

# STAR WARS

## TALES OF THE JEDI



### V-II: ESCAPE

BY STEPHEN J DUTTON



ELEVEN FAMILIES.  
TWELVE GENERATIONS.  
ONE EVIL.

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THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO A SMALL GROUP OF INTREPID EXPLORERS SURVEYED THE NARTHIS SECTOR AND SOON IT BECAME ANOTHER PART OF THE GALACTIC REPUBLIC. THE DESCENDANTS OF MOST OF THESE EXPLORERS STILL RESIDE IN THE SECTOR, WHERE THEY HAVE BECOME BOTH FAMOUS AND WEALTHY. BUT DID THE ORIGINAL EXPLORERS DIVULGE EVERYTHING THEY DISCOVERED, OR HAVE THEIR FAMILIES BEEN HIDING SOME DARK SECRET EVER SINCE? NOW A JEDI KNIGHT HAS VANISHED WITHOUT TRACE AND THE INVESTIGATION WILL BRING ANOTHER FAMILY TO THE SECTOR. FROM NOW ON NOTHING WILL BE THE SAME...

**ESCAPE**

AS EXPECTED KYLE JENNER HAS ATTEMPTED TO ASSASSINATE TRENT NARTHIS JUST AS HE WAS ABOUT TO TAKE OFFICE AND NOW HE HAS A FORCE OF JEDI HOT ON HIS TRAIL. BUT IS THE FALLEN JEDI KNIGHT STRONGER THAN HIS FORMER FRIENDS BELIEVE HIM TO BE...

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<http://thehazugfiles.uk/Index.html>

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# 1.

## *Danger.*

Jedi knight Cal Udra sensed the tremor in the Force just moments before the sudden burst of machine gun fire ripped through the curtain set up at the rear of the stage where Trent Narthis, direct descendant of Jayk Narthis who had led the survey mission to chart the Narthis Sector for the Republic was about to be sworn in as its newly elected senator. Cal, along with his sister and padawan learner Lara as well as Master Ben Karas, the most senior jedi in the region along with his padawan Keana Vreyes and a jedi shadow named Tarris Blake who had spent his entire adult life in pursuit of the servants of the Dark Side had all come to the swearing in ceremony in anticipation that an individual named Kyle Jenner would attempt to assassinate not only Trent Narthis but also as many of the descendants of the survey team, known in the sector as the Founding Families, as he possibly could. Kyle Jenner was a former jedi knight who was Cal's immediate predecessor as the jedi assigned to the Narthis Sector who was believed to have been seduced by the Dark Side of the Force.

"Down!" Cal yelled as he made the most of his jedi reflexes to leap to his feet and rush towards Trent, tackling him and forcing him to the stage as the burst of projectile fire passed overhead.

There were screams from the large crowd that had gathered as they realised that the area was under attack and pandemonium set in. Members of the crowd began to head for the exits, pushing and shoving at one another as they tried to ensure their own personal safety over that of others. At the front of the crowd, between where the VIPs had been placed and the stage both Keana and Lara drew their lightsabers though neither risked igniting their weapons just yet. The panic had not yet spread to the VIP section, where security staff were directing them to take cover until they could be evacuated rather than try to flee.

"Are you injured?" Cal asked Trent.

"Only my pride Jedi Udra." he replied.

"Good." Cal said and then he looked up, searching for the source of the continuing hail of bullets. Using the Force to enhance his senses Cal spotted a broken window in a nearby office building and from inside there was the distinctive flash of a firearm being discharged, "Keana! Lara! Over there!" he yelled pointing to the office building. Cal jumped to his feet and drew his lightsaber as he somersaulted through the air, landing between Keana and his sister and all three jedi set off towards the source of the attack.

Kyle Jenner watched the three junior jedi start to move. So far there was no sign of the two more senior members of the order who he considered a far greater threat than any of these three. Kyle sensed that Tarris and Master Karas would be waiting for him to make an appearance in person, but he was not yet ready for that. Instead he continued to fire the machine gun on its automated mount, using it to keep the security staff occupied with organising an evacuation.

As jedi Cal, Keana and Lara were all in peak physical condition and they were able to sprint all the way to the office building where they found it locked. Without waiting for the two security guards sat behind the reception desk to come and open the door for them Cal ignited his lightsaber and swung at the lock, slicing right through it and prompting the door to slide open.

"What the-" one of the guards exclaimed as the three jedi burst in.

"Jedi business!" Cal snapped, running straight for the building's primary turbolift cluster. He shut down his lightsaber as he reached it and dived into the nearest open lift, followed by the two padawans.

"Okay big brother, what floor?" Lara asked.

"Six." Cal replied, jabbing at the control panel.

"Oh how do you know that?" Lara responded.

"He counted the floors to the broken window from the outside." Keana told her, "That's what I did. Didn't you?"

Lara frowned and then the turbolift door slid open again, revealing the sixth floor and demonstrating that the jedi had come to the correct place. There were two bodies in the corridor immediately outside the turbolift and it was undeniable that Kyle Jenner had been responsible for their deaths. One had been sliced in half vertically by a single sweep of a lightsaber blade while the second was slumped against a wall where he had choked to death following his throat having been crushed from the inside. The sound of gunfire attracted the attention of the jedi and Cal waved at the padawans.

"This way." he said.

Moving quickly the jedi followed the sound of gunfire until they reached the door to the office suite from where it was coming.

"Lightsabers." Cal said and all three of them activated their weapons. Then just as he had done with the front door to the building Cal used his lightsaber to disable the lock to the office door and when it promptly slid

upwards he rushed inside, holding his lightsaber out in front of him, ready to engage Kyle.

The sound of machine gun fire was much louder in the office and Cal could tell that it was coming from a room just up ahead that was positioned at the edge of the building overlooking the park where the swearing in ceremony had been about to take place.

"Kyle Jenner!" Cal called out, "In the name of the Galactic Republic you are under-" and then as he stepped into the room where the gunfire was originating from he came to a sudden stop.

"Cal what's wrong?" Lara asked as she followed her brother through the open doorway. Then she just added, "Oh."

The only people inside the room were dead, three bodies piled at one side of it. Meanwhile in the centre of the room was a machine gun on an automated mount with built in remote targeting and a wireless control receiver. The wall at the side of the building was made entirely of toughened glass, but despite functioning as a window there was no way to open it. This was a safety precaution to prevent anyone from either accidentally falling out or even deliberately throwing themselves out of it. But it meant that the machine gun could not be fired at the park without shooting through the window itself and this was the reason why it had appeared as broken when Cal had seen it from the outside

But of Kyle Jenner himself there was no sign.

Frustrated, Cal stepped forwards and with a swing of his lightsaber he cut the machine gun in half and silenced it before rushing to the large hole that had been made in the window by the machine gun just in case the former Jedi had escaped by leaping out of it. But there was no sign of Kyle anywhere and Cal shook his head as he brought it back inside.

"We missed him." he said.

"Master Karas," Keana said into her point to point communication link, "we have disabled the weapon Kyle Jenner was using to attack the ceremony, but he is not here. He was using a wireless link to control the machine gun."

"Copy that Keana." Master Karas replied, "Are you certain that Kyle Jenner is involved?"

"Yes master. We found evidence of his presence. There was a Shill Security team deployed to this location and they were definitely killed by Kyle Jenner. Some of the bodies show signs of having been killed by a lightsaber."

"Very well Keana. Check to see if there is any evidence to tell us where he may be. Good work though."

Master Karas told her and then the channel went dead.

"You get told good work?" Lara commented, "What about us two? Master Karas really doesn't like us, does he?"

"No I don't think he likes you at all." Keana answered.

Master Karas turned to Tarris as he put his PTP link away.

"Kyle was not there." he said, "Just as you suspected."

"He lured three of us away." Tarris replied, "Hopefully he thinks that they were all of us."

"And if he doesn't?"

"Then he must still try and get past us to reach his target." Tarris said.

Kyle moved. Now that the machine gun was out of action he discarded the datapad he had been using to control it and ran straight for the security fence surrounding the park. At three metre tall and enveloped by a deflector field it was a formidable barrier to most beings, but to one strong with the Force it was nothing. Drawing on the Force Kyle leapt into the air and easily cleared the fence, landing beside a startled police officer that he rendered unconscious with a single punch before heading towards the stage.

At the moment the machine gun fire stopped Han Shill, the public head of Shill Security grabbed Trent by the shoulder.

"We have to get you out of here." he said and Trent nodded.

"What about my family?" he asked and he turned to where his wife and children were now surrounded by more heavily armed and armoured agents from Shill Security.

"They're just fine." Han replied and he began to pull Trent towards the area backstage.

"Leaving so soon senator?" Kyle's voice called out as he rushed towards the stage and leapt up onto it, lightsaber in hand.

"Behind me!" Han snapped, positioning himself between Kyle and Trent and he drew a pulse wave blaster from under his jacket and took aim. But before he could fire Kyle unleashed a blast of Force energy with a wave of his hand that threw Han clear off the stage. For an instant it looked as if there was no one left to prevent Trent Narthis from being struck down but then Master Karas and Tarris both burst out from behind the curtain that ran along the back of the stage.

"Jedi Jenner! Stand down and prepare to face judgement." Tarris called out as he held out his lightsaber aligned horizontally and a glowing blade emerged from each end.

Seeing his chance Trent ran for the back of the stage and Master Karas moved to put himself between him and Kyle, just as Han Shill had done. Unlike Han however, the Jedi master was not one to be easily swatted aside and he too ignited his lightsaber.

All at one time the three Force users rushed at one another while the Trent family were all being ushered away. But Kyle had no interest in fighting two opponents that he was not confident of being able to defeat while his primary target slipped away from him and just before the two Jedi could reach him he suddenly spun his lightsaber blade in a circle and performed another leap into the air. The lightsaber easily sliced through the stage and as Kyle was taking to the air its structural supports gave way and the entire section collapsed, leaving Master Karas and Tarris plummeting downwards.

Neither Jedi was at any real risk of serious injury. The stage was barely more than a metre above the ground and both men had decades of practice at using the Force help them control such unexpected falls. However as they jumped back up onto what remained of the stage they saw that Kyle had already left it in pursuit of his quarry.

## 2.

The Narthis family had arrived from their hotel by airspeeder and it was to this vehicle that the security team now hurried them. But when they came to the speeder the reason that there had not even been any injuries, let alone fatalities from the sustained machine gun fire was revealed. The weapon had fired over the heads of everyone in the crowd and on the stage because it had been targeted at the airspeeder in the backstage area and it was now riddled with bullet holes where the machine gun had been used to take out its repulsorlift engines and pilot.

"Air unit one is down." one of the security agents said into his PTP link, "Transferring subjects to alternate transport."

The possibility that an evacuation would be needed and that the airspeeder would not be available had been accounted for in the security planning and a group of armoured landspeeders was held close by in reserve for just such an eventuality. These were not as large as the airspeeder and the security agents divided up the Narthis family, placing Trent and his wife Calleen in one while their children were placed in another and two more were left empty as decoys. All four speeders then lifted about a metre off the ground and accelerated rapidly towards the exit from the supposedly secured area.

Kyle arrived on the scene just in time to see Calleen being pushed into one of the speeders and correctly guessed that Trent would already be sat inside. It was obvious to the former Jedi that he could not catch up with the speeder on foot but it was here that the arrangements made to evacuate the Narthis family worked in the event of an emergency such as this worked in his favour. In order to guarantee that the armoured speeders would be able to get through the streets of the capital city in good time each one had been assigned four police outriders on speeder bikes and using the Force, Kyle dragged one of the riders from his mount before he could set off. Then he simply ran up to the speeder bike, leapt into the saddle and set off after Trent.

Tarris and Master Karas were assisted in getting free of the wrecked stage by the soldiers that had been a part of the guard of honour for the ceremony and also by one of the VIP guests for it. General Josh Drud was not only the head of the Drud family but was the commander of the Crassis Major Defence Forces and as such as partially responsible for the security at the ceremony.

"Trent's left by speeder." he told the Jedi as they were helped out from under the debris, "But it looks like Kyle Jenner's gone after him on one of the police speeder bikes."

Master Karas looked up into the sky where he could make out some of the military gunships that had been deployed to enforce the no fly zone around the park.

"Bring one them to us." he said, "And send the rest after Kyle. If he can be taken out from the air then so much the better."

"What about Cal and the others?" Josh asked.

"A gunship should be sent for them as well." Tarris said and Master Karas nodded.

"Yes, the more strength we can deploy the better." he added.

Though Trent's speeder had a head start on him, Kyle had the advantage of speed. The police speeder bikes were far faster than the bigger and heavier armoured speeder and although the escorts had to maintain the same speed as the armoured vehicle, Kyle was under no such restriction and he pushed his bike as fast as it would go. Combining this with his Jedi senses and reflexes that allowed him to make course correction and avoid collisions far faster than any normal rider he soon found himself closing in on Trent's speeder and the four police outriders surrounding it with their sirens blaring to clear traffic out of the way.

From under his cloak Kyle drew his plasma carbine and aimed the bulky weapon towards one of the police outriders that was between him and the armoured speeder. There was a brilliant flash of light and the carbine kicked as Kyle fired, sending a packet of super heated matter towards the hapless police officer. However, rather than strike the officer himself the blast struck his speeder bike. Unlike the newer blaster weapons that stabilised the plasma bolts they fired Kyle's older weapon lost energy rapidly over distance and by the time the shot struck the speeder bike it had lost most of its effectiveness. However, there was still enough energy in the blast to overload many of the circuits in the lightweight vehicle's repulsorlift engine and it looked as if lightning was arcing over the engine as the competing energy fields of the engine and plasma blast conflicted with one another. Despite not having inflicted any serious physical damage on the speeder bike the loss of control that the rider suffered left it uncontrollable and at a speed approaching two hundred kilometres per hour he was thrown off and smashed into a wall as his bike ploughed into the ground before bursting into flames.

The other rider behind Trent's speeder could not help but notice the destruction of his comrade's vehicle and glancing over his shoulder he saw Kyle closing in fast and turning his carbine towards him. With a turn of his

hand the police rider suddenly cut his speed even further and as Kyle raced past him he lashed out with a baton. The risky manoeuvre was intended to knock Kyle from his bike but he sensed the attack was imminent moments before it took place and he moved his bike further away while bringing his carbine to bear on the officer. The two weapons connected between the speeder bikes and the force of the impact caused both riders to drop them. Seeing his carbine smash as it hit the road at high speed Kyle swerved towards the police officer and there was a grinding sound as their speeder bikes made contact. The officer swung a fist at Kyle, hoping to at least drive him off, but he was prepared for this and keeping just one hand on the controls of his speeder bike, Kyle grabbed hold of the officer and dragged him from it. Panicked, the officer tried to take hold of Kyle's speeder bike, but when the former jedi released his grip he then elbowed the officer in the face. The toughened visor of his helmet prevented Kyle from breaking his nose with the blow, but its simple force dislodged him from the speeder bike and he screamed as he too struck the ground at almost two hundred kilometres per hour.

Taking hold of the controls to his speeder bike in both hands again Kyle continued towards the armoured speeder.

*Danger.*

Before he could catch up with the armoured vehicle Kyle sensed a tremor in the Force and he swerved just as a pulse wave blast struck the road from above.

Looking up Kyle saw a pair of gunships closing in on him and he knew that as things stood he could neither outrun nor escape them. The main armaments of the low flying aircraft were too powerful for their crews to risk using them in such a crowded area so instead the side doors to their passenger compartments had been opened and the door gunners were directing the lighter pulse wave cannons mounted in them at Kyle. He knew that getting closer to Trent's landspeeder would make it much harder for the gunners overhead to target him and so Kyle tried to close the distance to his target. But before he could get within striking distance there was another burst of fire from one of the gunships that rocked his bike.

Realising that the presence of the heavily armed aircraft would prevent him from reaching his target Kyle came to the conclusion that he needed to deal with them prior to Trent and he could not do that from the ground.

The two gunships containing the jedi closed in on the first two and their Force sensitive passengers looked down at Kyle.

"What's he doing?" Lara asked as she saw him lift his feet off the control pedals, place them on the seat beneath him and start to lift himself up.

"Is he going to try and jump onto the speeder?" Keana suggested in amazement.

"It's too far. He'll never make it." Lara replied.

"It's not the speeder he's after." Cal said, his eyes widening, "I've got a very bad feeling about this. Pilot! Tell the other gunships to get-" but before he could finish his warning to the woman flying the gunship Kyle simply leapt straight up into the air.

The door gunner was just taking aim for another burst of fire at Kyle when he saw the former jedi suddenly hurtling towards him. Startled, the gunner froze and his jaw dropped as he saw Kyle's lightsaber flash into life as he got closer. Reaching out with his free hand, Kyle caught hold of the barrel of the pulse wave cannon mounted in the doorway of the gunship and used it to hurl himself into the craft. Holding his lightsaber so it pointed directly in front of him Kyle skewered the gunner and sliced through his safety harness then sidestepped as his body toppled forwards and fell through the open door.

"He's inside!" one of the squad of soldiers carried aboard the gunship yelled as he tried to aim his rifle at Kyle. But the length of the weapon made it impractical to use in such a confined space and Kyle grabbed it by the muzzle, pulling the soldier forwards and decapitating him with a single swipe of his lightsaber.

Behind him another soldier drew his sidearm and took aim, but Kyle sensed the imminent attack and with a single movement of his free hand he directed a telekinetic blast of Force energy at the unfortunate soldier who was hurled out of the open door by the impact and he screamed as he plummeted to his death. At the same time he swung his lightsaber in a horizontal arc and slashed two more soldiers across the chest. Both men collapsed to the floor of the gunship without making a sound and Kyle lifted his weapon, ready to strike again.

All of a sudden a terrified soldier reached out with both hands and grabbed hold of Kyle's wrist, trying to prevent him from using his lightsaber to do any further damage. But Kyle acted quickly, spinning on the spot and lowering his lightsaber. This had the effect of cutting the legs out from under another soldier before he came to a sudden halt and the man holding his wrist stumbled forwards just far enough that he fell head first into the glowing lightsaber blade.

A sudden, powerful kick from Kyle caught another soldier in the stomach and he fell backwards into the second door gunner before slipping through the doorway on that side. However, this time the soldier was able to grab hold of the door frame and held on long enough for the gunner to grab hold of him, using his

safety harness to support them both. Unfortunately this meant that when Kyle used the Force to strike the emergency release to the gunner's harness on the wall beside the door both men fell from the aircraft. Only three of the squad now remained and one of them tried to use his rifle as a club, swinging the butt towards Kyle's chin. But Kyle effortlessly dodged the blow, ducking down and then bringing his lightsaber up so that it first sliced through the soldier's rifle and then took both arms off below his elbows. Then a second swing in the other direction impaled his chest on the blade.

One of the final two soldiers had finally been able to draw his sidearm and take aim and he fired his weapon at Kyle. A standard pulse wave blaster, Kyle parried each shot with his lightsaber and the tiny spatial distortions the weapon projected were burst as they came into contact with the blade. With each swing of his lightsaber Kyle took another step towards the soldier as well and the moment he came within arms reach he extended one hand and knocked the pulse wave blaster aside just as the soldier fired it again and the blaster instead struck the other remaining soldier in the chest. The armoured vest worn by all members of the squad was insufficient to stop the energy blast and he fell against the wall of the passenger compartment before collapsing in a heap on the floor. With the pulse wave blaster now safely pointed away from him, Kyle took another step forwards and thrust his lightsaber upwards. The blade entered the soldier's head under his jaw and came out through the top of his skull. For a moment the soldier made a confused expression before he simply collapsed and Kyle turned his attention to the flight crew.

"Emergency! Emergency!" the pilot broadcast in desperation, "Enemy is loose aboard aircraft. All squad is down!"

At the same time the co-pilot released his harness and was just getting out of his seat and reaching for his sidearm when Kyle struck, slicing his head from his shoulders so that it fell into the lap of the pilot.

"Holy kriff!" the pilot exclaimed and he simply let go of the controls and grabbed hold of the large handle set into the floor between his legs. Pressing his head back into the padding of his seat the pilot then pulled on the handle and there was a flash and a cloud of smoke as his ejector seat triggered, blasting him through the hole that opened up above him as part of the cockpit canopy was blasted free a fraction of a second before he would have otherwise struck it.

This left Kyle in an aircraft that was not only out of control but also open to the elements and the sound of air rushing over him came close to drowning out that of all the alarms now sounding as the gunship began to fall from the sky. Turning to the co-pilot's seat, Kyle shut off his lightsaber and pulled what remained of the seat's occupant clear before sitting down and taking hold of the control column now in front of him. Pulling back sharply on this the ground that had been getting ever closer vanished from view as the gunship gained altitude rapidly, giving Kyle the chance to strap himself in.

"Pilot, Kyle Jenner has control of that gunship. Shoot it down." Tarris ordered as soon as he saw the other craft's pilot eject. But Kyle was quicker and as he turned his gunship around he lined up its forward laser cannons on the second craft to have tried strafing him and fired. The bright red bolts slammed into the side of the other gunship and tore it apart as its fuel cells exploded and the burning debris that was all that remained of it fell towards the streets of the city below.



### 3.

"Can you get us above him?" Cal asked the pilot of his gunship when he saw Kyle evade a volley of fire from the gunship carrying the other jedi.

"Yes sir." she replied.

"Then do it." Cal ordered and the pilot banked the gunship hard.

"Cal, what are you planning?" Lara asked.

"Yes, this gunship's weapons are not designed to be used from directly above a target." Keana asked.

"I'm not planning on shooting Kyle down." Cal replied as he drew his lightsaber.

"Are you insane?" Lara exclaimed as she realised what Cal was planning but by the time she finished asking the question he had already leapt through the open doorway.

Cal landed on the nose of Kyle's gunship and grabbed hold of it to prevent him from falling to the ground. Simultaneously he glared at the somewhat surprised Kyle, who had not expected Cal to simply drop onto the gunship right in front of him while they were still airborne and he activated his lightsaber.

"Give it up Jenner!" Cal snapped, "Take us down to the ground right now."

"Oh Cal, you could have joined me." Kyle replied, "Together we would have put a stop to the plans of the Founding Families and destroyed them all. But no you leave me with no choice but to leave you." and then he pulled the ejection handle in front of his seat.

Cal watched as Kyle sudden shot upwards and he flinched at the back blast from the explosives used to propel the ejector seat to safety. Then his current situation sank in. He was clinging to the front of a gunship that was several hundred metres above the ground was falling rapidly and with no seats remaining in the cockpit had no easy way of being flown. He briefly considered using the Force to push back on the control column closest to him to try and add to the gunship's altitude. But his knowledge of flying told him that applying such a crude adjustment was likely to cause some other unexpected effect elsewhere and clinging onto the front of a gunship diving towards the ground was still better than clinging to the front of one that was spinning or tumbling towards the ground.

Instead Cal decided to increase his personal altitude and returning his lightsaber to his belt he let the Force flow through him, drawing on its power to boost both his strength and concentration. Then he jumped forwards and upwards, landing on the upper hull of the gunship and then he ran along its length, heading all the way to the tail assembly.

"Get us closer!" Lara shouted at the pilot, "We need to be right above him."

"We're already as close as we dare get." the pilot responded.

"I wish Seth was here." Lara muttered, referring to a jedi knight who was an expert pilot. He was the sort of individual who dared carry out manoeuvres that would terrify most others. Then she looked back out of the open doorway towards her brother, "Cal!" she yelled, "This is as close as we can get." Then the PTP link she carried sounded and she plucked it from its pouch.

"I can't hear you over the sound of all these engines." Cal's voice said, "Just use your PTP link."

"Cal, we're as close as we can get. Can you jump from there?"

"Of course not. Jedi can't actually fly, you know that. Now tell your pilot to dive. I need you beneath me."

"Huh?" Lara replied.

"Quickly please. The ground is getting bigger. Much bigger. Too big."

"Oh, right." Lara said and she turned to the pilot, "Pilot, descend. Cal wants us lower than him."

"Oh I get it." Keana said as the pilot just nodded and put her gunship into a dive.

"I wish I did." Lara replied.

Cal watched as the gunship carrying his sister descended rapidly, overtaking the slower dive of the one he was currently trying not to fall from. A jump downwards required far less power and skill than one upwards and knowing this Cal waited until the other gunship was at a lower altitude than he was and leapt from the tail of the of the gunship he was clinging to.

Using the Force to direct his fall, Cal aimed for the open hatch at the side of the gunship where he could see Lara staring at him in amazement and he reached out a hand towards her. Seeing this Lara did likewise, extending an arm out towards Cal and also reaching out to him through the Force, creating a link between them that helped steer Cal right towards his sister. As soon as they were close enough together the sibling joined hands and Lara pulled Cal into the gunship where they both landed in a heap.

"Thanks Lara." Cal said as he got back to his feet. But when Lara stood up as well she just scowled at him. Then she punched his arm, "Ouch! What was that for?" Cal exclaimed.

"Don't you ever do something like that again." Lara yelled at him before punching his arm a second time,

"And never say that I'm less use than a dog again either."

"Okay, okay." Cal replied, "Now what happened to Kyle? I kind of lost track when he disembarked from the gunship."

"Oh don't worry." Keana replied, "Master Karas will have him soon."

Tarris and Master Karas watched as the parachute deployed from Kyle's ejector seat as the seat itself dropped away.

"Shall we engage sir?" the pilot asked.

"No." Master Karas answered.

"No?" Tarris responded, "We cannot let him slip through our fingers again."

"Right now Kyle may be considered an enemy who has abandoned his craft." Master Karas pointed out, "Therefore, we must be wary of doing anything that may look as if the Jedi Order believes it appropriate to attack a defenceless target."

"Kyle Jenner is far from helpless." Tarris pointed out.

"Maybe so, but we do not have the luxury of operating out of the public eye here and it is my experience that the public and indeed the senate rarely understands the pressures we operate under. No, we must allow him to reach the ground before we can risk firing on him again." Master Karas explained, "At least his rate of descent is sufficiently slow that we can easily track him."

Kyle was also aware of how his use of a parachute was preventing him from escaping the Jedi and with Trent Narthis no longer anywhere in view escape was his only remaining concern. Looking down at the ground Kyle saw that he was going to land in an industrial sector of the city and he smiled, knowing that his original escape plan had called for him to come in this direction anyway. But he still needed to get away from the two gunships and the Jedi they contained before leaving the planet and that was not going to happen while he hung suspended from a parachute.

Then something caught Kyle's eye, a row of pylons carrying power cables for the industrial plants surrounding him and Kyle smiled. The overhead cables would not only limit the ability of the gunships to follow him they would also interfere with their targeting of him. The Jedi and defence force personnel had to take into account any collateral damage that their actions may cause and bringing down pylons and power lines would make the two gunships that Kyle had caused to crash look trivial in comparison. But Kyle knew that he could not get to the pylons while still strapped to the parachute and so he slammed his fist against the emergency release on his chest.

In an instant Kyle fell free of the parachute that continued to drift slowly towards the ground below, carried only by the wind. On the other hand Kyle began to accelerate once more as gravity took over. From his belt Kyle took a small grappling hook that was connected to the end of a reel of synthrope and he hurled it towards the closest pylon, using the Force to guide it to its target. As soon as the grappling hook caught on the pylon Kyle retracted the line and was instantly pulled towards the structure.

The more his altitude dropped the closer Kyle was drawn to the pylon and eventually he reached a point where the synthrope line would not allow him to fall any further. Given his current rate of descent had his downward motion simply been halted by his striking a solid object then Kyle's bones would have been smashed regardless of his training in the Jedi arts. But instead the synthrope acted like the rod of a pendulum with the pylon as its axis and Kyle himself as the weight at the end and his downward motion was translated into an angular swing. As he swung towards the pylon Kyle reached out through the Force, applying a gentle push against it to slow his swing further so that when it came within reach all he had to do was extend his arm and grab hold of the pylon before pulling himself up onto its structure and releasing the line that tethered him to it.

"Pilot, take us down. Get us as close to that pylon as you can." Master Karas ordered and as the gunship pilot complied he took out his PTP link, "Keana, can you read me?" he asked.

"Yes master." his Padawan replied.

"Have your gunship land on the far side of the tower from ours." Master Karas told her, "We will surround Kyle Jenner and take him into custody."

"Yes master."

## 4.

Kyle saw the two gunships descend to ground level and watched as their passengers, both Jedi and defence force troops began to disembark. However, the presence of the overhead power lines meant that although Kyle had enemies on two sides there remained a sizeable gap between the two groups.

He descended the pylon as quickly as he could, leaping the final part of the way and breaking into a run as soon as he hit the ground. Knowing that the Jedi would easily see which way he was heading in, Kyle made for a nearby electricity substation.

"Access to this facility is-" a maintenance droid began as it saw Kyle leap over the fence surrounding the substation and rush towards the main door. But it was cut off abruptly as Kyle ignited his lightsaber and sliced the machine's box-shaped head off before running inside the substation.

The electricity substation was fully automated, with just a handful of droids to perform minor repairs or summon help if anything more complicated was required. They were capable of performing only the most basic of security functions and as each machine challenged Kyle he destroyed it with a single stroke of his lightsaber. Intended to provide power to a variety of industrial facilities, each with its own unique power needs the substation was divided up into different sections where the incoming power could be converted into the form most suited for each. This gave Kyle plenty of options for finding a hiding place, but he was not planning on merely going to ground and hoping to avoid being found. Instead he found a bank of power converters and leapt up onto the top of one.

Cal led his group to a side entrance of the substation and used his lightsaber to force it open before leading the way through. The squad of soldiers that had been carried aboard the gunship, all armed with plasma carbines, immediately spread out to establish a perimeter while they searched for any signs of Kyle.

"Well he's been this way." Cal commented, pointing to the ruins of a maintenance droid.

"We should split up." Keana said, "We can cover more ground that way."

"And if we come across Kyle?" Lara replied, "You know that neither of us is strong enough to take him down alone."

"All we need to do is find him." Keana said, "Then Master Karas can deal with him."

"Keana's right." Cal said, "I want each of you to take four troops with you. I'll take the remaining two and we'll head that way in parallel routes. Then when we get to the far side of the building we'll loop back around and drive Kyle towards the main entrance."

"Where Master Karas is heading." Keana added with a smile.

"Exactly." Cal said, "Now come on let's go. Sergeant, divide your men."

Leading another squad of soldiers Master Karas and Tarris approached the substation via the same route that Kyle had used, making their way directly for the main entrance at the front. But as they were about to enter the building Master Karas came to a sudden halt.

"What's wrong?" Tarris asked, "I do not sense Kyle Jenner close by."

"No, he is not." Master Karas replied, "But I sense that he came here for more of a reason than just to try and evade capture."

"He may mean to ambush us." Tarris suggested.

"Oh I don't doubt that." Master Karas said, "But I have the feeling that we should be looking at more than just this one small building." and he looked around at the surrounding buildings, all of them far larger than the substation.

"Perhaps you should remain here and see if the Force can give you more insight." Tarris told him, "I will lead the squad inside and we can summon you if we require your assistance."

Master Karas nodded.

"Go." he said and while Tarris waved the soldiers onwards he closed his eyes and opened his mind to the Force.

Master Karas had taught Kyle Jenner and despite the change in his character brought on by his fall he knew that his former padawan was not suicidal. Therefore, he must have had an escape plan laid out for if he had been successful in killing Trent Narthis and as many other members of the Founding Families as he could and it did not seem to Master Karas that Kyle was currently making things up as he went along. This suggested that he was still operating according to his original escape plan.

Then it occurred to him that Kyle Jenner had been sighted on many worlds in the sector and was known to have a starship of his own. Kyle would undoubtedly head for that ship and Master Karas sensed that it was close by. But the question remained of where? There were numerous large buildings close by and many of them included private docking facilities for small to medium transports so that the use of often crowded and inefficient commercial starports could be avoided.

But Master Karas' idea still had one major flaw. The private docking facilities were there to be used by vessel bringing in supplies or collecting finished goods and were not intended to be simply rented out. Of course Kyle could have used his abilities with the Force to manipulate someone into allowing him to use their docking bay to store his ship, but that would only be effective for as long as Kyle was present to cloud the minds of anyone else who happened to come along. Even in a droid operated factory there would be dozens of different visitors every single day who could notice his ship taking up valuable docking space and question it.

What Kyle needed was a facility that would receive no visitors at all.

Opening his eyes Master Karas looked around, inspecting each of the factories around him in turn. Each of them possessed windows through which he could see light shining with the exception of one building that was entirely dark. Like the others all around the Jedi this building had a large sign on that identified the company that owned it but in this case the sign was broken and the writing on what remained was covered in dirt that no one had bothered cleaning off in a long time. The building was clearly abandoned, the business that had occupied it presumably having gone bankrupt but it had a docking bay built into its structure that remained intact. Even if all of the equipment for servicing a ship had been removed it would still be perfectly usable as a storage hangar.

"That is it." Master Karas said to himself, "Kyle's ship is there."

Kyle heard the approach of Lara and the four armoured troops accompanying her and paused, waiting to see if they were alone or just an advanced party before he struck. He could sense no-one else close by but the deployment of Lara and her troops bothered him. They were spread out, with two pairs of soldiers watching ahead and behind while Lara remained in the centre. Kyle waved his hand slightly and on the far side of the room a discarded tool fell from a bench.

"Over there!" one of the soldiers snapped, whirling round and aiming his weapon.

"Wait." Lara said, "Something about this isn't right. I thought I sensed something there."

Kyle had hoped that his use of the Force would have been discrete enough to avoid detection, but obviously Lara's skills were more developed than he thought. But he knew that she was still not strong enough to defeat him alone.

"Go check it out." Lara told the two soldiers in front of her, "You two keep watch." she then said to the pair behind her and the group split up further as the two soldiers in front moved to investigate the sound, their carbines held at the ready.

That was when Kyle chose to strike, leaping off the power converter to land behind the two soldiers now standing watch with Lara and he thrust his lightsaber right through the chest of one.

Then as Lara and the three surviving soldiers all turned to face Kyle he lashed out with the Force, sending a telekinetic blast towards the pair who had gone to investigate his distraction and both were blown off their feet and hurled into the far wall.

Lara ignited her lightsaber and swung it at Kyle, the blade aimed to slice him in half at the waist. But Kyle easily parried the attack, holding his own lightsaber one handed as he blocked her hurried attack. At the same time he used the other hand to reach out and strike the final soldier in the throat. The blow was not a killing one but it did disable him long enough that he dropped the carbine he had been about to fire at Kyle. As the weapon fell Kyle plucked it out of the air using the Force and turned it around as he grasped it in his hand.

"Thanks." he told the soldier as he aimed the carbine at its former owner, "I needed a new one." and then he pulled the trigger.

## 5.

*Surprise.*

*Fear.*

Cal felt the tremor in the Force from nearby and he knew instantly that his sister was in trouble. Then moments later he heard the sound of a plasma weapon discharging.

"Lara!" he exclaimed and then he looked at the two soldiers accompanying him, "Come on, she's in danger."

Lara struck again but once more Kyle parried her attack single handed while keeping hold of the carbine in the other.

"Oh Lara," he said, "I have tried to warn you so often. The Founding Families are evil, you must see this."

"Yeah I kind of got that." she replied as she made another vain attempt to attack him with her lightsaber, "But that doesn't make you a good guy."

"I have offered you the chance to join me before and you have rejected it every time." Kyle went on, "I urge you to reconsider this. The Founding Families will destroy the Republic if they are allowed to. They have infiltrated even the Jedi order with their agents."

"I think I'll pass." Lara said, "I don't fancy the idea of working for a murderer."

"I don't want to kill you Lara, but I cannot let you prevent me from getting away." Kyle said and he began to swing his carbine towards her.

"Kyle! Drop it!" Cal shouted as he burst into the room.

Kyle turned his head just in time to see the two soldiers accompanying Cal drop to their knees as they aimed their carbines and fired. Wary of hitting Lara by mistake both of them had disconnected the supply of helium gas that was used to generate the plasma charge so instead of a blast of super heated matter when they pulled their triggers all that their weapons released was the magnetic pulse used to propel the plasma. At short range this pulse was strong enough to disrupt the nervous system of a humanoid and could be used to subdue rather than kill.

Normally Kyle would have used his lightsaber to deflect the energy pulses but right now he was using it to stop Lara from slicing him in half and so both shots scored clean hits and it was only by drawing on the Force that Kyle was able to keep himself from blacking out.

Tossing his carbine aside Kyle then slipped around behind Lara who was taken completely by surprise by the manoeuvre. With his now empty hand he struck at her wrist and her lightsaber fell from her grasp while he brought his own up to her throat.

"Don't do it Kyle!" Cal yelled, pointing his own lightsaber at him, "There's no where to go."

"On the contrary Jedi Udra, there are plenty of places to go. I just need to get out this room first and while your sister is in the way you can't risk trying to take me down. Of course I don't need a hostage slowing me down either." and at that point he shut off his lightsaber and used the Force to pick Lara up off the floor and hurl her at Cal and the two soldiers. Kyle was already moving before Lara struck them and he scooped his newly acquired carbine up off the floor as he ran past it and out of the room.

Having heard the commotion as well, Keana and her troops came running into the room by a different door just after Kyle had departed and found Cal, Lara and the two soldiers still getting back to their feet.

"What happened here?" Keana asked, grinding to a halt while the soldiers accompanying her positioned themselves to provide cover just in case Kyle returned.

"Kyle Jenner happened." Cal said with a frown while he looked around for his lightsaber that had been dropped when Lara was hurled at him.

"Looking for this big brother?" Lara asked as she spotted the weapon and called it to her hand using the Force.

Cal smiled.

"Good girl Lara." he said, "I didn't even need to say 'Fetch'." and Lara scowled.

"Which way did he go?" Keana asked.

"Don't ask me." Lara replied, "I was busy flying through the air at the time."

"That way." Cal added and he grinned as he pointed in the direction Kyle had gone.

"What's so great about that?" Lara asked when she saw his expression.

"If he's gone that way he's heading straight for the main entrance." Cal said and Keana smiled as well.

"He'll run right into Master Karas, Jedi Blake and a full squad of soldiers." she said, still unaware that her master had not entered the building.

"Come on." Cal said, "We need to make sure that he keeps going that way. I've been waiting a year and a half to see him taken down."

"He should be heading straight for you." Cal told Tarris using his PTP link.

"Understood Jedi Udra." the shadow responded, "Be aware that Master Karas believes that Kyle may have an ulterior motive in leading us here and has gone to try and discover his true objective."

"Copy that. I guess we'll just have to try and take him down ourselves then." Cal said and Tarris frowned. "There is no try Jedi Udra. There is only do or do not. Now continue with your plan, drive Kyle Jenner towards us and I will deal with him personally."

Cal led the way once more, all three Jedi holding their lightsabers at the ready as they followed in the direction Kyle had gone. Cal doubted how effective any of them would be against the more experienced Jedi in a lightsaber duel. But he hoped that the characteristic humming sound that they produced would help drive Kyle onwards into the trap Tarris was preparing for him.

From ahead there was the sound of something exploding, accompanied by the lights flickering and then going out.

"What happened?" Lara exclaimed.

"My guess is that Kyle just shorted something out to take out the lights." Cal replied.

"But why?" Keana said, "Our lightsabers give us enough light to see by."

"I know. That's what's giving me a bad feeling about all this. He's up to something." Cal said.

"Never mind bringing our dog, we should have brought the grenade launcher." Lara muttered.

"Oh I can just picture the look on Master Karas' face when you start launching high explosives in all directions." Cal replied then he halted and held up a hand.

"What's wrong?" Keana asked.

"This is it." Cal whispered, "Kyle's stopped dead ahead, I can sense his presence in the Force."

Carefully the Jedi advanced while the soldiers accompanying them brought their carbine up to their shoulders as they positioned themselves between the Jedi so that they would have clear fields of fire when Kyle came into view. Cal kept focused on the disturbance in the Force that told him there was a powerful Force user in close proximity and this led the group to an open doorway.

"In there." he whispered, pointing at the doorway and the group moved closer. They halted just before reaching the doorway and Cal held up three fingers. Then he lowered them one at a time and as the last finger came down the group charged through the door and spread out to cover the room.

"Kyle Jenner you are – Oh stang!" Cal exclaimed as he found himself facing Tarris and a squad of soldiers.

"Jedi Udra." Tarris said, "Where is Kyle Jenner?"

"Err, I think we lost him." Cal replied.

"How could we lose him?" Lara asked, "There was no where else for him to go other than right here."

Frowning, Tarris took out his PTP link.

"Master Karas." he transmitted.

"Go ahead Jedi Blake." Master Karas replied.

"Kyle Jenner has disappeared." Tarris told him.

"Unsurprising." Master Karas said, "But I know now that this place was always somewhere that Kyle Jenner had to come. I have found his ship."

"Where master?" Keana asked when she heard this, making sure she spoke loud enough that Tarris' PTP link picked up her question.

"I am in an abandoned factory building with its own private docking bay. There is a vessel here that I believe belongs to Kyle. It is sealed, but appears to have been prepared for immediate use."

"Utility tunnels." Cal said, smiling, "The power comes into this place using overhead cables, but it goes out to the factories via underground ones, so there are probably tunnels to take them there so that they're easy to access if there's a problem."

"And in the dark we probably walked right over an access hatch in the floor." Lara added, "That's why Kyle took out the lights."

"We must move quickly." Tarris said, "Find this hatch and we will drive Kyle Jenner into Master Karas."

"Yeah, because that plan worked so well just now." Lara commented.

The tunnel led straight from the substation to the abandoned factory and Kyle was glad that he had put the effort into memorising every single way in and out of it despite it being somewhere that he would most likely never visit again. He made a point of varying his landing sites on every world he visited and now that the Jedi knew about this one, or at least would do when he blasted off right in front of them, the local authorities would be alert for him returning. However, the Force appeared to have been with him in so far that he had been able to make it back here even if his primary goal of killing Trent Narthis had been a failure.

A set of ladders leading upwards heralded the end of the tunnel and Kyle scaled them. But before he exited the tunnel properly he drew his plasma carbine from under his cloak and pointed it back down the tunnel, aiming it at the ceiling. Then he fired the powerful weapon repeatedly, each shot going into the concrete structure of the tunnel and blasting loose debris that landed on the floor below. Kyle continued shooting until eventually the ceiling became so unstable that the entire thing collapsed and blocked the tunnel behind him.

Satisfied that he could not be followed Kyle then exited the tunnel into the factory. However, as soon as was out of the tunnel he felt a disturbance in the Force. The disturbance was a presence that he had sensed many times over the years and he knew instantly what the cause was. "Master Karas." he said to himself, "So, your knowledge of me was enough to lead you hear ahead of the others." and then he put his carbine away and drew his lightsaber instead.

"What was that?" Lara asked when a rumbling sound filled the tunnel.

"Oh I've got a bad feeling about this." Cal said and he ran on ahead, grinding to a sudden halt when he saw the pile of rubble blocking the tunnel.

"We can't possibly clear that." Keana said when she too saw the rubble blocking their path.

"The ceiling has collapsed." Tarris said, "Even if we cleared this, there would be the risk of further collapse."

"So what do we do now then?" Lara asked.

"We go back." Cal told her.

"Back?" Lara exclaimed.

"Unless you have a way of teleporting us past this Padawan Udra, yes we go back." Tarris said, "We know which way Kyle was going now so we should have little difficulty in following him above ground instead."

## 6.

Kyle's ship was a vava-class scout ship that he had obtained at some point after leaving the Jedi Order. Master Karas saw the logic in this. As a Jedi Kyle had favoured a saber-class starfighter, but that type of vessel would be easily noticed. On the other hand, although its performance was not up to the levels of a starfighter, not only were there enough scout ships flying to make them more anonymous than a military craft but there was also living space aboard that allowed Kyle to travel in far more comfort and even live in the ship if the need arose.

Master Karas could sense no-one aboard the ship and he guessed that Kyle had had an accomplice prepare it for use while he was attempting to assassinate Trent. The other alternative was that it had been left in its partially active state since Kyle himself left it here, but that seemed less likely. The longer the ship was left in this condition the more likely it became that something would fail and with no-one around to deal with it a minor fault could easily become more serious.

"You could just use your lightsaber to disable the ship you know Ben."

Master glanced over his shoulder at the glowing apparition that had materialised there, the spirit of his dead master Pater Hald.

"If Kyle arrives and sees his vessel disabled then he may choose to flee again." Master Karas replied, "I want to make sure that he thinks his only way out is right here."

"And then what Ben?" Pater's ghost asked, "Will you kill the man you taught and served alongside if he refuses to yield?"

"Would you not have done the same if I had fallen?" Master Karas asked in reply.

"I'm glad I never had to face that choice. Mind you, the disciples of the Sith I faced proved more than I could handle anyway. If not then I'd be right here with you in body as well as spirit."

"The Jedi code states that we should avoid attachment. That includes to our padawans." Master Karas said.

"And to our masters as well? Or maybe others we become close to. Like Karrie Tyran perhaps? I know you and she are very close."

"I will do what I must." Master Karas said, "I cannot permit Kyle Jenner to do any more harm than he already has."

"Very well. But be careful Ben. I'd rather you didn't join me today." Pater said and then he faded away. At the same time Master Karas heard a familiar humming sound and felt a tremor in the Force.

"Hello Kyle." he said and he turned to face his old apprentice who now stood in the doorway to the hangar with his lightsaber in his hand.

"Get out of my way old man." Kyle said, "I have no argument with you. Not yet."

"Kyle give me your lightsaber." Master Karas said, "I can help you."

"Help me? Shut me away like Hargood Nollar you mean?" Kyle replied, "You are blind old man. The Founding Families want to resurrect the Sith Empire and I do not intend to let them succeed."

"We are aware of what the Founding Families are doing. We are investigating-"

"Investigating?" Kyle exclaimed, "They have put a spy in your own ranks. Corlay Shill works for them."

"There is no evidence of that. Only Belle Shill has been shown to have acted criminally and her own brother killed her to put a stop to her activities."

Kyle scowled.

"This is your last chance old man. Get out of my way and I'll let you go." he hissed.

Sighing, Master Karas drew his lightsaber and there was a 'snap-hiss' as he activated it.

"I have no intention of letting you go at all my old padawan." he said and the two men charged at one another.

Kyle was younger and physically stronger than his former master, but Master Karas had almost two decades more experience in both lightsaber combat and with using the Force and this allowed him to easily blunt Kyle's initial charge.

"You forget," Master Karas told his former pupil, "I've been doing this a lot longer than you have."

"And you 'master' forget that you taught me all your moves." Kyle replied and then he suddenly kicked one of Master Karas' legs out from under him. However, rather than try to strike at his former teacher as he fell, knowing that Master Karas would expect such a move, he jumped upwards to land on top of his scout ship. Uninjured, Master Karas leapt back to his feet and sensed a disturbance as Kyle extended his arm towards the side of the room. Spinning around, Master Karas was just in time to see a collection of old tools and spare parts hurtling towards him through the air. Unleashing a telekinetic blast of his own, Master Karas scattered the objects around him and then jumped up into the air himself, landing on the upper hull of Kyle's ship some distance from him.

"Didn't I teach you better than that?" Master Karas asked and then Kyle charged towards him once more.

Rather than meet the charge head on, Master Karas side stepped at the last moment and attempting to slash



his lightsaber across Kyle's side. But the former Jedi realised what was happening in time to parry the attack with his own blade. However, because of Master Karas' evasion of his charge Kyle was not only left off balance but now had his back against the very edge of his ship and had nowhere to retreat to. So instead he attempted a show of brute force to make Master Karas back off.

But Master Karas sensed the build up of Force energy and knew what was coming and when Kyle held out his hand Master Karas did likewise. Both Force users pushed against the energy fields each was channelling with one of their own and the effect was to hurl both backwards as the energy in the competing fields built up to the point where it could no longer be contained.

Master Karas was thrown back across the hull of the ship, while Kyle was hurled off it and flew backwards through the air. Somersaulting as he went, Kyle took control of his fall and landed on both feet looking back up at the top of his ship just as Master Karas reappeared and jumped down to the floor as well.

"You can't win Kyle," he said, "Just give up now and you can still survive this."

"Never." Kyle replied, scowling and he hurled his lightsaber at the Jedi master. Effortlessly Master Karas deflected the spinning blade, sending it downwards where it deactivated just as it hit the floor.

"Disarming yourself in combat is never a good idea Kyle," he said as he placed a foot on top of the lightsaber hilt to prevent Kyle from simply drawing it back to his grip with the Force, "I am surprised at such a desperate move."

"Oh I'm not quite unarmed yet old man," Kyle replied as he opened his cloak to reveal the plasma carbine and pulse wave blaster he also carried, "And you'll find I'm full of surprises."

"Really? You think those weapons can beat me?" Master Karas asked and Kyle grinned.

"Maybe not," he answered, "But this ought to help," and all of a sudden he extended one hand towards Master Karas and a storm of pale blue lightning erupted from his fingertips.

In response to this Master Karas brought up his lightsaber, placing it in the path of the Force lightning and the energy of the attack danced around the blade as it was deflected harmlessly away from him.

Entering the abandoned factory the other Jedi sensed the ongoing battle through the Force, such blatant use of it resonated over a great distance and created a beacon to lead them towards its epicentre.

"Hurry," Tarris said, "I sense that Master Karas is in grave danger, the Dark Side is strong here."

The Jedi charged directly towards the source of the disturbance, on more than one occasion using their lightsabers to simply hack through locked doors that stood in their way.

But rather than the hangar bay they were trying to reach, their path instead took them to a control room that overlooked it. The floor of the hangar was set below ground level, so the Jedi found themselves at a roughly equal height to the upper hull of Kyle's vasa-class ship and looking out through the armoured transparisteel viewing windows they could see Kyle bombarding Master Karas with Force lightning.

"Master Karas!" Keana exclaimed, "We have to get down there and help him," and she swung her lightsaber at the window. However, the transparisteel barrier was intended to protect the occupants of the control room from any accident involving a vessel in the hangar and all her attack managed to do was leave a scorch mark along the path of her blade.

But beside the window was a blast door that led to a walkway within the hangar itself and both Cal and Tarris rushed over to it. Cal tried to open the door using the control panel, but there was no power left in the system to make it work and so instead both he and Tarris plunged their lightsaber blades into the centre of the door in an attempt to melt through the locking system.

Lara turned to the soldiers accompanying them.

"There must be another way around," she told them, "Come with me and we'll try and find it."

"Yes commander," one of the soldiers replied and then they followed her from the room.

Meanwhile Keana just stared through the transparisteel window, fixated on her master and his duel with Kyle Jenner.

"It'll take more than a simple light show to defeat me Kyle," Master Karas called out, "Even if you used both hands to project it."

"Oh I only need one hand to keep you occupied," Kyle replied, "Besides, I need the other for something else," and all of a sudden he drew his pulse wave blaster and fired it.

The shot was aimed low and it caught Master Karas in the leg, shattering his thigh bone and producing a scream as he collapsed. At the same time Kyle ceased his lightning attack and he began to stride towards his prone opponent, holstering his weapon as he advanced. Master Karas no longer had his foot on Kyle's lightsaber and when he reached it he simply plucked it up from the floor with the Force.

Master Karas tried to back away, sliding across the floor of the hangar while holding his lightsaber up above him to protect against Kyle, but the fallen Jedi was not deterred.

"You should have just stepped aside old man and we both could have lived," he said and with a single swing of his lightsaber he sliced off Master Karas' hand and the Jedi master just let out a gasp as he saw both his severed hand and his lightsaber tumbling towards the floor, the glowing blade shutting off as soon as his grip

was released. Kyle caught the lightsaber and reactivated it, now holding both weapons towards Master Karas. The he leant in closer and Master Karas saw that his former pupil's eyes now shone yellow. "The knowledge that the Founding Families seek and the power that comes with it will be mine." he hissed before stabbing Master Karas through the chest with his own lightsaber.

"No!" Keana screamed as she saw Master Karas slump to the floor. Then there was a mix of plasma and pulse wave fire from across the hangar that made Kyle turn to deflect it as Lara and the soldiers stormed in.

"We're through!" Cal then exclaimed as the sections of the blast door slid apart and all three jedi in the control room charged into the hangar, leaping down from the walkway and rushing towards Kyle. The fallen jedi backed away and with a wave of his hand there was a sudden hiss as the access ramp to his ship began to open. Under fire from the soldiers and with four jedi now heading for him, Kyle retreated into his ship, jumping up onto the ramp and closing it again before it was even finished opening.

"He's still alive!" Keana cried out as she noticed movement from Master Karas and she ran towards him. There was a roar from the scout ship as Kyle reached the cockpit before the jedi could get within striking distance and he took off, the vessel's powerful repulsorlifts producing a blast of wind that slowed the jedi further as the ship headed skywards.

"Master!" Keana exclaimed as she slid to a halt beside him and dropped to the floor to cradle him in her arms.

"Fetch a medical capsule." Lara ordered the soldiers behind her.

"It is too late." Master Karas gasped, his remaining hand clamped over the wound where his own weapon had been used to deliver the fatal blow.

"No Master, you can't die." Keana pleaded but he just looked up at her and smiled.

"I have taught you well." he said, "Now someone else must finish your training. Do not under - do not underestimate-" but before he could finish his eyes drifted towards Cal and Lara and through the Force he sensed the warning he had first received two years earlier when they had first been placed under his command.

*The Udra family will serve the Sith.*

And after that the material universe meant nothing to him.

At the jedi enclave on Moldas, Hargood Nollar was meditating in the room in which he was confined when he heard the sound of the door sliding open and felt a familiar presence.

"You have returned from the Narthis Sector then." he said to Keana. But then he noticed something amiss, "But I sense your mission did not go well young one."

"Master Karas is dead." Keana replied as she dropped to her knees in front of him.

"I see." Hargood said, standing up and looking down at her.

"Kyle Jenner killed him."

"As you feared he would?"

"Yes. Why didn't Master Karas listen to me? If we'd taken you as well then Kyle would not have stood a chance." Keana said.

"And why do you come to me now?" Hargood asked, "I sense that it is to do more than just tell me of your master's death."

"I want you to help me find Kyle Jenner and kill him." Keana answered and Hargood smiled.

"Alas, I can do little from in here." and he waved at the walls around him.

Keana looked up and held out her hand. In it was a cylinder about thirty centimetres in length. It was Hargood's lightsaber and he smiled as he accepted the weapon.

"You say you want my help." he said, "Is it just revenge for the death of your master you seek? Or something more?"

"Master Karas said told me that I needed someone to complete my training. I want that to be you. Teach me how to master the Dark Side as you have and between us we will destroy all those who bring back the Sith Empire."

Hargood's smile widened.

"Then rise, my new apprentice." he said and he offered Keana his hand. Taking it she got to her feet and the pair strode towards the door. As it opened a pair of freedom warriors blocked their path, levelling their weapons when they saw that Hargood was armed. But both he and Keana activated their lightsabers and the two warriors were cut down. Then Hargood and Keana headed towards the landing field in search of a ship to take them away from Moldas before the alarm could be raised.