**Success through complete failure**

***Eetherbiail Zarih’Taen – Dossier #11484***

**38 ABY**

**Korriban**

**Valley of the Dark Lords**

Eetherbiail crouched in the underbrush looking down into the Valley of the Dark Lords. The encampment below was busy with commotion. This was the force of Muz Ashen that the figure in the Holocron mentioned, led by the loyalist Colyn Skybender. Their perimeter was exponentially large, fortified, and easily defensible. Eetherbiail went down his knowledge of Colyn in his head…*Juggernaut…so he will be difficult to deal with. He will have the experience to outlast any frontal assault. He never does anything by half…so his defenses will be too hard to penetrate. He outclasses me in skills…subterfuge is the way to go when dealing with his camp.*

A soft sigh escaped Eetherbiail’s lips. He raised his fingers to his eyes and rubbed them in frustration, “Secure the facility…do what you can to ensure the strategic value of the site does not fall into enemy hands.” *Scholae Palatinae really needs to succeed for Jac. We need this victory. I need to take care of this on my own so we can deviate more supplies and forces against Muz himself, need to take care of this before the reinforcements arrive.*

“Right…as easy as that mysterious figure, thanks for this unbelievably impossible task. Not only do I have to deal with Colyn, but Synin Torin is here with his blasted droids. There are also two pesky Jedi roaming around, and on top of that, there’s a rogue Jedi smuggler to deal with!” Eetherbiail cocked an eyebrow at the ground. *Talking to myself, great…just when I could not become even more insane* he thought to himself.

Eetherbiail closed his eyes and focused, diminishing himself in the Force, releasing any frustration or killing intent. It would be a disaster if he got caught now, and he had to ensure that the mission was a success for Jac. House Scholae Palatinae allied themselves with the former Grand Master to deal with the current Grand Master’s scheme: immortality. He marked on the rough dirt map the location of Colyn’s force, *No idea where Synin and Connor are…let alone the Jedi sisters.* Eetherbiail lost himself in thought while looking at the map.

A quick, short pair of giggling shook Eetherbiail out of his stupor, “You shouldn’t become distracted so easily while near the enemy Dark Jedi.”

Eetherbiail quickly spun around and stood, sinking low into form for close hand to hand combat. He quickly took in his surroundings, two oddly pigmented teal Twi’leks stood in front of him. They cocked their heads to the side in opposite directions in a very oddly unison action. Eetherbiail shivered at their creepy gesture and glared at them, “So you’re the infamous Jedi sisters I’ve heard about. What do you want? Clearly you’re not going to attack me, or you would have done so while I was not paying attention.”

Rhiaen tilted her head to the other side, “We don’t want-“

            Nalia tilted her head to the other side to form a triangle like shape with her sister, “-anything.”

They were attractive, and each had a lightsaber clipped to their belt, but Eetherbiail had no patience for the opposite sex, their appeal and comfortable clothing meant to alleviate the heat had no effect on him, “Then why are you here? And cover up…you may be Twi’leks but aren’t you Jedi?”

The two of them giggled again and ignored his question. Together in unison, they turned around and walked away. They turned their heads slightly so they could speak to Eetherbiail while walking away. Nalia said, “We are here, just to be here. You never know when you might-“

“-witness the beginning of the change in the course of history” Finished Rhiaen. Nalia disappeared in the dense shrubbery and trees. Her sister Rhiaen stopped before following and turned to face Eetherbiail, “You might want to search for another Jedi, his name is Connor Grey, and he is east of here, in a small encampment he’s made.” She levitated a rock with the Force and dropped it on Eetherbiail’s dirt map, “It’s difficult to find, but he may prove useful to you. Good luck with your survival” she said with a smirk. With that, she turned and followed her sister into oblivion, disappearing, and not sensible in the Force.

“Blasted Jedi, speaking but never saying what they mean. They always have to make the task incredibly more difficult” Eether said to the empty air. He sighed heavily to himself and turned to look the map one more time. He crouched down and grabbed a stick, *well, if I go around Colyn’s encampment here to avoid detection, and more importantly, fighting. Scale the Valley and…talk to Connor. Shouldn’t be too hard* he thought to himself.

Eetherbiail ran his hand through the dirt and destroyed his map, unwilling to let his enemies find his plan. He stood up and nudged the ground with his boot to make sure it was completely destroyed. He pulled his hood up over his head, closed his eyes and diminished himself in the Force once more. Alert, as to not be taken unaware again, Eetherbiail trudged off into the east towards Connor.

Eetherbiail walked through the underbrush, keeping an eye on Colyn’s encampment to his side, and avoided all patrols around him. A few times he had to duck or drop behind a rock or climb a tree to avoid detection. *Ugh...this isn’t like me. I hate subterfuge. It’s cowardice.* He sighed mentally to himself, taking a deep breath, *relax* he thought, *if I succeed, there’s no way we will lose the war. This is worth it.*

As Eetherbiail got a little farther around Colyn’s force, the patrols lessened until there were none. He stopped crouching over, and proceeded normally through the bushes. Eetherbiail cursed his situation without a portable map. *It should be around here…*he thought.

“Tsk tsk tsk. You really shouldn’t find yourself lost in thought so easy Dark Jedi.”

“Fierfek! Synin I presume?” Eetherbiail quickly grabbed his lightsaber from its clip and ignited it. The light blue light from the lightsaber shown in the darkness, and illuminated the area around him.

“You know, you were doing quite the impressive job with hiding your presence in the Force. However, my droids can see body heat. You did not stand a chance,” Synin said triumphantly.

Suddenly a YVH 1 Droid burst through the bushes and tossed a thermal detonator at Eetherbiail. Eetherbiail grabbed the explosive with the Force and attempted to throw it back at the droid but did not succeed in time. The detonator blew and sent Eetherbiail flying back into a tree with a thud. Synin jumped down from his perch on a large tree and ignited his lightsaber as he flew down from the branch, the purple light emmited from it illuminated the droid more. He sunk into a high Form III grip and charged forward towards Eetherbiail. At the same time, the YVH 1 droid surged forward as well. The two moved in sync, the purple lightsaber attacking Eetherbiail’s head, while the YVH 1 droid fired an electroray at Eetherbiail’s hip section.

Eetherbiail knew quickly that this could very well be the end of his life. He spun around and cut through the tree’s trunk that he landed into that was already splintered from his impact. Eetherbiail followed his momentum and dodged sideways as the tree fell diagonally behind him onto the two attackers. His only thought was to dodge the lightsaber strike and the spraying effect of the electroray. The electroray burst above him and into the trunk of the tree as Synin grabbed it with the Force and tossed it away. Eetherbiail rolled forward to his feet and spun around again to face his attackers, “Aww, too scared to fight by yourself that you have to have your pretty little droid with you?”

“My boy, who ever said I had a single droid?” Synin smirked at Eetherbiail in an eerie purple glow. Suddenly, fire poured from Eetherbiail’s right, his dominant side. It caught on his robes and burned him; he ripped off his robes and tossed it at the direction of the flamethrower. It burned up instantly and turned to ash.

“Frak!” Eether said, he couldn’t glance at his shoulder and arm, but he felt the burn. *Three on one huh, there’s no way I will be able to take out them all and come out unscathed* Eetherbiail thought. Eetherbiail kick spun the ASN-121 droid before it could launch more flames against him. It only kicked it back in the air as it float a few feet away. Continuing with the momentum, Eetherbiail pivoted on his other foot and launched an attack at Synin. Their lightsabers met midair and clashed, sparks flew off of the two blades. The YVH 1 droid sunk into a low hand to hand style and lunged forward, forcing Eetherbiail to duck as a fist came flying at his face. Synin disengaged and backed away, letting his droid take the frontal assault.

The ASN-121 droid floated to Eetherbiail’s 8 o’clock, pinning Eetherbiail in the midst of a triangle. “I know you found me because of your ASN-121 droid’s spy sensor.”

“So? What is your point young man?”

“So all I have to do is take it out!” Eetherbiail switched his lightsaber into a reverse grip as he surged forward, kicking the YVH 1 droid away and left a little opening. Eetherbiail brought his lightsaber upwards towards Synin, forcing him to protect his side. Using the fluid motion of the reverse grip, Eetherbiail grabbed the ASN-121 droid in the force and pulled it towards him. Fire erupted at Eetherbiail’s front. He braced for impact, but went for the prize.

Synin laughed hysterically, “By all means boy! Help me kill you!”

Eetherbiail felt the heat as the fire came closer to him, he toughed it out as the droid came in reach. As Eetherbiail’s lightsaber skid off of Synin’s from the upward strike, he rounded out and struck downwards, he struck the ASN-121 droid, splitting it in half. Eetherbiail grunted as the pain from the flame seared him after the initial adrenaline kick died out. Using the droids death as an opening, Eetherbiail surged forward, deactivated his lightsaber, and ran into the trees. Bewildered and dumbfounded, Synin stood there in shock as his prey escaped his grasp. As Eetherbiail cut through the trees, he heard an angry howl from Synin behind him.

**38 ABY – 2 Hours Later**

**Korriban**

**Valley of the Dark Lords**

Eetherbiail sat with his back against a tree trunk gripping his shoulder. The flamethrower had done more damage to him than he realized at the time. It was a miracle he had even survived the fight to begin with, too many droids to take out on his own. He had gotten cocky, believing himself hidden in the Force. He had forgotten about droids and sensors…*blast it. I’m better than this* he thought. He would never let his former master and Emperor know that he had gotten caught…twice!

He laid his head back against the tree trunk and sighed heavily. Eetherbiail grunted again and stood up, using the tree for support. *If I recall, Connor should be just below, if I can survive scaling down the Valley wall* Eetherbiail thought to himself. He raised an eyebrow in the dark, *when did I start talking to myself so much? Maybe I really am going crazy.*

Eetherbiail walked slowly over to the ledge and looked down into complete darkness. He carefully sat down with his feet over the edge and took a foothold to climb down. He took it slow, and made sure his footing was secure before letting go, his shoulder seared with pain but he ignored it. When he reached the bottom of the Valley, Eetherbiail knew that he might have done lasting damage to his shoulder, but he would worry about that when he made it off of Korriban. Eetherbiail crouched and head in the direction that Rhiaen had indicated. As Eetherbiail pushed through the bushes, he came to a clearing with a small tent that blended into the environment. He held his hands up in mock surrender, “Connor? Are you here? I do not mean any harm.”

A click sounded and a figure burst through the tent opening. He rolled and raised an Enforce pistol to Eetherbiail’s chest. Hands and gun raised, the standoff continued. Minutes passed, Eetherbiail made no move to grab his lightsaber, and Connor made no move to pull the trigger, “What do you want from me?” Connor said.

“Like I said, I mean no harm to you. The enemy of my enemy is my friend” Eetherbiail smirked at Connor. “If you’re willing to listen to me, I have an uh…proposition for you. But if you please, lower your weapon?”

Connor clicked the safety on his pistol and lowered it, and allowed Eetherbiail to lower his hands. He made no move to his lightsaber to prove his point. “May I sit?” Eetherbiail asked.

Connor nodded his approval and Eetherbiail sat and spoke to him, “I know you’re a relic hunter and arms dealer, meaning you have more than a pistol here, am I right? I’ve heard that you might have uncovered something, but I’m not here for that. I’m not here for information. I’m here to enlist your help.”

Connor scoffed at that, “Me? Help a Sith?”

“I may be a Sith good sir, but you and I both know that what Muz is after, he cannot obtain. It would mean the end of everything we know” replied Eetherbiail.

“I am here to help Jac stop Muz. But to do that, I need to ‘secure’ the ruins and the tomb. But I have another idea. There is no way that I’ll be able to take on Synin again, and Colyn’s force by myself. The only way to secure victory, is to make sure that no one else, not even myself, obtains what they’re after.”

Realization dawned on Connor, “You don’t mean…”

“Yes, I mean exactly what I am implying Connor. What explosives do you have?”

“You’re assuming I came to Korriban with explosives,” replied Connor.

Eetherbiail raised an eyebrow at Connor Grey, “You’re a known arms dealer Connor.”

“Yeesh, I find that offensive! But yes, I have a multitude of explosive devices.”

Eetherbiail grinned at Connor, “Any time bombs?”

Connor grinned at the Sith, “Of course I do, they are not here though. They are up in some trees a few paces away. Cannot be too careful about explosives; let me go get ‘em.” He jumped up and went to fetch them, leaving Eetherbiail alone in his sparse camp. Eetherbiail looked up at the stars with determination, *reduced to working with a Jedi…what have I become* he thought.

A few minutes later, Connor came back into the small clearing with a heavy laden bag. He gingerly set it down and sat again, “So what do you want to do with all of these?”

Eetherbiail tilted his head at Connor, “What you don’t know? I want to sneak into the ruins and destroy everything. Academy, ruins, tombs, and relics all go boom. If I can’t have them, no one can. That suits you too right?”

Connor sighed heavily, “I don’t like having to work with a Sith. However, you bring up a valid point. It would be better for them to be destroyed than to fall into our mutual enemies hands.”

“Glad you could see it my way. It’s still dark, we should do it now.”

**38 ABY – 30 Minutes Later**

**Korriban**

**Valley of the Dark Lords**

After avoiding some enemies and creatures that lurked around the Academy and tombs, Eetherbiail had set a number of time bombs around the area. Some of them he had to move heavy boulders with the Force to get underneath the structure in order to make sure it collapsed in itself. Other time bombs he had placed in tunnels that had gone down to the various tombs. He had to make sure that he didn’t open the tomb that Muz was after and make it easier for him to get.

*I am putting my faith in you to do your part Connor. Keep your end of the deal and we will not have any issues* thought Eetherbiail. He set the last few time bombs around the site and snuck out of the area. His shoulder and arm throbbed with pain from the burns, but he did not care. Eetherbiail ran as far away from the ruins as he could in order to get away from the blast radius. *At least I will probably take out some enemies too with the blast that many should pull. Hopefully Connor gets out as well* he thought.

Eetherbiail counted down the time from the safe distance. He hunkered down and waited for the reinforcements to arrive and receive medical treatment.

“Well, I may fail in the mission to secure it for our faction, but I succeeded in my mission to ensure it did not fall into the enemies hands,” he said to himself aloud in the darkness.

“Lose one battle, win the war,” muttered Eetherbiail to himself quietly with the fires of the ruins in front of him.