars rose up from the surface to escort the *Swift Exit* down to the surface, following the beacon.

"That's their parliament." Jayk said as the *Swift Exit*'s destination came into view, a tall cylindrical building with a flared base that had numerous landing pads protruding out from its core. Most of these appeared lifeless, even those that had shuttles or airspeeders of some form landed on them but there was one where the landing lights were flashing and also a small group of figures could be seen against the light coming from the open doorway behind them.

"Looks like they're waiting for us." Tylo commented as he flew towards the pad.

"Yes, they do seem rather keen don't they?" Jayk replied and he got up out of his seat, "Take us down. I'm going to brief Brae." he added as he exited the cockpit and headed for the *Swift Exit*'s lounge. Here Jayk found Brae, his padawan and also his niece, practising her lightsaber fighting techniques while watched over by the hologram of yet another member of the Udra family. Cal Udra had been a jedi knight thousands of years earlier and during his life had placed all of his knowledge into a holocron along with a simulation of his own personality to act as a guide and a guardian of the contents. The holocron had been provided to Jayk to help him with the unusual assignment of training a close family member given that Cal had done precisely that while alive.

"You expect combat?" Jayk asked.

"Where Teron Sharr is concerned violence is not that far behind master." Brae responded as she shut off her weapons and looked at him.

"And how is she doing?" Jayk added, looking at Cal.

"Progressing adequately." Cal replied, "Though I wouldn't want to put her up against a fully trained jedi."

"Teron's not a jedi. The old Sith lightsaber he stole doesn't even work." Brae pointed out, "As long as I can block his Force lightning I'll be fine."

"Be careful you do not get too over confident my very young apprentice." Jayk said, "Just as you are working to improve your skills we can be sure that Teron is doing the same."

"Fortunately he lacks a teacher." Cal said, "Whereas you have your uncle and myself. As long as you listen to us you'll do just fine."

"Did Lara follow that advice?" Brae asked and Cal frowned.

"No." he said, "No, my baby sister rarely acknowledged my superior experience or rank."

"We're coming in to land." Jayk said, changing the subject to the one he had come to the lounge to discuss,

"It looks like the planetary government is keen to speak with us directly. The entire planet looks to be on lock down and we're being escorted to their parliament."

"Teron Sharr's got them frightened." Cal commented, "I wonder what could cause that?"

"I don't know. But I want both of you with me when I meet with their representative. If all this is just because Teron Sharr is listed as being wanted by the Jedi Order I'm hoping that the presence of all three of us may help calm things down. Planetwide air and space travel restrictions are going to cause more problems that they solve if the government tries to keep them in place for an extended period of time."

"Stand by." Tylo then announced over the intercom, "Five seconds to touch down."

"I'll get Cal." Brae said as she walked over to where the holocron sat on a shelf and Cal's hologram vanished as she picked it up and put it inside her robes.

The *Swift Exit* lurched slightly as it touched down and the two Jedi made their way into the hold, followed moments later by Tylo who came rushing in behind them.

"That bad feeling I had earlier just got a whole lot worse." he said, "I got a good look at the group waiting for us and they don't look like low level civil servants. Something really bad's going on here." and then he opened the access ramp.

Exiting the freighter the trio found themselves facing a single male duros in formal robes while either side of him a line of uniformed troops were lined up at attention. It was not unusual for Jedi to be met by members of local military forces when they arrived on a planet but it was rare for them to be so obviously equipped with clothing obviously meant to protect against chemical or biological attack. All of the troops wore bulky protective suits and although the built in hoods were lowered this was so that they could more easily don the respirators they had hung across their chests.

"Welcome to Veletar." the duros announced, "I am the personal under secretary to Prime Minister Maya Torrel. If you would like to follow me, we will escort you to her office right away."

"We're seeing the Prime Minister herself?" Brae whispered.

"More to the point we need to be escorted there by troops in NBC kit." Tylo added softly.

"Be patient." Jayk responded, "If the Prime Minister herself cannot tell us what's going on around here then I doubt that anyone can."

Walking through the corridors of the parliament building it became apparent that it was not just Veletar's air and orbital space that was locked down. What should have been a building teeming with activity around the clock was almost totally deserted and the vast majority of the beings present were military personnel in protective clothing like that worn by the troops escorting the crew of the *Swift Exit*. This pattern continued right up until they reached the Prime Minister's office and given the lack of anyone sat at the desk outside to clear them the duros under secretary led them straight inside.

The Prime Minister was not alone in her office. Instead General Jaras and a man in a police uniform decorated with numerous awards were present with her.

"Jedi Jayk Udra madam Prime Minister." the duros said.

"Excellent." Prime Minister Torrel said, "Please do take a seat Jedi Udra. I take it that these are your pilot and your apprentice?"

"Correct. Captain Kurrast is the owner of the *Swift Exit*, operating under contract to the Jedi Order and Brae is my padawan learner." Jayk answered and Tylo smiled. The contract he operated under was one whereby he provided Jayk and Brae with transportation and the republic's Judicial Department did not charge him for his involvement in transporting illegal Sith artefacts.

"Just Brae?" General Jaras commented.

"Brae Udra." Brae replied and the three locals exchanged puzzled glances.

"Brae is my niece." Jayk told them.

"Oh, I see." Prime Minister Torrel said.

"She is also carrying with her the holocron of an ancestor of ours, Cal Udra." Jayk continued and Brae smiled as she produced the holocron and set it down on the Prime Minister's desk, at which point Cal's hologram appeared.

"An honour to meet you madam Prime Minister." he said.

"Err, likewise." she responded before coming back to her senses and introducing the two men in the office with her, "And this is General Jaras, chief of Veletar's defence forces and Commissioner Ubran of the planetary police service."

"All of whom appear very busy at the moment." Tylo commented, "Having a spot of trouble with Teron Sharr?"

"Trouble?" Commissioner Ubran exclaimed, "That terrorist could end all life on this planet." and now it was the turn of the *Swift Exit*'s crew to be confused.

"Perhaps you should explain exactly what has happened." Jayk suggested.

"Of course." the Prime Minister replied.

Fear.

Jayk and Brae glanced at one another when they sensed the Prime Minister's discomfort.

"Teron Sharr and his associates were observed breaking into a maximum security storage facility." Prime Minister Torrel explained, "This facility has been sealed for more than nine hundred years but his people were able to locate it, penetrate its defences and make off with a significant amount of its contents."

"What were its contents exactly?" Cal asked, "I can guess that it was something dangerous."

"That's putting it mildly." Commissioner Ubran muttered.

"During the last Sith war Veletar was occupied by the enemy for a time and they conducted a number of experiments on the population." General Jaras said, "At the end of the war when the planet was liberated the

reformed government took over all of the Sith's facilities and in one of them they found the results of the experiments carried out by the Sith. Many people thought that the Republic was about to fall apart after the war and the government of the day decided to keep what they found as a precaution."

Jayk frowned.

"They kept it, didn't they?" he said sternly, "Everything connected to the Sith was supposed to be turned over to the Jedi Order for appraisal but whatever your people found they kept it hidden for all these centuries."

"What is it?" Brae asked.

"It's a toxin." Prime Minister Torrel answered.

"According to our information it's the most devastating biochemical agent ever developed." Commissioner Ubran said.

"Commissioner perhaps-" General Jaras began before the police commissioner interrupted him.

Anger.

"Stang it's too late to worry about keeping this a secret now general. The military and the government itself have had this thing under our feet for a thousand years without warning anyone about it and now it's come back to threaten us all." he snapped. Then he looked back towards the Jedi and continued with his explanation, "It attacks a target at a cellular level and triggers massive haemorrhaging. To make matters worse it adapts itself to each affected target individually. This makes no mass produced counter agent possible, only a serum derived from stem cells of someone very closely related to the victim can be used to manufacture an antidote and each dose must be custom made."

"I take that the planetary police were not informed." Cal said.

"No we were not." Commissioner Ubran replied, "As far as I can tell every new government was assured by the military that this stuff was useful for planetary defence and every new chief of defence staff was told that it was government policy to retain the stockpile. They both left us out."

Tylo sighed.

"How much does he have?" he said.

"Seven hundred litres of concentrated toxin." General Jaras said.

"Enough to kill seven hundred million beings apparently." Commissioner Ubran added.

"That was the calculation that the Sith made." General Jaras agreed.

"And how is it delivered?" Cal asked.

"You name it." Commissioner Ubran responded, "You can coat a blade with it, put it in a dart or even dose food or drink with it. Worse still if it's mixed right then it can be deployed as an aerosol."

"Ah, so that's why your airspace is shut down." Tylo said, "You don't want Teron spraying that stuff over one of your cities."

"Or getting it off world where other planets could find out what you've been hiding." Brae added.

"It's not our airspace." Prime Minister Torrel said, "I've put the entire planet under curfew administered by martial law. I had no choice with this threat hanging over us. But this can't go on for long. Our economy just can't bear the strain."

"Prime Minister, the government of this planet has violated Republic law." Jayk said, "Not only have you retained forbidden weapons of mass destruction but you have also had Sith artefacts in your possession that the Jedi Order has not approved. This cannot be overlooked."

"What are you proposing?" the Prime Minister asked.

"To begin with madam Prime Minister both you and General Jaras are under arrest." Jayk said and then he glanced at Commissioner Ubran, "I assume that you can take care of that detail?" he asked and the commissioner nodded, "Good. Next I will need to contact Coruscant. The Judicial Department will need to send agents to extradite the pair of you for trial and to oversee the destruction of any other stashes of illegal weaponry you may have overlooked to dispose of when the war ended. Meanwhile I expect the full co-operation of your remaining military command and government officials in tracking down Teron Sharr."

3.

"Are you still playing around with that thing?" Krovak asked when he entered the room and saw Teron hunched over a workbench.

"The Jedi will be coming. I intend to be ready. Now what about the poison?" Teron replied without bothering to look up from his work.

"We cracked open one of the containers like you said to. In fact that's why I'm here now." Krovak replied and he walked over to the workbench and set down a knife in a scabbard, "The blade is coated so I wouldn't cut yourself with it if I were you." he added.

"I'll be careful." Teron responded.

"You'll be dead if that stuff gets into your blood." Krovak said.

"Any what about the authorities? What are they doing?" Teron said as he picked up the scabbard and hooked it onto his belt. Then he noticed Krovak smiling, "What's happened?" he asked.

"This little job has brought down a government." Krovak said, "According to the news a whole bunch of senior politicians and military officers have been arrested. The cops are running things now."

"No." Teron said suddenly as he got up from his seat, "The Jedi are. If the police were going to arrest people they would have done it as soon as our actions were discovered. No, they're operating under orders from outside. The Jedi are already here and we need to be ready to move."

The police investigation room that Jayk was using as his command centre was equipped with a large scale holographic projector that could be used to create multiple different high definition images at once but for now Jayk had only one purpose for it.

"So this is our poison?" he asked as Cal looked on at him as he and Brae studied the chemical diagram of the stolen Sith poison.

"As close as ordinary science can show it, yes." Cal answered, "There seems to be an element that defies mundane examination. Most likely owing to the use of the Dark Side to create it. Scan it five different times and you get five different results."

"Could that be how it adapts itself to its victims master?" Brae asked from beside Jayk.

"That would be my guess." Cal agreed.

"So what's your opinion of it Cal?" Jayk said.

"In its concentrated form it's pretty safe to handle just as long as you don't get any into an open wound, in your eyes or ingest it. But it takes only a microscopic amount to kill a typical person. It's at its most dangerous when blended with methanol. That allows it to be spread in a smaller droplet form that can be inhaled as well as swallowed or absorbed directly through the skin and mucus membranes."

"And how do we dispose of it?" Jayk said.

"Oddly for Sith alchemy that's easy enough. The chemical breaks down at high pressures and temperatures so high explosives should be quite adequate for dealing with the remaining stockpile." Cal said.

"More importantly that means we can use a missile strike on whatever Teron is using to transport his stolen supply without worrying about contaminating a large area." Jayk added.

"Okay this sounds bad." Tylo announced as he entered the room. Unlike when they had first landed he now carried a bag slung across his shoulder that contained a military issue breath mask that would offer at least some protection from the toxin, or at least so he thought.

"Ah Tylo, we were just studying the chemical properties of the toxin." Jayk told him.

"Well I hope you've found a way of neutralising it because I've asked around and martial law may have closed down most of the underworld here for the time being but it's also made people more talkative." Tylo said.

"What are they saying?" Brae asked.

"That something very bad's going down." Tylo answered, "There's talk of a new crew that came in from off world and took out a couple of minor drug factories in the city. They killed the bosses and offered the enforcers and chemists the option of working for them. Then they packed up all of the gear and vanished about a day before all of this started."

"Teron's not just after the concentrated toxin, he wants to be able to deploy it over a wide area." Jayk said.

"And I'm all for getting away from this particular area." Tylo said, "Bring in droids to deal with it, they can't be poisoned."

"The Veletarans tried using a droid to protect their little illegal stockpile." Brae pointed out, "Teron trashed it."

"Like it or not it is our responsibility to deal with Teron." Jayk said, "Unless you'd rather dissolve our agreement and spend the rest of your life in prison?"

"All of a sudden I have new enthusiasm for our mission." Tylo said, "But I've still got a very bad feeling about

all this.”

“Did the honest and upstanding citizens you spoke with at least give you any hints about where Teron could be hiding out?” Cal asked.

“As a matter of fact, yes. When Teron started moving his new crew out some enterprising beings decided that it would be a good idea to wait and see what got left behind. That meant that they got to see how long it took for the repulsortruck that was used to ship out the kit to complete a round trip.”

“How long?” Brae asked.

“Five hours. They also said that it took about fifteen minutes to load it up, including bringing all the equipment from inside the hideout.” Tylo said.

“So even if offloading took about that long as well then we’re looking at about a round trip of three hundred to three hundred and fifty kilometres.” Cal said.

“That’s a lot of ground to cover.” Brae commented.

“I need a map of the area.” Jayk announced, looking towards the police officers present, “Mark on it an area of three hundred to three hundred and fifty kilometres outside the city.”

As the police officer was loading the map into the projector Commissioner Ubran entered the room and walked right up to Jayk.

“It’s done.” he said, “My men have detained every current and former government minister who would have had knowledge of the illegal weapons store as well as every military officer involved.”

“Who have you got to replace them?” Jayk asked.

“For now there’s an old navy admiral been brought out of retirement to run the defence force, the illegal stockpile seems to have been a purely army operation but the civilian side of things is proving more difficult. I can’t appoint new ministers of state, only the new Prime Minister can do that and he’s on vacation off world right now. I’ve sent word for him to return but until then we’ve got civil servant running things.” the commissioner explained.

“Running your government is not in our jurisdiction.” Jayk said, “It will just have to do for now. But we have managed to narrow down the possible locations of Teron Sharr and his group from anywhere on the planet to the area shown here. What can you tell us about it?”

“Well all that ground to the east is swamp.” Commissioner Ubran said, “There are a few roads and structures but nothing significant. Most law enforcement in that region operates from airspeeders because of the sheer area they have to cover.”

“Methanol is wood alcohol isn’t it? It could easily be produced in a swamp environment.” Brae pointed out and Jayk nodded.

“Perhaps. But Teron will also need to put together a delivery system and that will need more modern tools and a reliable energy supply.” he said.

“North.” Commissioner Ubran said when he heard this, “There’s a large port facility on the coast that sends industrial ships up to the arctic. That means they need antifreeze and that contains methanol. Plus there’s a plentiful energy supply available.”

“So north then.” Tylo said.

“No that can’t be it.” the commissioner added, shaking his head.

“But you just said-” Brae began.

“There’s a reserve airbase less than five kilometres from the port.” Commissioner Ubran interrupted, “It may not be heavily manned but it does have an effective sensor net and a fortified perimeter. It’s not possible to enter or leave that area without being seen and assaulting it would be suicidal for a band of outlaws.”

“Then that just leaves us with south and west.” Tylo said, “Anyone want to take a guess? Or maybe use those Force powers you two have?”

4.

The military patrol speeder made its way slowly along the darkened street, with one of the occupants shining the powerful glow lamp mounted on the roof of the vehicle into all of the potential hiding places between the buildings. The street lights in the town had been shut down as an energy saving measure while marshal law remained in effect. When no-one was supposed to be on the streets there was no need to illuminate them. All of a sudden the beam caught someone trying to escape down an alleyway.

"Over there!" the operator of the glow lamp yelled, keeping the lamp focused on the entrance to the alleyway so that the driver could see where he needed to go.

"Got it." the driver replied and he drove the speeder into the alleyway where the fleeing figure was illuminated by the roof mounted glow lamp and also the speeder's main headlights. The alleyway was a dead end and when he was lit up the figure was attempting to leap up high enough to get a grip on the top of the wall blocking his escape so that could try to climb over it. However, a single shot from the blaster mounted on the roof of the speeder with the glow lamp was enough to make him stop.

"Stay where you are!" the trooper in the front passenger seat ordered, using the speeder's public address system while the two other troopers in the back disembarked, "You are in violation of curfew. Have your scan docs ready for inspection."

Turning to face the speeder and the troopers advancing towards him, Teron raised his hands over his head and smiled.

"I'm afraid I don't have any scan docs on me." he said, "I appear to have left them at home."

"Who are you?" one of the troopers demanded.

"You don't need to know my name. You just need to arrest me." Teron replied and he waved one of his hands slowly.

"Okay have it that way." one of the troopers said, snarling at him as he produced a set of binders that he clamped onto Teron's wrists, "You're under arrest. Now get moving." and he shoved Teron towards the speeder.

Teron offered no resistance as he was taken to the vehicle and loaded into the back seat between the two troopers. The speeder then began to back up out of the alleyway before it turned back towards its base. Along the way Teron glanced out of the speeder's windows and smiled as it drove past a run down building near one of the cargo docks by the water that had the stolen repulsortruck his gang used parked outside. The nearby airbase was just a short drive away and as the speeder approached its gates they slid open automatically to allow it inside. As Teron had expected there were few signs of activity inside the base, it had just enough personnel to keep its equipment operational but it was not in regular use and even in the current state of martial law additional troops had not been sent to man it. Getting out of the speeder, two of the troopers escorted Teron inside the main building and took him to a small office where one took his picture.

"I'm not in your system. There's no point in submitting that." Teron said to the trooper.

"There's no point in submitting this if he's not in the system." the trooper then said to his comrade.

"You may as well delete that image." Teron added.

"I may as well delete the image." the trooper said and Teron watched him delete the image from his datapad.

It was then that Teron struck, leaping to his feet and striking the closest trooper in his throat. The blow was powerful enough that there was a sickening 'crunch' and the surprised trooper collapsed, clawing at his own throat as he tried to breathe. Meanwhile the other guard dropped his datapad and reached for his sidearm but while his attention was on Teron, Teron's was on the other objects in the room such as the stylus for the trooper's datapad and with a wave of his hand he used the Force to send it hurtling towards the trooper. Before the trooper could fire at Teron the stylus struck him in his eye and pierced the thin layer of bone behind it before burying itself in his brain. As the second trooper fell dead Teron darted over to him to search his belt for the key to his binders. Finding these he released the binders from his wrists and then began to strip the dead trooper of his uniform as well as his belt that included a holstered blaster pistol and a combat knife.

Several minutes later and leaving the two corpses in the small room behind the table where they would not be noticed by anyone who happened to glance inside it, Teron emerged into the corridor wearing a defence force uniform. Walking back the way he had been brought into the building, Teron lowered the darkened visor of his stolen blast helmet to cover as much of his face as possible. Calmly he walked out of the building and then began to circle it.

Teron found what he was looking for behind the main building, a smaller structure that was marked with warning signs that advised passers by of the high voltage power inside. Ignoring this Teron walked right up to the building and found it unlocked, enabling him to proceed straight inside.

"How may I assist you corporal?" a mechanical voice asked as he stepped through the doorway and Teron

looked around to see a droid standing by the main control control panel of the power substation.

"Does this building supply all of the power to the base?" Teron asked.

"Yes corporal." the droid answered, still referring to Teron by the rank shown on his stolen uniform, "The main transformers are located here as is the reserve fusion generator.

"All controlled from this console, yes?" Teron said.

"Yes corporal."

"Excellent." Teron said and then he raised his hands before unleashing a blast of Force lightning that engulfed the droid, overloading the electrical insulation that was essential for a machine working in a power substation and the droid convulsed before it burst into flames and exploded. Teron hurried towards the control console, kicking the remains of the droid out his way as he studied the console. As far as he could tell there was an automatic switch that would engage the reserve generator as soon as the main supply was cut off. However, no matter what the source of the power for the base was it still had to pass through the same set of switching gear and so Teron's next target was this, directing more Force lightning at it. The switching gear was designed to tolerate a great deal of energy flowing through it and its insulation was far greater than that possessed by the service droid. Teron could see the insulation around the switching gear starting to melt but he was beginning to tire. Anger at his own failure drew the Dark Side into him and Teron sensed the influx of power that he channelled into the lightning storm, increasing its strength enough that the insulation surrounding the switching gear shattered to expose the equipment beneath. The energy of Teron's Force lightning flowed through the conductors, producing a sudden surge that was enough to knock out the entire power feed and all of a sudden the entire airbase was plunged into darkness.

"Okay that's the signal. Let's go." Krovak said when he saw the lights at the airbase all go out at the same time. In addition the large rotating sensor receiving dish abruptly stopped turning at exactly the same moment as the lights went out.

Hurrying to the repulsortruck, Krovak climbed aboard just as the driver was starting up the engine. The inside of the vehicle was very cramped, with the drums of toxin strapped together at the rear while as many of the gang that would fit inside the truck filled what remained of the available internal space. Altogether Krovak knew that he had about twenty men with which to attack the airbase and unless Teron was able to significantly thin out the numbers of the base defenders then this was a suicide mission.

Panic gripped the airbase as the troopers assigned to it tried to discover what was happening. It took one of them to see the flames coming from the power substation to realise why there was no power on the base. The lack of power complicated efforts to fight the blaze, first preventing the trooper who had discovered the fire from contacting the command centre by making use of the intercom system that would not function without power and then slowing down the response by preventing the base commander from issuing orders over the intercom as well. Fortunately for the airbase personnel there was a single firefighting vehicle attached to the base that was intended to be used should an aircraft or shuttle crash in the landing zone and this was sent to counter the fire as quickly as possible. In addition to this as many other troopers and technicians as could be spared were sent to fight the fire with handheld equipment.

Meanwhile Teron headed towards the perimeter fence. Rather than moving calmly as he had before, Teron now moved at a faster pace to give the impression that he had been given an important task to do that could not be interrupted by such things as asking who he was or giving him an order to do something else. What Teron was really making his way towards though was one of the defence posts that had been hastily set up just inside the perimeter fence that surrounded the airbase. Each of these containing a support weapon such as a repeating blaster or automatic grenade launcher and had been manned by a section of four men. However, the sudden need for personnel to fight the fire at the substation meant that most of these had been withdrawn and now only a single trooper manned each post. Given that their purpose was to protect the base from external attack the attention of these troopers was focused outwards and slowing down as he neared one of them, Teron was able to get right up behind him and before the trooper realised what was happening Teron slit his throat using the combat knife he had taken along with his uniform.

There was a repeating blaster set up in the defence post to face out beyond the fence and Teron began to disconnect this from its mounting. The weapon was hooked up to a compact fusion generator and this was about as heavy as the ten kilogram blaster. There was a tough fabric sling that enabled Teron to carry the blaster over his shoulder but he found that he had to drag the generator along the ground as he removed it from the defence post and pulled it towards the substation. Coming to a halt as soon as the burning substation and the troopers attempting to control the blaze were in sight Teron set the generator down and unslung the repeating blaster. Then after double checking that the weapon was set to fully automatic he opened fire.

The sudden stream of energy blasts took the troopers completely by surprise and half of them were cut down before they even realised where the attack was coming from. The rest of the troopers on foot scattered and Teron then moved onto the firefighting vehicle, firing a sustained burst towards it until it exploded in a brief

ball of flame that was quenched by the escaping firefighting foam contained in its own storage tanks.

Danger.

Teron sensed the attack just in time to duck before a single blaster bolt struck the wall behind where he had been while firing the heavy weapon. The shot had come from the direction of the perimeter fence and looking around he saw that the trooper manning another of the defence posts pointing a blaster pistol towards him. Beside the trooper Teron could see a grenade launcher and he understood why he had not chosen to fire the more powerful weapon at him, launching explosive projectiles into the airbase would cause significant collateral damage. However, the grenade launcher also offered Teron an opportunity to deal with his opponent and he swung the repeating blaster towards the defence post. Firing another burst from his weapon Teron aimed for the grenade launcher rather than the trooper who dived for cover as soon as Teron opened fire. The first few shots struck the mechanism of the grenade launcher and one of them triggered it, sending a fragmentation grenade flying over the perimeter fence before the launcher was disabled by the following shots. However, Teron's intention was not to merely disable the grenade launcher and he continued to fire at the grenade launcher until one of his shots struck the ammunition feed and triggered one of the grenades. In turn this explosion was enough to begin a chain reaction in the magazine that created a much larger explosion and spreading shrapnel over a large area around the defence post as well as killing the unfortunate trooper manning it.

The sound of a second explosion followed this and Teron turned towards its source, seeing smoke and flames rising from the direction of the gatehouse and Teron smiled knowing that his gang had arrived. Disconnecting the repeating blaster from its generator, Teron slung the weapon over his shoulder again and began to run towards the gatehouse. As soon as the gate came into view he saw that there was a large cloud of smoke beyond the gate and blaster bolts were heading into and coming back out of this. Within the perimeter there was a wrecked speeder bike that had the body of one of a man that Teron recognised as one of the locals he had recruited to his gang lying beside it. Meanwhile two defence posts equipped with repeating blasters were firing into the cloud of smoke. Teron unslung his repeating blaster and then placed it on the ground before drawing the pistol he had stolen along with his uniform. This sidearm was far less powerful and much shorter ranged than the repeating blasters that the troopers in the defence posts were armed with but it was also much lighter and Teron could move faster with it in his hand than with the repeating blaster over his shoulder. Rushing towards the nearest of the two defence posts Teron saw the troopers from both briefly look towards him and so to try and maintain the illusion that he was coming to their aide he too fired his blaster towards the cloud of smoke, deliberating aiming away from where any of the incoming blaster bolts were coming from. This obviously worked as both troopers returned to focusing their attention on the cloud while Teron ran the final few metres to the defence post.

"Stang you're just in time." the trooper already inside it said as Teron leapt in with him.

"I know." Teron replied right before he shot the trooper in the chest.

Manhandling the repeating blaster Teron turned this towards the second defence post, this one still firing into the cloud. Then he opened fire, sending a continuous stream of energy blasts towards it. Unprepared for this attack, the trooper in the other defence post was hit several times in his side and he slumped forwards over his weapon. The muzzle of this promptly rose up into the air as one last burst was fired and then all of the outgoing fire ceased.

"Come on Krovak." Teron said to himself, "Notice that they aren't firing any more."

A few seconds later all of the blaster shots coming out of the cloud of smoke also ceased and then Teron heard the high pitched sound of a lightweight repulsorlift engine before a second speeder bike raced out of the cloud and came to a complete halt, "Over here!" Teron called out, pulling off his blast helmet and getting to his feet and waving at the biker, "Tell Krovak to get in here quickly."

The repulsortruck brought in most of the gang, with the remainder following on a mix of speeder bikes and a few battered landspeeders. Knowing that Krovak would be in the repulsortruck Teron ran towards it, arriving just as Krovak disembarked holding Teron's own equipment belt that he handed over.

"Here, you'll probably be wanting these." he said.

"Thanks." Teron replied, discarding the belt he was wearing before accepting his own from Krovak.

"We took out the gate with a missile." Krovak explained, "But when I sent the first rider in he was hit by those kriffing repeating blasters. Thankfully the smoke from the missile blast blocked their line of sight to the rest of us."

"There are still several defence posts around the perimeter." Teron told him, "It's probably a good idea to use these repeating blasters to take them out. Send half the men to do it and take out anyone else still around, the rest need to come with us to secure the hangar. All the power's out so we'll have to do something about the launch lift."

5.

"So basically there's nowhere in that search area that Teron could have access to the resources he needs to get the toxin ready for deployment and also be able to keep out of sight?" Tylo said.

"There must be something that we're missing." Jayk said.

"Obviously." Tylo commented, "But what?"

"That reserve airbase." Cal said, "What's there exactly?"

"I don't know." Commissioner Ubran replied, "We'd have to ask the military."

"What are you thinking?" Jayk asked, looking at Cal's hologram.

"Well how is Teron going to disperse the toxin?" Cal said, "Even if he came here in a ship of his own with the airspace lock down in effect he'd be shot down the moment he took off. On the other hand maybe he's going to try and use a government craft. Like something that could be stored at an airbase."

"Get me that airbase now." Jayk said, turning towards the police officers present and one of them began to work rapidly to establish a link to the airbase.

"Master jedi I can't establish a link." the officer said.

"Try a different line." the commissioner said.

"I've tried them all sir." the officer said, "It's like they're not there."

"But I bet Teron is." Tylo said and Jayk looked at Commissioner Ubran.

"Commissioner I need transport to that airbase immediately plus as many of your best men as you can muster in ten minutes." he said, "Teron Sharr is there."

The airbase used an underground hangar to protect the few craft stationed there. Most of them were airspeeders and cloud cars meant for operations in the planet's atmosphere but there was also a single scout ship capable of interstellar travel and this was the reason Teron's gang had come here. Having no intention of using the toxin here on Veletar the plan was to load it aboard the scout ship and sneak it through the orbiting blockade. Ideally they hoped to be able to simply fly right through the blockade by impersonating an official craft, but if needed the scout had both speed and shields that could enable it to simply charge through under fire. Of course for this to work they would have to target one of the sections of the blockade made up of lighter warships rather than the bigger frigates but that was easy to plan for and the positions of every ship in the blockade had already been plotted. The drawback was that with no power there was no way to bring the scout ship up to the surface so that the drums of toxin could be loaded aboard it or to easily carry the drums down to the scout ship. In theory the scout could be launched from inside the hangar and fly up to the surface but the blast from its engines would be easily detectable from space and the gang's presence at the airbase would be revealed in an instant. The only real solution was to rig the lift that would carry stored craft up to the surface to run from the engine of one of the stored craft.

"The problem is the sheer power." one of Teron's men explained, "The scout can generate it but none of the speeders can."

"Okay so what if we use more than one and split the load?" Krovak asked while Teron just scowled angrily at the man who not long before had been assuring him that it would take just a few minutes to swap the power feed for the lift from the base mains system to the output of one of the speeders' engines.

"That could work. But we'd need to be able to synchronise the start up or they'll just stall." the man said.

"Get it done." Teron said sternly. Then right before he turned to leave he pointed at the man and added, "Do not fail me again."

The man watched Teron head for the scout ship and then looked at Krovak.

"Idiot kid. Who does he think he's kidding?" he said and Krovak glared at him momentarily before head butting him. The man howled in pain and clutched at his face as blood pumped from his nose.

"Get on with your work." Krovak said, "Mister Sharr will be back in fifteen minutes and you'd better have some results." then he hurried after Teron.

Just as Krovak caught up with Teron the two men looked up the large lift shaft that was open to the outside as they heard the sound of repulsorlift engines.

"Incoming!" a voice called out and Krovak reached for his blaster.

"No!" Teron snapped, "You stay down here and get the ship ready. Everyone else with me. We need to hold back the jedi."

"The jedi, you're sure they're here?" Krovak asked.

"Who else would it be?" Teron responded as he walked towards the stairs.

Teron's gang was shooting at the police transports before they were even in range and from that Jayk could see that there was a significant number of beings holding the airbase. All of a sudden there were several

brighter flashes of blaster fire as the repeating blasters captured from the airbase's defenders joined in the firing and one of the police transports exploded in mid air with its passengers still aboard.

"Set us down here." Jayk ordered, realising that for the remaining transports to continue just put them at risk as well.

Four transports descended to ground level to allow their passengers to disembark. Being forced to land early meant that the police tactical teams were being deployed outside the perimeter fence but the only alternative was to risk being shot down. Jayk was the first out of his transport, followed rapidly by Brae and then Tylo before the police tactical team began to deploy as well. Tylo had his blaster rifle slung over his shoulder while in his hands he held a grenade launcher and when the first blaster bolts whizzed over their heads Jayk looked at him.

"We'll need cover if we are make it through the fence." Jayk said and Tylo nodded.

"I was expecting this." he said and he raised his grenade launcher. Then he fired all six rounds that the weapon held in rapid succession. These arced towards the perimeter fence with some landing inside it and others outside before all six burst open to release clouds of white smoke, "Cover." Tylo said, swapping the now empty grenade launcher for his rifle.

"Forward." Jayk ordered, "But hold your fire, you will only give away our positions."

The combined police and jedi force advanced towards the smoke while their transports took off and began to circle beyond the range of the gang's weapons. From their elevated position the transports could monitor the gang's activities and relay that information to their own personnel on the ground and they were able to report that although the gang had ceased fire its members were deploying in an arc ready to defend themselves as soon as the police came through the smoke.

Cutting through the perimeter fence with lightsabers would have been quickest but the glow from the weapons would also give away the jedi's locations and so it was left to the police tactical teams to breach the fence with mechanical cutters before they continued their advance.

"The smoke is clearing." Jayk said when the smoke started to thin around him and he realised that they were almost through to the other side.

"Now master?" Brae asked and Jayk nodded.

"Now." he replied.

Both jedi ignited their lightsabers at the same time and charged forwards out of the smoke. Almost immediately the gang opened fire and both Jayk and Brae used their lightsabers to deflect the blaster bolts away from them. Alerted to the locations of the gang members by the bright blaster bolts the police returned fire, using short bursts of fire to keep their targets pinned down while they too advanced out of the cloud. At the same time Jayk waved his hand towards a stack of crates that several gang members were using for cover and the crates were flung aside by the wave of telekinetic energy that he sent towards them. Startled, the gang members looked for a new hiding place but before they could move the police fired on them and all were hit.

As the jedi and their police allies advanced Tylo suddenly caught sight of a repulsortruck parked behind another stack of crates close to the airbase landing strip and he whistled.

"Jayk! The truck's over there!" and he pointed.

At that moment Jayk was blocking the fire from a trio of gang members hiding behind a squat ferrocrete block that was too strongly anchored to the ground for him to be able to move using the Force while a pair of police officers traded fire with them. However, although he could not abandon the police he was able to look in the direction Tylo was indicating and he too saw the repulsortruck.

"Do it." he ordered and Tylo took cover.

Unslinging his grenade launcher again, Tylo took out a small metal case that was marked DANGER – BARADIUM and he opened it to reveal three thermal detonators that he carefully loaded into the grenade launcher. Baradium was notoriously unstable and Tylo took extra caution as he loaded and then closed the grenade launcher before taking aim at the repulsortruck. Tylo fired a single round, not wanting to waste the other two until he had seen what effect the first had and he smiled as he saw the projectile falling towards its target.

"Stang." he hissed as he realised that the round was about to detonate and he ducked right before there was a sudden wave of heat as the thermal detonator went off. The baradium produced an intense heat that engulfed the repulsortruck and its contents and triggered a second explosion as the repulsortruck blew up and took its contents with it.

Teron glared at Tylo, filled with rage at seeing his precious cargo destroyed. Once again the jedi had prevented him from accomplishing his aims and now all that remained to him was to escape and report back to his master. Firing as he ran, Teron retreated back towards the stairs leading down into the hangar but he did not escape unnoticed.

Anger.

Teron's own rage alerted both Jayk and Brae to his location and the two jedi looked towards him.

"There's Teron. Don't let him escape!" Jayk called out as he continued providing a shield for the police

officers positioned behind him. On the other hand Brae had been able to get far forward enough to engage members of the gang directly and she had just cut one of them down when she saw Teron trying to get away. "I'm on him!" she shouted before she broke into a run to give chase. Another of Teron's gang stepped into her path but before he could do anything Brae simply leapt up into the air and somersaulted over his head, slashing at him with her lightsaber as she passed over him. Landing not far from the access point to the stairs she then charged through the open doorway and followed Teron down towards the hangar.

6.

Teron heard the sound of footsteps pursuing him as he descended the stairs down to the underground hangar but he did not waste time looking to see who it was that was chasing him. However, when he made it to the hangar and began to run towards the scout ship he heard a shout from behind him and then he knew exactly who it was that he faced.

"Teron! Stay where you are!" Brae called out as he came to a halt and turned around.

"Ah, the young jedi." Teron said, smiling and he began to walk towards Brae.

"You're under arrest Teron. Get down on the ground." Brae told him but Teron continued to advance, even when he heard a banging sound and glanced back towards the scout ship to see Krovak banging his fist on the inside of the cockpit canopy before waving at him to get aboard.

"I can sense the Dark Side in you." Teron said, "I'd invite you to join me but I can do without a rival."

"I'll never join you." Brae replied, "Now stop right there and get down on the ground." and she raised her lightsaber just as Teron released a brief blast of Force lightning from one hand, "You need some new tricks Teron." Brae commented as she easily parried this attack with her lightsaber.

"You mean like this?" Teron asked and from a long pouch on his belt he drew the Sith lightsaber he had stolen several weeks earlier from a museum. Then to Brae's surprise there was a 'snap-hiss' as he activated the weapon and a bright red blade extended from the grip.

"You found a kyber crystal." Brae said.

"Yes, it seems that the locals were hoarding far more than just a stockpile of deadly poison." Teron responded.

"It doesn't matter. You don't know how to use that weapon anyway." Brae said.

"Let's find out shall we?" Teron said and then he charged at Brae.

Teron's strike was clumsy and amateurish and Brae easily blocked it. Then she struck back with two quick swipes at him. However, Teron proved to be better at defending himself than he was at attacking and he was able to block both strikes. Brae struck again, not allowing him the opportunity to attack back but Teron continued to be able to parry each attack. However, with each strike Teron took a step backwards and was being pushed closer and closer to the scout ship.

"Getting frustrated jedi?" he said, grinning at Brae, "Perhaps if you just made use of that anger I can sense within you then you could actually land a blow on me once in a while."

"I don't need any advice about my anger from the likes of you." Brae said as Teron parried yet another attack.

"I tell you what then, how about I fight you one handed?" Teron said and he promptly took one hand away from his lightsaber.

"Big mistake." Brae said and she lunged at him, swinging her lightsaber at him. Teron parried the attack again but Brae continued to push forwards with her lightsaber and Teron's own blade started to move ever closer to his face, "Ready to surrender yet?" Brae asked but Teron smiled back at her.

"Ready to die yet?" he said and all of a sudden Brae felt a stinging sensation on her arm as Teron slashed at her with his knife.

"It'll take more than-" she began but then she felt a sudden jolt of pain from her arm and she backed away,

"What have you done?" she asked.

"Like I said, I've killed you." Teron answered holding up the knife, "I've heard that Sith toxin is quite deadly."

Brae looked at her arm where Teron's knife had cut her and then she noticed a few drops of blood on her hand that could not have come from the cut. Instead she realised that the blood was coming from under her fingernails as the poison spread. Feeling suddenly weakened, Brae collapsed and her lightsaber rolled from her grip as Teron looked down at her.

"I could finish you off quickly but I find the idea of leaving you here to die slowly far more suitable." he said.

"Hey Teron! What are you waiting for?" Krovak's voice suddenly shouted out from the scout ship.

"Nothing." Teron replied and Teron turned around and walked away from Brae, hearing just three words coming from her lips as he turned.

"Uncle. Help me."

Inside the scout ship the two men sat in the cockpit and Teron looked down at the two canisters of murky fluid strapped under a console.

"At least we'll have something to give to my master." he said.

"Hang on." Krovak added as he took hold of the ship's controls and the scout ship rose up off the deck.

Uncle. Help me.

Jayk felt Brae's plea for help through the Force and turned towards the doorway he had seen her go through in pursuit of Teron. Abandoning the idea of providing cover for the police who by this time had dealt with most

of Teron's gang in any case, he ran for the doorway.

"Hey!" Tylo called out after him, "Where are you going?"

"Brae needs me." Jayk responded just there was an almighty roaring sound as the scout ship rose up out of the hangar and flew skywards.

"Stang. There he goes again." Tylo hissed. Then he looked at Jayk again and shouted, "Wait for me. I'm coming too."

Jayk did not slow down, instead rushing straight into the stairwell and skipping over numerous steps on his way down until he got to the bottom and found Brae lying on the floor.

"Brae!" he exclaimed as he rushed to her side and saw the blood now seeping from every orifice of her body.

"Uncle." she moaned, "Sith poison."

"Fight this Brae." Jayk said as he picked her up and turned around, "I'll get you to help."

"What the kriff's going on?" Tylo said as he reached the bottom of the stairs to find Jayk carrying the bleeding Brae towards him.

"It was Teron. He used the poison on her. We need to get her to a hospital." Jayk said and Tylo nodded, reaching for his comlink.

"We need a medevac. Now!" he signalled.

Jayk was still carrying Brae when he and Tylo burst into the hospital.

"We need help over here." he called out.

"It's okay, someone called Cal sent us instructions." the doctor who came rushing up to them responded while a pair of orderlies followed with a wheeled stretcher, "But we need a donor from her immediate family. Can one be contacted in time?"

"I'm her uncle." Jayk said as he set Brae down on the stretcher.

"Ah." the doctor said, "We'll do what we can but the information we were sent stated that it should be a parent or sibling. Your DNA is only a slight match for hers.

"Stang won't you even try?" Tylo demanded.

"Now calm down sir. Of course we'll try, But I suggest you try and find out whether the Jedi Order can locate a closer family member." the doctor said. Then he looked at Jayk, "In the meantime if you'll come with me we can arrange to extract some bone marrow.

After bone marrow was taken from Jayk's leg he was returned to the waiting area where Tylo sat and the pair of them and waited to hear from the medical staff.

"This is taking too kriffing long." Tylo said, "They should have come and told us something by now."

"I think they're about to." Jayk replied as he saw the doctor who was treating Brae approaching them carrying a datapad.

"Doctor, what's happening?" Jayk asked, getting to his feet, "Is Brae alright?"

"Master jedi, we have done what we can." the doctor replied, "But I have to warn you that we cannot treat your apprentice properly unless you are totally honest with us."

"Huh?" Tylo commented.

"I understand that the Jedi Order has its rules but we need to have all relevant information for a patient." the doctor continued, "I can assure you that whatever you tell us will remain confidential. It's the law."

Jayk frowned and then he reached out and snatched the datapad away from the doctor.

"Let me see that." he said and he looked at the device showing the progress of Brae's treatment.

"This can't be true." he said, "They lied to me."

"What's wrong?" Tylo asked but Jayk just thrust the datapad at him and then ran towards Brae's room.

Confused, Tylo looked at the datapad himself and his eyes widened.

"Oh kriff." he said.

When Jayk entered Brae's room he found her alone in bed, numerous tubes feeding medication and nutrition into her arms while sensors had been placed all over her.

"Master." she gasped, "I suppose I must be getting better if I'm allowed visitors."

Then she noticed the stern look on his face.

Anger.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

Jayk walked over to Brae and sat down beside her bed.

"Brae about twenty years ago I was sent on a long term assignment, providing security for a government that was being rebuilt after a period of instability on a planet in the Mid Rim. I was there for a number of years and I got to know a number of the locals very well, one in particular. Of course the assignment could not last forever and the Jedi Order recalled me, meaning that I had to leave behind my friends and the woman I had entered into a relationship with. We both knew that it would end eventually but that did not make things any easier and I have never heard from her since."

“Are you saying that you will no longer be my master?” Brae asked.

“I do not know. That depends entirely on the council's decision.” Jayk answered, “I think it is unlikely.”

“But why uncle?” Brae said and a slight smile appeared on Jayk's face.

“I am not your uncle Brae.” he told her, “I am your father.”