

## **Frozen mysteries**

### **KAP Xantros**

### **11518**

#### **38 ABY, Caina, polar cape**

Krath Archpriest Xantros, former Aedile of House Scholae Palatinae stood in front of the only known entrance to underground facility, where a zealot known as Vim was conducting mysterious Dark Side experiments. The Duro was tasked by Emperor Xen'Mordin Vismorsus with infiltration of the laboratory and discovering what exactly was going on out there. He had to carry out the mission on his own, as a higher number of operatives would warn Vim, who would probably initiate the evacuation procedure and the self-destruction process. Many of the results of his works would be lost to him, but all results of his works would be lost to the Imperial House. Such a waste of possibly useful source of information was unacceptable and Xantros was expected to secure all records from the Vim's experiments.

The Archpriest understood the necessity of carrying that mission his own. However, he was far from being eager to go inside the lab alone. Not that he was scared of possible outcome. Through the years of his service as the Dark Jedi, he learned how to deal with his fear and other feelings. He was not emotionless, but he was able to control them and rarely allowed them to influence his actions. However, he was tired with the Dark Crusade and he was no longer zealous to take part in such missions. He desperately needed to rest and meditate. He desperately needed to regain his zeal and energy. Otherwise, he would not be able continue his service to the Imperial House and to the Dark Jedi Brotherhood as the whole. Only strong loyalty to Scholae Palatinae made him agree to go on the mission to the underground lab of a hostile Dark Jedi, even though he was aware that his loyalty to the Heirs of Palpatine started to deteriorate and weaken due to various factors.

Unable to predict what was waiting for him below the planetary surface, Xantros entered the underground facility and walked a long corridor. The place was rather dark, though there was enough light, which was provided by the lamps here and there, to see clearly up to twenty five meters ahead. The Krath Archpriest continued his walk down the corridor expecting heavy resistance behind each turn, but the underground compound was surprisingly quiet. There was no sign of any living being in the close proximity. It was strange, as the facility seemed to be completely sterile and someone or something had to keep it clean. However, the Duro encountered no resistance neither from living beings nor from droids and automatic defense system. He started wondering, if the base was prepared for his arrival. Soon, his suspicions turned out to be truth.

As he entered a large hall, which seemed to be the primary conference room, he noticed a man sitting on the chair. Man's appearance matched the identikit picture, which was in the possession of the Imperial House. The man opened his eyes and spoke, „At last, we meet face to face. Welcome to my sanctuary, Xantros.”

„Vim! Your sick experiments end here,” said the Duro.

„Do not be so righteous. I am aware that you have been conducting similar experiments in your own laboratories.”

„There is a great difference between you and us. What we do is meant to help and to protect the citizens of the Empire. Also, we do not carry on the experiments on innocent people. We take only criminals, who have committed crimes against the Empire, while you utilize anyone, who falls into your cursed hands.”

„Indeed, I do. For the greater good, just like you do. I just do not limit myself. Actually, we are very similar. You and me,” said Vim.

„Not at all!” replied the Archpriest.

„We both feel strong desire of knowledge. We condemn these, who are not willing to learn. We despise these, who are stupid. The knowledge is the greatest treasure to both of us and we both shall look for every single opportunity to learn new things. We often keep secrets for ourselves and are extremely hesitant to share them with others. I have built this laboratory to conduct experiments and learn more and more. You have come here not because you feel any obligation to your comrades and superiors, but because you are curious about the results of my experiments. Yes, we have much in common. Admit it,” continued Vim with calm voice.

„No, I am not like you. I know, where my loyalty lies,” replied Xantros, though he felt that Vim was a bit right. He told himself that it was loyalty that made him go on that mission. However, the truth was that he wished to see, if the experiments conducted by Vim might be useful for him. For him, not for the Imperial House. Of course, he would hand some of the results to the Emperor, but he would keep some of them to himself for further studies. Without his authority as the Aedile, he would be unable to reach the documents, when they would be stored in the Imperial Archives.

„I am not going fight you. I am aware that even if I killed you, I would be unable to run away from the planet or that I would be quickly tracked down and captured by your comrades. They would not let anyone to go away with such an offence. Kill me now and take whatever you find here. You have two hours before the lab will blow up.”

„Why?”

„As I said, we are the same. Because we are the same, you can ask your questions, if you can tolerate the answers. You will find the answers in the documents, which describe my works here. Enjoy the reading, I am sure that you will find it interesting.”

Xantros nodded and decapitated Vim with a gentle lightsaber swing. There was no time to lose. The Krath Archpriest quickly gathered all documents and datapads available in the room. There was a small repulsor trolley in the room, which seemed to be specially prepared for that occasion. Xantros utilized it to transport the findings outside the laboratory before it exploded. When he got to a safe distance, he called in for a transport.