The sand-filled wind stung the young human’s face as a rather strong gust whipped through the valley. The Jedi Hunter took a long drag of his cigarette as he turned to admire the structure behind him.

\*The great Sith Academy of Korriban, what a joke.\*

In truth, the academy was now nothing more than a relic of times gone by. Nicolai knew that the true center of dark side learning in the galaxy rested on Lyspair at the Shadow Academy. This dead planet was nothing more than a home to secrets that would be better off buried in its sands.

Nicolai hated Korriban, but even worse, he hated the fact that he would most likely die on this wretched planet. As he stood in the wind smoking what could be his last cigarette, Rebel and New Order forces were in route to attempt to take the barren remnants of the academy from the Loyalists. The Loyalists had been the first ones on the planet, and as such set up their base of operations at the abandoned academy.

 Nicolai and another Jedi Hunter, Colyn Skybender, had been tasked with setting up a perimeter around the academy and holding it until reinforcements could safely arrive. Rod liked Colyn, he was a fellow soldier through and through, and the Sith could tell he would fight until his last breath.

As Rod took another drag off of his cigarette, he noticed a man wearing a tie approaching him from the direction of the perimeter.

\*How did this sleemo get in here?\* The Jedi Hunter thought to himself.

As the man got closer Nicolai could make out the weathered face of a man who has lived an eventful life. He was an older man, Rod would have to guess at least 50 from his appearance. His hair was unnaturally blonde, a sight which disturbed the Jedi Hunter who was reminded of a violent musical artist from Almania.

“Got an extra smoke?” The man asked as he approached the young Sith.

For a reason he couldn’t identify, Nicolai trusted this man, so instead of questioning his intentions he reached into his jacket and handed him a red and white pack of cigarettes.

“How did you-“

“Get in here?” The man finished, “Well, your perimeters a bit too spread out, a good force use can walk right through unnoticed. Regardless, you’ve stacked up the wrong side. That One Sith weirdo has most of his forces to the west of the academy, not the east, and your other not so friendly brothers will be fainting an attack from the east but will also come from the west.”

Nicolai simply stared at the man, completely impressed by the vast amount of knowledge he had just displayed.

“Who-“

“Connor Grey, pleasure to meet you.”

Suddenly it all made sense. Nicolai remembered the dossier he had read on the shuttle to the planet’s surface. This man was a rogue Jedi who knew the ins and outs of the planet better than anyone else. He also had yet to pick a side in this battle, and was very unlikely too.

“So, you would recommend we move the majority of our forces to protect the western entrance of the academy?” The Jedi Hunter queried, now very interested at what this man had to say.

Connor took a long drag of his cigarette before he replied.

“Yeah, that would be your best bet. Leave a big enough contingent on this side to protect against the faint, but move the majority of the troops to the west side, that’s where most of the fighting will be.”

Nicolai thought for a moment, then looked up at the man once more.

“How do I know-“

“I’m not lying to you?” Connor finished, slightly infuriating the young Sith, “You don’t, everyone could be coming the east and I want you loyalists to get steam rolled. You’re taking a risk either way, but you did give me a smoke, so why would I lie to you?”

With that, the older Sith flicked the butt of his cigarette and began to walk back off the same way he came. Nicolai couldn’t help but wonder as he disappeared into the haze if he had really talked to anyone at all.

Nicolai quickly reached down to his hip for his comlink.

“Skybender, its Rodell, acknowledge.”

“I hear you loud and clear, go for Skybender.”

“I’m pulling most of our troops from the east perimeter, I have intel that the attack will be coming from the west. Have the men there fortify their positions and move all the walkers we have there as well. We have to hold the line.”

“Understood, I’ll get it done, Skybender out.”