

Love (love)
Devotion (devotion)
Feeling (feeling)
Emotion (emotion)

Don't care what people say
Just follow your own way
Don't give up and use the chance
To return to innocence
That's not the beginning of the end
That's the return to yourself
The return to innocence
It's the return to innocence

From the song "Return to Innocence" by Enigma

**50 km west of the CSP capital, Elaya,
Seraph, Caperion System, Date unknown**

"Daesha. Daesha, you need to get up," a voice called out.

Daesha slowly opened her eyes and sleepily blinked, trying to clear the blariness out of her glowing red eyes.

"Come on, sleepyhead, we need to get you dressed," the voice called again.

Looking about, Daesha could see a figure standing in front of her. Squinting her eyes, Daesha watched as the figure came into focus.

"*Vik'mayu?*" Daesha said in a surprised, questioning voice. "Why are you dressed like that?" Indicating to the elaborate dress that Ristaria was wearing.

"You don't remember what today is?" Ristaria said, smiling as she looked at her adopted granddaughter.

Daesha shook her head, her lekku whipping back and forth.

"Well, today is the day that your mommy and daddy are getting married. Remember?"

Daesha's eyes shot open wide as she gasped loudly, bolted out of her bed, and wildly raced around her room, looking for her clothes. While in the process, startling the soundly asleep Ziesh sending the silver and black Corellian Sand panther racing out of the room, through the hall and down the stairs into the living room on the first floor

"Hang on, you little blue speedster, I've got your dress right here," Ristaria said as she reached over and picked up a frilly pink and white dress from the table beside Daesha's bed.

After a few moments, Ristaria managed to corral the now highly rambunctious Daesha and coaxed her into getting dressed.

"I don't think that your mom or dad would be too happy if their favorite flower girl couldn't be there," Ristaria said as she helped Daesha get her shoes on.

"Everything okay in here?" A voice asked from the now open doorway.

"Nope, no problem. Everything is good here," Ristaria said as she looked at her husband with a smile.

"And how about our little flower girl? Are you ready to walk ahead and lead your mommy to your daddy?" Si'Vran asked.

"Yes!" Daesha proudly stated. She turned her head to one side and kissed Ristaria on the cheek.

"Thank you, *Vik'mayu*, for helping me."

"You are welcome, sweetie. Now we need to get going so we can help your mommy get ready," Ristaria said as she hugged Daesha. Then looking up at Si'vran, "We'll meet you and Jasten at the Sunrider Gardens,"

"Okay, where are we off to?" Jasten asked as he and Si'vran were in Jasten's speeder, pulling out of the drive leading toward the house.

"The Sunrider Gardens in Tokare City. Don't you remember? We were there with Xendar last night doing some last-minute setup work."

"Yeah, I know where we are going. I'm just nervous, that's all," Jasten admitted. "I've been through missions that would test the mettle of any man alive, but this, this makes those missions look like a training exercise!" He exclaimed, in his usual slow drawl.

"It's not every day that a man is giving his little girl away in marriage. Though, I never did ask them, I wonder how did those two meet? For the most part, they are the complete opposite of each other, and it doesn't seem very likely that they would frequent the same social circles."

Caelestis City, Ragnath

Near Border Crossing 17

Some time before the present day.

I hold out for one more drink, before I think

I'm lookin' too desperately

But so far has not been fun, I should just stay home

If one thing really means one

This club will hopefully be closed in three weeks

That would be cool with me

Well, I'm not paralyzed, but I seem to be struck by you

From the song "Paralyzer" by Finger Eleven

"Hey there, hold on a minute, will ya?" An older security sergeant called out as he ran up to Xendar, who was walking away from the station toward his rented speeder.

Xendar stopped and slowly turned toward the sergeant. "Yes?" He asked in an impassive voice.

"I'm taking the recruits down to The Emperor's Club to celebrate; why don't you join us?"

"I don't drink," Xendar said. He then paused for a moment as a look of puzzlement crossed his face. "Why are you celebrating? Your team lost,"

"Yeah, we did. But you just gave me; this security section, and all of those new recruits, the biggest drubbing that we are likely to get in our lives. You didn't act like a regular force user; you were more like a cunning wild predator. Exploiting our weaknesses and slowly cutting us down. Even the force sensitives we have in this security section had a hard time trying to figure out what you were going to do next. You just showed command that we really need to keep on our toes and be open to some new training scenarios. So, why don't you join us?"

Xendar started to say that he wasn't interested, but something in his mind began to insistently tell him to accept the offer.

Stepping inside the club, Xendar tried very hard to suppress a rather insistent growl in his throat that had not gone away. It seemed to be a persistent reminder that he did not want to be here. *Why did I agree to come here*, he thought to himself again as he reluctantly followed the sergeant and the recruits. The sergeant led them to one of the concert halls. He kept blithely going on about how there was some amazingly new hot talent playing in one of the rooms and that they would only be there for one night. Sighing as he walked up to the bar, Xendar ordered a non-alcoholic beverage made with spices, milk, and local fruits. *Once I finish this*. He thought to himself, looking at his drink. *I am out of here*.

"Hey kid, over here," the sergeant shouted from one of the tables.

Xendar sighed, rolled his eyes, and shook his head as he made his way through the crowds sitting at the other tables, waiting for the main show to begin.

I don't know why I even agreed to come here! This was a really lousy idea. Xendar thought to himself as he sat down in one of the chairs at the table, that particular thought had resonated in his mind for the umpteenth time since he walked into the club.

Xendar had been sitting at the table for what seemed to be an eternity, nothing was happening, And his patience was wearing thin. *I knew it, this was a frakkin mistake*. Xendar thought to himself.

Giving another sigh, he was halfway out of his seat and ready to take his leave when she appeared.

A lone spotlight lit up the stage, and the silhouette of a woman appeared. A tall woman with red-tinged chocolate-colored skin with pointed ears and platinum blonde hair stood center stage wearing a simple red dress with a single blue flower. And as the accompanying music started to play, she began to sing. Her mellifluous voice echoed about the room. Xendar dropped back into his chair like a lead weight as all thoughts of leaving vanished like smoke in the wind. *She's beautiful!* Xendar thought to himself. Enchanted and mesmerized, Xendar eagerly watched her performance.

She finished her song to thunderous applause. After giving a bow to the audience, she turned toward where Xendar was sitting and flashed an amazing smile, which caused Xendar's heart to skip a beat. Xendar's mind, normally an ice-cold, logical, precise, and well-ordered machine, had gone completely and utterly erratic and was running wild with several emotions he had never experienced before. But to him, one of the strangest ones was that he secretly hoped that her smile was meant for him. *Dream on, bantha brain!* He thought harshly to himself, desperately trying to get his mind back under some semblance of control. *She meant that smile for everyone*. At least that is what he thought until she walked off the stage and headed in his direction.

"Do you mind if I sit here?" she asked as she stood in front of Xendar. It was at that moment that Xendar had noticed that with the exclusion of himself, the table was empty of everyone else.

"Uh... please, go, go right ahead. Can I uh... Can I get you something?"

"Thank you, no." She said, smiling at him as she sat down. "I'm Oriyanna Rathelin. And you are?"

"Xendar...Xendar Thendaris," Xendar quietly stuttered.

"Agent One to Base, Veradun and Eleena are interacting, results are promising, Agent One out," the security sergeant whispered into a comlink hidden under the collar of his jacket, as he moved away from the table, and herding the recruits toward the bar.

"From what I remember, they met at The Emperor's Club. Oriyanna was completing an infiltration requirement for her admission into the Black Nova Spec ops team by acting as a singer. And Xendar was there due to some kind of an invite from a security team he trounced." Jasten stated. "Though some conspiracy theorist I ran into a few months ago, was trying to tell me that those two were part of some experiment called the Unified Force Project. Which was some kind of attempt to create an extremely cohesive two-being fighting team. Supposedly, Xendar and Oriyanna were a part of the Veradun and Eleena Experiment, which was supposed to be the pairing of a strong force user male and a female special operations soldier. I never put much stock in it, but with some events that happened just after the two of them started seeing each other, well... it kind of plays into that theory. But whatever, if someone was playing some kind of game to get those two together, well, it worked. What we are doing today is proof of that."

Tokare City, Seraph
Near the Sunrider Gardens
Date Unknown

As Oriyanna walked through the Sunrider gardens, she watched as the morning sun rose in the sky over Tokare City, its tendrils of light and warmth began to make their presence known to all. Moving forward, it gently kissed the flowers and plants of the garden, enticing them to share their beauty and color.

And as the sun climbed up the Galek tree, and in a moment of indulgence, Oriyanna stopped and leaned against the tree. Enjoying the scent of it and the feeling of the warm sunlight as it played across her face.

"So, this is Sunrider Gardens; I can see why you and Xendar would want to get married here," A female voice called out, and a tall, striking, Falleen female with a headful of raven black hair appeared.

Oriyanna smiled, stepped forward, and the two shared a warm, loving embrace.

"Nervous?" The Falleen playfully asked as the two of them stepped away from each other.

"Yeah, mom, I am," Oriyanna said with a nervous smile. "I've been through all sorts of high-stress missions, and not once; did I ever have it this bad."

"Everyone gets them, Oriyanna. Just before your father and I got married. I was waiting for the ceremony to start. I was shaking so bad, you could have put a dead blade in my hand, and you would have sworn I was holding a vibroblade. But after walking down the aisle and as your father took my hand, I knew everything was going to be okay. Do you know why?" Deshavara asked.

Oriyanna just shook her head.

"Because he was shaking worse than I was!" Deshavara giggled.

"Dad was eighteen, so I can see why he would be nervous; but Mom, you were a hundred and thirty-six when you two got married; you had been around a lot longer than Dad and had to experience more," Oriyanna stated.

"Sweetie, contrary to how things look now. Before I met your father, I was an incredibly shy and retiring person. Yes, I was flying in fighter squadrons for a long time; but until I met your father, flying was the only thing in my life. Another problem I had, being a Falleen female was not a help; the constant stream of men vying for my attention was nerve-wracking at times. Some of

them were the types that were interested in me not as a person but because I was a Falleen. Then, I met your father; he was different than a lot of the others. And as time passed, he was the first to get me out of my shell, the first to sweep me off my feet, and the first and only one I wanted to spend my life and raise our children with. And that part of the dream came true after we were able to adopt you."

Oriyanna smiled at her mother, "I'll bet you gave Dad quite a shock when he found out how old you were,"

Deshavara started to giggle again, "We both had one! We didn't learn about our age differences until your father's nineteenth birthday, and that happened six months after we had been married." A loud, insistent beeping from Deshavara's wrist chrono stopped the conversation.

"Come on," Deshavara said, grabbing her daughter's wrist. "We need to get you ready."

"Oh, you look beautiful! You are going to floor Xendar when he sees you," Deshavara said proudly to Oriyanna, who was standing in front of her now wearing a wedding dress.

"Thanks, Mom, and thank you, Ristaria; you don't know how much it means to me to be able to wear my mother's wedding dress."

"You're welcome," Ristaria said with a smile, "You are just a little taller than your mother, so it was an easy fix,"

"Now there's a sight to see," A Lethan Twil'lek named Shi'anna playfully stated as she finished putting on her bridesmaid dress. Shi'anna had served with the Revenants on Dandoran before meeting Xendar and being recruited as a sniper for the Night Wraiths spec op team.

"Xendar being floored. How do you floor someone who seems almost completely impassive?"

"Oh, it can happen, just because someone may seem to be one way. But in reality, be an entirely different person." said Rella Blaiditch, a furless Deveronian whom Oriyanna had become acquainted with through Xendar and Rella's husband Tor. Both Rella and Tor were also from Dandoran. Tor was now the XO of Jasten Rathelin's spec ops team. And Rella was a teacher for the local school where Daesha was attending.

"Yeah, that's true, but you don't become one of the "Infamous Five" or get called Nightmare or Doom Walker just for being a nice person. Not that I am going to say anything bad about it, but anyone who can make a Dandoran Principate commander almost soil themselves at the mere mention of their name is okay in my book." Shi'ana said, smiling at Oriyanna

"As my father used to say, "One person's hero is another person's monster," Rella simply stated.

For some reason, the word monster triggered several memories in Oriyanna's mind. One was of a holo from a hidden spy cam holo droid assigned to watch Xendar while he was on assignment. The other was from her own experiences.

Caperion System

Huisan, Nayama Dynasty

Seraph, (60 hrs. after the destruction of Adoniram Tower)

***You will be shown how I have become indestructible.
Determination that is incorruptible.***

*From the other side, a terror to behold.
Annihilation will be unavoidable.
Every broken enemy will know that their opponent had to be
invincible.
Take a last look around while you're alive.
I am the indestructible master of war!*

From the song: "Indestructible" by Disturbed

As Xendar walked down the main streets of Huisan, he paid no attention to his surroundings. If the situation had not been so dire, he would have been tempted to bring along Oriyanna and Daesha, who would have loved to see the elegant calligraphy and engravings and gazed in awe as the sunlight glinted off the burnished gold and polished wood of the buildings lining the street. As he continued forward, his eyes were on the street in front of him, his mind focused on the meeting with a character named Glitch, who was supposed to provide him with information regarding the strange happenings around Nayama as of the last several weeks.

It was these rumors of the strange happenings and recent events that led Xendar to stray from his original assignment in the Tokare City area and took him to the Nayama Dynasty's capital of Huisan.

As he came to an intersection, Xendar turned to his right and then a few moments later turned and headed down an alleyway that would lead him to the outskirts of the city.

"Well, aren't you the punctual one," A voice called out from beside a pile of containers. A moment later, a figure stepped away from the containers. "You got my money?" Glitch inquired. "Do you have my information?" Xendar countered.

"Yes, I do. But, you see, I made some new friends," Glitch said as a squad of armored troopers appeared around him with their weapons drawn. "And they think that it would be better for me to work with them instead. Which, I think, is an excellent idea. Though it does entail your death, but I can live with that."

"So, that is your choice," Xendar said as he looked at Glitch. His gaze was that of casual indifference.

Glitch gave a hearty laugh. "You've got guts. I'll give you that. But what you haven't got is brains. You may be dressed like a local. Kriff, you might even look like one. But that doesn't make you one. And no one here will care if another outsider disappears and is found dead."

Xendar smiled at the group in front of him. It was not a combative, angry, or even a nasty smile. The only way that Glitch could have described it was...frightening.

"You have chosen poorly," Xendar said as he vanished from sight.

"Hey, what the!" one of the troopers yelled as the pile of containers came crashing down on top of them, catching and crushing two of the troopers. Another gave a strangled cry as he fell to the ground. A force amplified thrown shuriken blossomed at his throat and lodged itself deep, nearly decapitating the trooper.

"Where in the galaxy did he go?" Another trooper loudly demanded as he spun around in circles trying to look everywhere at once.

"Sir, should we fall back?" One of the troopers asked.

"Negative. Command wants this guy dead, now! Keep looking! And shoot anything that moves! I'm certain; that this brain bolted chakaar has still got some dirty tricks up his sleeve!" The leader said.

As if to validate that statement, a loud creaking groan came from further down the alleyway. Whipping around, the squad found themselves staring at a large container floating up in the air; after a few seconds, the container launched itself at the remaining troopers. It was at this moment that Xendar struck.

Appearing behind one trooper on the far left. Xendar's left arm shot around, and clamped down tight against the trooper's neck, and with his right, grabbed the trooper's chin and pulled hard to the right. A loud sickening snap filled the air, as Xendar ended that trooper's life.

Letting the trooper's body fall to the ground. Xendar lashed out with a vicious force amplified chop to another trooper's throat, which landed with a loud, meaty crack. The trooper dropped to the ground with a gasping croak as he tried to breathe his last breath.

Then with a sweeping gesture, Xendar sent the remaining seven troopers flying into the nearby containers.

As the troopers struggled to their feet, Xendar reached to his side and pulled out some throwing knives and flung them at the troopers, guided by the force, the knives sung through the air as they penetrated the pectoral armor and sinking deep into the chest area, near the hearts of three troopers. Xendar then let loose a blast of force lightning striking the three, specifically aiming for the knives, using them as a focal point. As the blast of force lightning traveled through the metal, it stunned and overloaded their hearts, killing them where they stood.

He then cloaked himself in the force, disappearing from sight. After a second or two he then force-leaped on the roof of a nearby building. Dropping the cloak and crouching low, Xendar focused his sole and total concentration on one of the troopers.

The trooper's head snapped up and he jerkily turned toward the other three, and opened fire. The first blast caught one of the troopers unaware, striking him from the side of the head at the base of the skull, killing him instantly. The second took a massive volley to the chest, stunning the trooper and melting the plastoid armor, then the next volley landed in the exact spot as the first, killing the surprised trooper.

As the trooper under the control from Xendar's Dominate Mind force power put his sights on the third, who just witnessed the other two troopers get blasted, dove behind some crates causing the controlled trooper to miss.

The controlled trooper then reached down to his belt and pulled out a concussion grenade, armed it and threw it at the other trooper hiding behind the crates. The other trooper rushed out and threw the grenade back toward the other trooper just before it exploded. Killing the first, and knocking the second off his feet, causing him to lose his blaster.

"Ah hutt spit!" The trooper said in an almost drunken sounding voice. As he stumbled around, he realized he was not holding his blaster. Seeing it on the ground several meters away, the trooper scurried on all fours over to it, and as he reached down to grab it, a pair of black boots landed on it, breaking the stock. Looking up, he found himself staring into the gaze of a pair of impassive silver eyes.

“Leave, now,” Xendar said in a deathly quiet voice.

“Like *bloah* I will! Go krink yourself, you *Azkanc!*” The trooper snarled as he tried to pull the vibroblade out of its sheath on his belt.

Xendar stepped forward, raised his foot and stomped the trooper’s wrist of the hand holding the vibroblade, causing the trooper to give off a yelp of pain. Xendar then reached down and grabbed the trooper by the throat and hoisted him into the air. In his shock, the trooper dropped the vibroblade. But that was the least of his problems. As Xendar’s grip tightened, the trooper’s hands flew up to his throat in a vain attempt to try and free himself from Xendar’s grip.

"You should have left when you had the chance," Xendar said in a deathly cold whisper, just before he crushed the trooper’s windpipe. The trooper gave off one last gasping choke before falling limp.

"As much as you may like dark holes," Xendar said, looking down at one of the piles of containers strewn about. "You might as well come out of there. No one is going to save you, Glitch." He said as he then threw the corpse of the trooper into a small opening that had been formed as the crates fell on each other.

Glitch gave off a loud screech and came scrambling out of the opening as fast as he could, trying to get away as far as possible from the corpse that Xendar had thrown at him.

"You want that information. I'll give it to you! No charge!" Glitch said in a panicked voice.

"Anything you want, I can get it, no problem! Just let me go!"

"I would have taken the information, but now there is a rather large problem. You see, Glitch, I can’t trust you. Which means I can’t trust the information you have. How do I know if I let you go and that the information you gave me ends up being inaccurate or even false; what am I to do then? It could get unpleasant for you." Xendar said as his voice took on a dark malevolent edge.

"It's not! It's not! I swear it's not," Glitch squeaked in fear.

"That's not good enough, Glitch," Xendar stated in an arrogant, condescending voice. "So just to make sure, I am going to put you in a place where I can find you. Do you know where that is?"

"No," Glitch squeaked.

"Prison," Xendar said with a malicious smile. "By the time you wake up, I will have left an anonymous message with the local authorities and when they arrive, this place will have been altered, and it will look like you ambushed and murdered these troopers. But on the positive side, you can enjoy a nice, long, pleasant conversation with the security force about your activities. Pleasant dreams, Glitch," Xendar said with an evil smile as he reached over and grabbed a hold the base of Glitch’s skull and used the force to overload Glitch’s nervous system rendering him unconscious.

Repair Room 5

Docking Bay 12

Nesolat Station

Orbiting the planet Arx

During the Attack on Arx

They say we are what we are

But we don't have to be

I'm bad behavior, but I do it in the best way

I'll be the watcher (watcher)

Of the eternal flame

I'll be the guard dog of all your fever dreams

I am the sand in the bottom half of the hourglass, glass (glass)

I try to picture me without you, but I can't

From the Song “Immortals” by Fallout Boy

In the dim light of the repair room, Oriyanna sat on a container, cleaning and polishing her DC-17m blaster rifle while humming quietly to herself. She heard a slight noise coming from the prisoner that Xendar had brought in several hours ago, a Kiffex Huntress.

Oriyanna watched as the Huntress tested her bonds, trying to work her way out.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you," Oriyanna said. She stopped cleaning her blaster, reached over and turned on a small light then went back to cleaning.

"Who are you, and what do you want with me?" The Huntress snarled.

Oriyanna stopped cleaning again and looked at the Huntress. "My name is Oriyanna, and you are a prisoner. Figure it out from there," Oriyanna said as she went back to cleaning her blaster.

"You won't get anything out of me!" The Huntress yelled defiantly.

Oriyanna rolled her eyes and sighed. "Did anyone ask you for anything?"

A chime from a holopad cut the sparsely awkward conversation off. Reaching over to a nearby container, Oriyanna switched the holo on. A familiar, black-shrouded form appeared.

"You Butcher! Murderer! You killed my sisters!" the Huntress screamed in near hysterics.

Xendar turned toward the Huntress; and in a whisper-quiet voice, uttered a single word.

"Enough."

The Huntress scuttled back against the wall, not wanting anything to do with him. Xendar then turned back to Oriyanna. "A few more survivors were found. I brought them in a little while ago, I had hoped that we could spend some time together, but Ranith said that you were trying to do ten jobs all at the same time,"

"Yeah, close, it was only six. But now I am on guard duty, watching that prisoner you brought in," Oriyanna stated.

"I see that," Xendar dryly replied.

The Huntress growled at them, only for Xendar to glance at her, causing her to scuttle back further into the dark.

They both looked at each other for several seconds before Xendar spoke again.

"You probably should get some rest. I have some loose ends to tie up, but I do hope to see you when I come back in," Xendar said.

"I'll get some rest in a little while," Oriyanna said, she then stopped, looked up and smiled at the figure.

"I love you," she said as she held up her hand in front of Xendar's figure on the holopad

"I love you too," Xendar warmly replied as he mirrored her gesture.

And with a high pitch whine, the holo went dead.

"You are in love with that monster?! How can you have feelings for that evil-incarnate butcher! He murdered my sisters in cold blood!" The Huntress screeched as she shuddered in revulsion.

"So you say. And whether or not that monster and I are in love with each other is really none of your business," Oriyanna stated as she snapped the anti-armor grenade launcher onto her DC-17.

"And one more word out of you, and your last meal is going to be a grenade, is that clear?"

Oriyanna quietly stated as she slammed the chamber in place.

The Huntress mutely nodded.

"Oriyanna, Oriyanna, Oriyanna. Hey, boss! Are you still with us?" a female voice called.

Oriyanna gave a start, "Sorry, Trina, I got caught up in some old memories."

Trina Sarawon, a young Miralian woman, looked at her commanding officer.

"Not getting cold feet, are you?" Trina asked.

Oriyanna smiled, "Not for this mission, I have been looking forward to this for a long time,"

"Good to hear that. But, a piece of advice, you need to keep your head in the game,"

"Now there's an irony, you handing me a piece of advice that I constantly tell you. Don't you have a lock to pick?"

"Sorry boss, not today. The ladies of the First Scholae Palantinae Advanced Response Team have a mission to make sure their commanding officer gets her just due. But don't worry. Blaze, Ice, Maelstrom, Dark Star, and I have volunteered for an ultra-vital mission, we have a date tonight with some of the boys from your dad's Night Wraiths, and we will see what information we can extract out of them. Right, ladies?" Trina said to the other bridesmaids.

Salanis Ratoolon, aka Blaze, an Epicanthix, was slipping on her shoes, and flashed a mischievous conspiratorial smile.

"That we are. But don't worry captain. If things get a little out of hand, we've got backup. Both Slammer and Cuddles are tagging along, and Slammer is bringing his date, Trista Rastvlen of the Rancors. So, we got this one boss. You focus on your mission," Salanis said.

"Yesss, enjoy your last momentsss asssss ssssingle woman, becaussss thossss dayssss will ssssoon be over!" Cuddles, said as she started to make a ssssss ssss noise.

"So says someone who is the proud mother of six children," Oriyanna playfully fired back.

Cuddles gave Oriyanna the Barbel equivalent of a toothy grin.

"Okay, everyone, it's just about time to start the ceremonies," a voice called out from outside the temporary building.

Tokare City, Seraph

Sunrider Gardens

Date Unknown

"Settle down, Ranith; the babies aren't due for another month; I just sat down wrong," Quista Scrage said, smiling at her husband. Who, since learning that Quista was pregnant, had turned into a nervous wreck, going out of his way to make sure that she had everything that she needed and to make sure that she had no discomfort whatsoever.

"Better get used to it, Quista, Ranith has been that way about things like that since he was a little kid, whether it was a feline about to have kittens or mom being pregnant with me. Ranith has always been that way.

"I know, Tanisa," Quista said, looking at her sister-in-law. "I couldn't have asked for a more loving and caring husband, though I would like it if he would relax a little bit."

Quista's eyes went wide for a moment; then turning toward her husband and sister-in-law. "The twins, they kicked," she said, smiling widely.

"Looks like you two could have a set of spunky ones when they are born..." Tanisa started to say when a tall figure walked by.

"Is that the groom?" She asked in a hesitant voice.

Both Quista and Ranith looked up and at the person Tanisa was indicating to.

"Yes, that's Xendar," they both said.

"I hope I am reading him wrong, but the impression I get from that guy is a cold and intimidating aura. Things can't end well for someone like that. They either have to almost die or lose something before they change.

No Name Space Station

Unknown Region

10+ Years before Current Date.

*Look in the eyes of a hero. And see the sacrifice within
There's no way out for the hero. He only lives to fight again.
A hero stands tall not for fortune or fame but to protect freedom,
cause we all are one and the same.
Real heroes don't give up, they fight through the pain
And never forget that iron has no name!*
From the song, "***Eyes of a Hero***" by Juniper

Balrook Satovor was feeling more than a bit pleased with himself. He and his pirates had managed to snag a fair amount of supplies and prisoners. Most were not worth much, but they would still be able to put a few credits in his pockets after selling them. Although, one prisoner had given him nothing but problems since his capture. He was some kind of architect. But with a slight roughing up from one of the other pirates, followed up by a pair of stun cuffs, seemed to do the trick.

"All right, listen up, all of you. Your life as you know it is over! You belong to me now. Do what I say, when I say it, and you will survive. Defy me, and you end up like him." Pointing to Si'Vran, who was lying in a heap in the middle of the floor. "If anyone of you has any smart ideas, don't bother, I will drop you where you stand! So, does anyone have any questions?"

Balrook asked in a tone that meant the complete opposite.

"I have one. Why didn't your parents slap each other when you were born?"

Balrook angrily whirled in the direction of the voice. "Okay smart guy, you just signed your death warrant! Come on out!"

Off to Balrook's left, a murmur passed through the crowd of pirates gathered there. And the crowd parted to reveal what looked to be some kind of kid with a catlike face and eyes. Balrook could not believe what he was seeing. "You? You want to fight me!" Balrook said as he launched into a fit of laughter. "You got guts, runt. I'll give you that." Then reaching down to his belt, Balrook pulled out his lightsaber. A dull yellow blade sprang to life. Balrook watched as Xendar reached down to his belt and pulled out two short-bodied lightsabers but did not ignite them. "What's the matter? Scared!" Balrook said in a mocking tone. "Can't fight with lightsabers, eh?" "No. I can't," Xendar simply stated as he dropped the lightsabers on the floor. Balrook started to laugh again.

"It's your funeral, runt. So long," he said in a gloating voice.

"No, it's yours. It may take some skill to use a lightsaber. But how does that make you look in front of your people? Killing an unarmed person while you have a weapon. Who is the coward here?"

A rippling murmur spread through the pirate crowd. Balrook looked around at the others. He realized that the kid had played him well. If he cut him down now, it would be a constant challenge for his place in the chain of command.

"Nice one, runt. Making me put away my lightsaber is going to cost you. I was just going to kill you. But now, I am going to break you. I am going to break you real bad, and then I will think about killing you." Balrook spat out. Then lowering his head, he charged at Xendar.

Xendar dove to one side as Balrook tried to hit him with a massive round house punch. As he stood up, he dropped back into an Echani fighting stance; he was grateful that his father had taught him how to fight. Echani was the style of observing your opponent while fighting. And from what Xendar could tell, as the fight progressed, Balrook was a brute. He relied on his considerable size and strength to overpower his enemies. But the most telling thing was, as Xendar concentrated on Balrook, was Balrook's connection to the force. He could feel that Balrook had nowhere near as strong a connection to the force as he did. Xendar planned his tactics accordingly. He wanted Balrook tired and angry. As the more tired and furious that Balrook became, the more mistakes he would make. But causing Balrook to make those mistakes would prove costly. And while he was able to dodge most of Balrook's strikes, a grazing hit still caused Xendar a massive amount of pain. With his left eye swollen shut, blood was streaming from his nose, mouth, and from various abrasions on his body. The ribs on both sides of his body felt like they were burning, and his back and abdomen were likely one solid interconnected bruise. But he could see that Balrook was getting tired. And while Xendar had barely caused a bruise on him, it was very apparent that Balrook was starting to slow down.

Si'Vran's eyes slowly opened. A wave of pain washed over him, as his whole body felt like a very energetic gundark had used him as a door knocker.

"RAHHH! Hold still, you little runt!" Balrook shouted. Si'Vran slowly turned his head toward the commotion. As his eyes slowly came into focus, he could see a tired and sweat-drenched Balrook trying to hit someone. It took a moment for Si'Vran's brain to register who it was.

"Xendar?!" Si'Vran whispered.

He could see the blood all over Xendar's body, and his movements were slow and jerky. Xendar looked to be losing this fight. Si'Vran struggled to his feet. His mind and body were seemingly immune to the discharges from the stun cuffs that Balrook's people had placed on him. Nothing else seemed to matter but protecting his son. Letting loose a quiet snarl of defiance, Si'Vran charged toward Balrook.

Balrook was tired, and this runt was really beginning to get on his nerves. Almost every time he tried to hit him; he would miss by the merest of millimeters. The little twerp would not hold still. It was like trying to punch smoke. Just when you thought that you had hit it, it would move out of the way, and you were back to where you started from. He snorted in disgust, as once again, the runt moved out of the way. But that would change. He watched as Xendar came to a screeching halt, his eyes open wide in horror,

"Dad! No!"

Balrook saw his opening and took it. His right fist slammed into Xendar's hands as he brought them up to ward off the blow that Balrook had aimed for his face. Balrook took great pleasure in hearing the satisfying pop as he broke Xendar's wrists which sent Xendar flying backward, hitting the ground with a great thud. But Balrook was still disappointed that his blow did not hit with the damage he wanted it to cause. Then from his left, Balrook caught sight of a motion, turning toward it, he found himself knocked off his feet. And he could feel blows being rained down on him.

"Enough!" He shouted and pitched forward, throwing the nuisance off him.

He saw that it was the annoying architect again.

"I have had enough of you!" Balrook shouted as he let loose a blast of force lightning.

Si'Vran tried to yell as the force lightning assaulted him. But he found that he could barely even breathe, let alone scream.

Xendar's eyes slowly opened. Everything seemed different. It was as if he was trying to view his surroundings from a helmet that muffled sounds and had opaque lenses to look through. Trying to get to his feet, he fell back to the ground in pain. Every time he tried to move his hands; his wrists would send a new wave of agonizing pain shooting up his arms. And in his stupor, he wondered why Balrook had stopped hitting him. Looking over, he saw why. As bolt after bolt of force lightning was slamming into Si'Vran. While it was rather weak, it still would cause a lot of pain, and Balrook was blasting his father mercilessly with it. "Dad," Xendar croaked. Xendar felt his eyes getting heavy as a massive weight of futility and helplessness started to drag him down. But then something happened. Xendar's eyes snapped open, he could feel a strange sensation wash over him. It was like a raging fire but only with an icy core. The heat of the fury was still there, but it was tempered by an ice-cold indifference. Xendar allowed the strange sensation to course through his body. The pain in his wrists seemed to fade away, his ribs, back and abdomen stopped hurting. Getting to his feet, his hands began to clench and unclench into fists, his eyes began to take on a gold hue. He also noticed that Force lightning started arcing off his arms. Xendar's lips curled back in a vicious snarl and as he looked over at Balrook, he gave off a loud feral growl

"Balrook!" He shouted as he rushed forward and smashed into Balrook with a force amplified shoulder ram, knocking Balrook off his feet. The lightning from Xendar's arms had leapt off him and began assaulting Balrook.

"You like to hurt people. How do you like it when you're the one getting hurt!" Xendar shouted as he hammered Balrook with a force amplified kick. Xendar could hear a muffled pop as his boot connected with Balrook's rib cage.

Balrook gave off a roar of pain. He could not believe it. How in the galaxy had this runt transformed from someone who could barely cause even the slightest redness of the skin, into someone that caused a lot of pain and just broke several of his ribs. *It just wasn't possible!* Balrook thought to himself as he scrambled to his feet. But it was, Balrook's mind traveled back in time to the sparring arena of the Shadow Academy. Where another small statured being named Zukan, had thoroughly bested Balrook in both saber and physical combat, and again with force powers, turning Balrook into a blubbering mess. And it was happening again.

"NOOO!" Balrook shouted as he began to fight in desperation.

Only now, Xendar was even harder to hit. And for every attack that Balrook tried to connect with, Xendar seemed to fade away and retaliate with another devastating strike. Reaching his limits, Balrook tried to throw one last powerful punch. But not this time. Xendar caught his hand

and twisted it until a loud crack was heard, and then pulled Balrook's arm down. Raising his right arm, Xendar smashed his elbow into Balrook's forearm. A loud crack could be heard as the force amplified strike broke the bone. Then lashing out with a vicious kick to the armpit. Balrook heard a sickening pop from his shoulder as Xendar's boot impacted, causing his shoulder bone to separate from its socket. While still holding on to Balrook's now dislocated and broken arm, Xendar spun around and with another force amplified strike, slammed his left elbow into Balrook's jaw. The loud crack resounded through Balrook's head. It reminded him of a mirror shattering into small pieces. And each time Xendar struck Balrook, the lightning from Xendar's arms would give their own present of pain to Balrook. Dropping Balrook's arm, Xendar lashed out with a brutal spin kick, catching Balrook on the other side of his jaw, which sent him crashing to the floor. Xendar walked over to Balrook's fallen form and used his boot to turn him over. He then used the Force to take Balrook's Dissuader-KD 30 from its holster.

"You can't kill me, runt," Balrook said as his words slurred together as he tried to spit out the blood and teeth. "You don't have what it takes."

"You hurt my father, you hurt and killed hundreds of innocent people, your goons were going to hurt my mother. You think that I can't kill you?" Xendar said in a deathly quiet voice. Turning to face Balrook, "No. You are dead wrong," Xendar pointed the gun at Balrook's head, and as Balrook's face filled the sights, Xendar pulled the trigger.

The report of the gun reverberated off the walls and sent a wave of shock throughout the crowd, as a sense of stunned disbelief filled the air. But before anyone could recover, there was a massive crash, and dozens of black-clad Brotherhood stormtroopers filled the room. And as the troopers were barreling in, a voice bellowed out.

"Nobody move! Put your hands on your head! Now!"

One pirate thought himself to be faster and a better shot, paid the price for his stupidity as his perforated corpse hit the ground with a heavy thud. As the commanding officer, Zekris Savrick moved about the room, he and his troops made sure that the pirates had been properly restrained. As he looked about, he saw Xendar standing stock-still in the middle of the room right next to the remains of Balrook Satovor.

"Xendar!" Zek yelled. "That was incredible! Rushing off like that to face Balrook, I figured that you would be dead. But you sure proved me wrong," Zek said as he clapped a hand on Xendar's shoulder. And for Xendar's part, he dropped straight to the floor in a heap. As a blessed veil of unconsciousness swept him away into the warm and wondrous embrace of nothingness.

Xendar slowly opened his eyes, squinting to try and rid himself of the watery images of his sight. Eventually, things started to come into focus. Slowly sitting up, Xendar looked to his right. He could see a form asleep in a chair beside his bed.

"Mom?" he quietly said.

Ristaria's eyes snapped open as she thought that she had heard something. Looking over at Xendar, she found him awake and looking at her.

"Si'Vran! He's awake!" She shouted as she shot out of her chair, and with tears of joy spilling down her cheeks, she wrapped Xendar up in one of the fiercest hugs he had received in his life. From the hall, the sound of running feet could be heard as Si'Vran rushed into the room. Seeing his son awake and alive, he also wrapped Xendar up in a fierce hug. After several moments both Si'Vran and Ristaria released Xendar. "Are you okay?" Ristaria asked as she brushed a stray hair

out of Xendar's eyes. Xendar looked down at his bandaged body and wrists, then up at his parents.

"Is everyone safe?" He quietly asked.

"Yes, they are. You saved a lot of lives, Xendar," Ristaria said as she pulled Xendar back into a hug.

"Yeah, and I took a lot of lives to make that happen," he said quietly.

"Xendar, my dad was a soldier, and one of the things he would say about fighting was; In order to save a life. Sometimes you have to take a life. Xendar, for a good portion of your life, we have been traveling around the galaxy, trying to help rebuild war-torn worlds. And sometimes, there are those who just want chaos, pain, and destruction. And we have been in our fair share of ugly fights," Si'Vran stated.

"Like that Weequay mom took out?" Xendar asked.

"Exactly, That Weequay was going to hurt you and the other patients I was trying to save," Ristaria said as she kissed Xendar on the forehead.

"But I don't feel any remorse. All I felt was satisfaction. I enjoyed stalking those pirates, hunting them, and then killing them." Ristaria looked at Si'Vran for a moment, then back at Xendar.

"Xendar, look at me, please," Ristaria gently said. "You and I have a feral side," she told him. "It comes from the Juhani in our blood. They are hunters and fighters. It can be a great advantage, or it can cause no end to so many problems. So, one of the greatest challenges for us will be to keep that side under control and not to let it run rampant."

"And that is going to be a tough road to tread. But remember, you can't build a house in one day," Si'Vran stated.

"Speaking of time, how long have I been out? Xendar asked.

"Almost a week and a half," Ristaria said. "And most of that was in a bacta tank."

Xendar's eyes widened. "That long?" He paused for a moment. "Where am I?" He said as he looked about the room. Before Si'Vran or Ristaria could answer, there was a knock on the wall nearby.

"Do you mind if we come in?" A familiar voice asked.

"Come in, come in. There is plenty of room." Ristaria said with a smile.

"How are you doing Xendar? You gave us quite a scare for a while," Zek said as he came in, he was not wearing his security outfit, but instead, was in some kind of military uniform, while carrying a small bundle in his arms.

"Zek?" Xendar said incredulously.

"Actually, it's Zekris Savrick. And I believe you know my greatest friend and one of the most important people in my life."

"Telasa?" Xendar said as a white-haired, pale skinned Sephi woman walked in, and she was also holding a small bundle in her arms. Xendar's eyes once again shot open wide.

"Your lightsabers! And that helmet! I'm sorry about..."

Telasa held up her hand, stopping Xendar from continuing.

"It's okay, Xendar. Both Trogo and Zek explained what happened with my lightsabers and Trogo explained to Zek about the helmet. And besides, there are two other people who would like to meet you as well." Telasa said as she and Zek put the bundles in Xendar's arms. "Say hello to Ristaria and Xendar." Xendar gave Telasa and Zek a look of shocked perplexion. "Your mom risked her life to help me deliver my babies. And she took out a security guard who came through the door before Trogo could warn them. She thought that a pirate had snuck in without anyone knowing."

"Well, it worked out in the end," Zek replied. "According to Jarse, getting the paste knocked out of him by a beautiful woman who knows how to fight made it all worthwhile."

"Uh, we are not aboard the station, are we?" Xendar asked hesitantly.

"No, we are aboard an Imperial star destroyer. And don't worry about Bifony. Ten minutes after we left, he was making some grandiose announcement about how he single-handedly saved the station. He's not really a bad person. But he does tend to be a glory hound. And here, this is for you," Zek said as he stepped out of the room for a moment and came back in the room, holding a container. "Why don't you pass the kids to your mom and dad," Zek suggested.

Xendar passed Ristaria to his mom and Xendar to his dad. Then taking the container, he opened it up. Inside, he found Telasa's lightsabers, Zek's TIE helmet, and at the bottom was Balrook's Dissuader-KD 30 and lightsaber.

"You more than earned everything in that container Xendar. Although it is kind of funny. Bifony went and had a major fit when he couldn't find those weapons and ordered a massive station wide search for them. He didn't know that I had picked them up, and I didn't tell him when we left. So there is a pretty good chance that he is still looking for them," Zek said.

"Thank you," Xendar quietly said.

"There is one more thing," Telasa stated. "We extended an invitation to you and your parents to join us. There is a special school there that can teach you how to use the Force. And we need more doctors and architects as well. It will take a little while to get there, and if it's okay with you and your parents, I would like to help you learn a little more about the Force."

Xendar looked over at his parents, who gave a nod of approval.

"I would like to learn whatever you can teach me." Xendar said, managing a small smile

"Telasa smiled, "With what you have shown that you can do, you have just taken your first steps into a larger world."

**Docking Bay 12
Nesolat Station
Orbiting the planet Arx
During the Attack on Arx**

*I will know you and I will be your friend.
Loyalty protects us, it's a bond that will never end.
I will lead you; you will lead me, lead each other to victory
We are steadfast, courage will last in the face of the enemy.*

*Strength not failing, skies grow darker
Honor holding, we're surrounded.
Come sit with me, we won't cower
Battles closer, we can win this.*

*I will never leave you to fend for yourself,
trust me to stand behind you, In the Glory Unseen.*

***I could never betray you, you fall but I'll save you,
I'll stand right by you, In the Glory Unseen.***

From the song, "*Glory Unseen*" by Juniper

It seemed to be a losing battle; the waves of the Collective Hive Marines and partisans flowed through the hole in the wall and continued unabated, they knew that the end was near, and the thought whipped them up in a massive fervor.

Oriyanna slammed her elbow into the chest of an onrushing partisan, she heard a slight creak from her plastiod armor as it impacted. Which was then followed up by a very loud crack as the sternum and ribs of the partisan broke from the impact of her strike. Spinning around, she saw another partisan rushing toward her. Seeing that her DC-17 in its current configuration would be a great hinderance, she threw it straight up in the air. The partisan was taken aback and stopped dead in his tracks. He watched in confusion as she did so, trying to figure out what she was doing. Lunging forward, Oriyanna activated the knuckle plate vibro blades on her hands and drove them deep into the clavicle region at the base of his neck. Oriyanna quickly brought up her boot and shoved the now nearly decapitated partisan in the chest away from her, the corpse fell to the floor with a wet thud. A female partisan tried to grab Oriyanna from behind as she caught her DC-17. The partisan was trying to use the blaster to bash in Oriyanna's face. Oriyanna took a step back and used her newfound leverage to throw the female partisan over her shoulder. The partisan hit the floor with a loud thud. The shock from the impact caused the partisan to let go of the blaster. Oriyanna quickly dropped to one knee, she took a firm hold of the DC-17m and smashed the stock of it into the partisan's unarmored throat.

"Next time, you karking idiot, you might want to check to see if they are wearing a fully enclosed helmet," Oriyanna fired off contemptuously as she stood up. Taking aim, she fired a grenade at the hole in the wall that the marines and partisans were pouring through, and grunted in satisfaction as the explosion sent a mass of bodies flying skyward.

"Try that again, Chakaar!" A huge partisan shouted as he barreled toward her. Oriyanna dove to one side as the partisan tried to slice her in two with a huge dual bladed vibro ax. As she did so, she lost her grip on her DC-17m. After dodging another attempt by the partisan to chop her in half, which caused the partisan to make a hole in the floor where she had been previously standing. Leading the ax to get stuck in the floor. Slamming one foot down on the haft of the ax, Oriyanna ripped off her helmet and swung it around, catching the partisan in the jaw, an explosion of blood and teeth filled the air. She then brought her helmet high over her head and smashed it into the remains of the partisan's face. The partisan fell lifelessly to the floor with a heavy thud. "Eat that, you chuff-sucking creespa!" Oriyanna snarled. She then dropped her helmet and ran over and scooped up her DC-17m. Over her shoulder, Oriyanna heard Ranith yell.

"Look!"

Whipping around, Oriyanna felt her heart sink; she could see what she thought was a large ship heading toward the docking bay. Oriyanna loaded the last anti-armor shell into her DC-17m attachment. *This might not take it out, but it will cause some damage!* She thought to herself as she looked back up and sighted the ship in her scope. She was looking for a vulnerable location

to shoot at once the ship cleared the entrance. But to her surprise, it was not a Collective ship, it was a flight of Brotherhood ships flying in close formation. At that moment, her earpiece crackled to life.

"Raptor Flight, to Docking Bay 12. Do you require assistance?"

"Raptor Flight this is Lieutenant Rathelin," Oriyanna yelled, "We are taking heavy fire and have sustained massive casualties!"

"Understood, Lieutenant, I think we can even the score a little bit." The pilot then turned his comsettings to broadcast. "Raptor Flight, arm all weapons! Repeat, arm all weapons! We are going in weapons hot! If it looks hostile, vaporize it!" Raptor Flight lead responded.

"Everyone, get down and take cover!" Oriyanna yelled.

The gunship transports came blazing in, their guns spewing pulsating blasts of brightly lit death at the Collective Hive Marines and the Partisans.

As the transports settled on the docking bay landing pad, their guns glowing red hot from the continuous fire that they bellowed forth.

"Everyone, fall back to the ships!" Oriyanna yelled to the other fighters in the docking bay. Slinging her DC-17m over her shoulder, as it would cause more harm than good at the moment. Reaching down, she pulled out her DC-15s from their holsters and started blasting the Hive Marines and Partisans as she ran for a transport.

As the survivors ran for the transports, some of those who had fought for this moment paid the ultimate price. Others, seeing their comrades fall, turned and began to return fire. In the end, while they did fall, their heroic sacrifice bought the other survivors the precious seconds that they needed to get aboard the transports.

And with a powerful roar of the engines, each transport loudly announced that they were departing this hellscape for safe havens elsewhere.

Oriyanna raced toward the last transport at full speed, and as she was running, Oriyanna yelled into her comline.

"Xendar! Where are you? This party has gotten too hot, we need to evac now!"

"I'm right behind you," his voice came over the comline.

Oriyanna whipped around on the ramp, she spotted Xendar running at full speed, with a lightsaber in one hand deflecting blaster bolts while the other arm, was a blood-sodden mess that was protectively holding onto a small bundle that had been wrapped up in his armorweave cloak. What neither of them saw, was a Hive Marine that had been blown to one side of the docking bay when the transport ships opened fire as they landed. Having lost most of his weapons, the Marine pulled out two malfunctioning vibroblades and threw them at Xendar. The marine watched in satisfaction as Xendar started up the ramp, the blades sunk deep into Xendar's back with a sickening thunk. Xendar dropped to his knees and slumped face-first into the loading ramp.

Oriyanna spotted the marine, and with a scream of rage and pain, she let loose a withering fusillade of blaster fire from her DC-15s pistols into the unarmored sections of the Hive Marine's body. As her pistols insistently clicked, an audible reminder that her pistols needed to recycle and charge. Holstering her pistols, she unslung her DC-17m still in its anti-armor mode, with her

last round chambered. Grabbing the grip with her free hand, she sighted the marine's head in the scope and took careful aim.

"When you see Rath Oligard in hell, you can tell him who sent you there!" She snarled viciously as she pulled the trigger. The last thing that the Marine saw was the anti-armor grenade that smashed into and lodged itself in his helmet's visor just before it exploded.

A loud groan came from the loading ramp as Xendar tried to get to his feet.

Throwing her DC-17 into the ship and trying hard to blink back the tears, Oriyanna ran down the ramp to help Xendar up and into the ship.

"No, that's not either one of them," Ranith stated as Quista picked up his hand. "He and Oriyanna adopted the little orphan girl that they found on the Nesolat Station, who thinks the galaxy of them. Since I know them a little better than some, I think that both of them would fight to protect those they love to their dying breath."

Tokare City, Seraph

Sunrider Gardens

Date Unknown

So, that's the groom, eh. I didn't recognize him without the executioner's garb, the hood or the glowing blood-red eyes," Lidgy mischievously whispered to Breeza.

"Lidgy!" Breeza said in a quiet, admonishing tone.

"What?" Lidgy said, feigning innocence. His lekku twitching and moving as if trying to add to the innocent act Lidgy was playing.

"You know good and well that is not true! Think of all the enjoyable times we have had with him and his family. How many times have we been invited by Xendar, his family, Oriyanna, Uncle Jasten, and Aunt Deshavera to come over for dinner."

"Okay, okay," Lidgy said in a false petulant tone. Then, quickly changed the subject.

"I meant to ask; this is your cousin's wedding, right? How is it that you are not the Maid of Honor?" Lidgy asked in a quiet voice.

"Oriyanna asked me that several times already, and I declined. I don't like drawing attention to myself. And besides, I would have felt like the odd one out with the other bridesmaids." Breeza stated.

"I know that feeling. Whenever I want to talk to someone from your family, I have to stand on a chair! I know you are supposed to look up to people, but not literally! I'm the only guy that I know that will get neck problems from having to look up all the time!" Lidgy said in a fake whiney voice.

Breeza smiled. Lidgy was trying to add some levity, to break down some of the seriousness that would come with weddings, and in his usual way, he would make jokes, sometimes about others, but he would mostly make them about himself.

"So, uh, where do you think they'll go on their honeymoon?" Lidgy asked, changing the subject.

"That would depend on if they take Daesha or not. If they don't, who knows? If they do, probably The Golden Beaches on Corellia again. We all went there on vacation. Had a good time. Though, at times, I had to feel sorry for Oriyanna."

"Oh, why was that?" Lidgy asked, his curiosity piqued.

**Golden Beaches
Corellia,
Sometime after the Abrogation
of the Republic of the Force**

*Well, the years start coming
And they don't stop coming
Fed to the rules and I hit the ground running
Didn't make sense not to live for fun
Your brain gets smart, but your head gets dumb
So much to do, so much to see
So what's wrong with taking the back streets?
You'll never know if you don't go
You'll never shine if you don't glow*
From the song, "All Stars" by Smash Mouth

Daesha squealed loudly as she ran through the surf as it crashed against the shore. It was an interesting sight as a small blue Twi'lek looking girl dressed in pink shorts, and a white short-sleeved shirt while wearing a large white bucket hat, ran away from a tall, dark-skinned woman with platinum blonde hair in an electric blue swimsuit.

"Daddy! Mommy is after me!" Daesha squealed happily.

"Run! Daesha, run! Your daddy can't save you from the tickle monster!" Oriyanna playfully shouted in a villain-like voice as she chased after Daesha.

As the two of them raced through the shallow water, neither of them noticed a shadow in the water just beneath the surface. Slowly the shadow drew ever closer to where Daesha and Oriyanna were running.

"Haha, gotcha!" Oriyanna said, snatching up Daesha.

"You cannot escape!" Oriyanna said as she got ready to tickle Daesha.

Xendar burst out of the water, startling Oriyanna, which allowed Daesha to break free.

Grabbing Oriyanna, he pulled her down and into the deeper water with him. "Xendar!" Oriyanna sputtered and squawked as she broke the surface of the water.

"Daddy got you, Mommy!" The little girl said as she laughed loudly.

A few seconds later, Xendar broke to the surface, a Cheshire-like grin spread across his cat-like face.

"You!" Oriyanna said in an indignant tone as she shoved Xendar back under the water. Xendar disappeared for a few seconds before coming back up and grabbing Oriyanna. He started to carry her to shore.

"Hey, Daesha! Want to come over here and help me tickle your mom?" Xendar said in a sing-song voice. Oriyanna let out a loud squeal as she tried to wiggle out of Xendar's arms. But to no avail, as Xendar had a good hold on her.

"Ah! Xendar! No more!" Oriyanna wheezed between bouts of laughter.

"Why? I've got reinforcements. Daesha, try the bottoms of mommy's feet."

Oriyanna gave another loud squeal and tried to pull her feet under her as Daesha pounced on her legs and started to tickle the bottoms of her feet.

"Is everything okay out here? I was in the house when I heard some shouting and..." Breeza started to say as she spotted Xendar, Oriyanna, and Daesha. Daesha was sitting on Oriyanna's shins energetically tickling the bottoms of her feet. While Xendar was on his knees, his right arm wrapped around Oriyanna's waist, with the fingers of his left moving at a furious rate across her ribs.

She's still ticklish?! Breeza incredulously thought to herself.

"Come on, Aunty Breeza! Help us tickle Mommy!" Daesha happily shouted.

The thought of getting revenge on Oriyanna for all of those ambush tickling's that she meted out when they were kids; had strongly crossed Breeza's mind. But she thought that perhaps for the best that she did not.

"Uh...no, no thanks. I was coming to ask if anyone wanted to go on a walk. When we were coming back on the train, I heard someone say that there should be a lot of animals running around. I thought that we might be able to see some.

Daesha gave a loud gasp of surprise and quickly turned to her parents.

"Can we go see! Can we pleeeeeease!" Daesha pleaded, her glowing red eyes growing ever bigger.

"I have an idea. If it's okay with your parents. How about you and me take a walk to see those animals and let your mommy and daddy have some time together?"

Oriyanna tilted her head back on Xendar's shoulder as the two of them looked at each other and then at Daesha.

"Okay," they both said.

"Yaaaaay!" Daesha shouted as she leaped up, grabbing Breeza's hand and pulling her toward a trail.

"Try to keep Daesha away from the dangerous animals. She'll try to bring one home. Knowing how animals like her, they would probably be all for that idea," Oriyanna shouted.

Xendar and Oriyanna watched as Daesha's and Breeza's forms dissappeared as they walked over a hill.

"So, what do you want to do now?" Oriyanna asked Xendar.

"Just twenty meters away from us is a rather large beach chair sitting in front of the house, and it should comfortably hold the two of us while we watch the sunset," Xendar said as he reached down to pick up Oriyanna.

"You certainly are a wild one, aren't you?" Oriyanna said playfully as she laid her head on Xendar's shoulder.

"Though, that sounds perfect." Oriyanna added.

"Well, today was an interesting first day," Oriyanna said, curling up against Xendar as they were sharing a beachfront deck chair, in front of the house watching the sunset.

"It was something, I'll agree to that. My parents were acting like a couple of teenage kids, and your father couldn't keep his hands off your mother, not that she seemed to mind."

"Well, after thirty plus years of marriage, I think that both your parents and mine get to act a little crazy every once in a while," Oriyanna said as she playfully poked Xendar in the ribs.

"And speaking of your parents, here they come," Xendar said as he pointed at two figures contently holding each other, making their way toward Xendar and Oriyanna.

"Someone seems to have had a good time," Xendar said to Jasten and Deshavara as they walked up to where he and Oriyanna were sitting.

"A most enjoyable one," Jasten stated. We did some swimming, some hiking, and we walked along the beach."

"Don't forget about that fight," Deshavara added.

"What fight?" Oriyanna asked.

"And that underwater cave was an experience itself. Though, it could get a little noisy."

"What fight? Oriyanna loudly pressed.

"Oh, just some muscle-bound morons who thought that the universe should acknowledge them as being the most perfect beings in the entirety of existence," Deshavara said nonchalantly.

"Apparently, in their judgment, I was found wanting. That your mother's affections were wasted on me and that they were there to show me the error of my ways," Jasten said in an overly dramatic manner.

"Oh no. Dad, please tell me that you didn't bring *Lil' Poppy*."

"Why is it that the blame for things is always placed on me," Jasten said, feigning innocence.

"What if I said that your mom was the one who had it," he added, pointing to Deshavara, who was wearing a skimpy, black two-piece swimsuit. For her part, she gave Oriyanna an evil conspiratorial smile.

"Who or what is *Lil' Poppy*?" Xendar asked as a bemused smile touched his lips.

"*Lil' Poppy* is Dad's pneumatic submachine gun," Oriyanna stated, adding extra emphasis to the word dad. "It looks like a shortened, heavily modified MK II Paladin blaster rifle. Only this one fires a non-lethal plastiod round. It won't kill you, but will hurt like you would never believe," Oriyanna said to Xendar, she then turned toward her father,

"Dad, what did you do?! Should we be expecting a visit from CorSec tomorrow as well?" "Calm down, Oriyanna. We won't be getting a visit from anyone. Those muscle-headed idiots would have to report that they got the snot knocked out of them by just two people." Deshavara stated, she then added in a playful tone, "You know, we should go back tomorrow and see if they would like a rematch,"

"Well, you could even up the odds by leaving *Lil' Poppy* at home," Xendar said, trying to sound helpful.

"Oh no you don't! You're just encouraging them." Oriyanna said as she gave Xendar a flat look.

"Fine, fine," Xendar said, raising his hands in mock surrender

"From the way that story sounds, everyone had a good time on Corellia. I will admit that I did not know that your cousin was ticklish." Lidgy whispered to Breeza as they watched Oriyanna and Xendar clasp hands and begin to recite their marriage vows to each other.

A large cheer swept through the crowd as Xendar lifted Oriyanna's veil and gave her the first kiss of their marriage.

As Oriyanna and Xendar, arm in arm, as husband and wife, walked down the aisleway toward an awaiting speeder, Oriyanna turned and threw her bouquet into the air. And as the bouquet reached the apex of the throw, it separated into smaller bouquets that fell into the crowd. Lidgy watched as the smaller bouquets fluttered into the hands of Trina Sarawon, Salanis Ratoolon, and Shi'anna Zaltus. Both Trina and Salanis looked at the bouquet of flowers and then at each other, then both burst out laughing. While Shi'anna looked over at the human man standing beside her with a happily expectant look.

"Well, I guess all is well that ends well," Ledgy stated. He noticed that Breeza hadn't said a word. Looking over at her, he could see that she was also holding a bouquet in her hands.