[**The Philosopher: Caina's Secure Vaults of Daemon**](https://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/competitions/8913)
by Calindra Hejaran, Dark Jedi Knight, 14234

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**Shuttle heading for the Iron Fleet
Sith Space**

Calindra was deep in thought as she struggled to write her report on the Zephyr incident, but her musings were interrupted when the the door to her cabin hissed opened. Only one person had the right to call on her. "What is it, Lieutnant?"

"Apologies, my lord, but there's an important communiqué from Imperial Intelligence," he explained. "Seems some group of terrorists is threatening certain Scholae affiliated sites across the Cocytus system; they call themselves the Survivors."

Calindra smirked at the name, but continued writing. "The Survivors should have kept their noses cast down on the ground where they belong. ‘*Survivors*’ indeed,” she added derisively. "Plot a course for the nearest threat, and inform Lord Victae di Plagia's office that we were called to fight our clan’s enemies, and apologize for the delay. I'll endeavor to finish this report and hand it to him personally after this small crisis is dealt with and our clan's enemies are destroyed."

There was a brief moment of hesitation before she heard the lieutenant click his heels in acknowledgement, his footsteps clattering on the shuttle's deck before the door hissed shut, leaving her alone with her thoughts.

**Cocytus System
Daemon City, Caina
 *24 hours later***

Calindra had been targeting all the known vaults in Daemon’s under city, but so far no signs of turmoil had caught her attention. The exercise had at least given her a bit of a feel for the city’s fortifications and defensive positions.

She feared an attack that might cripple the rich of the under districts, so she ensured that they were safely guarded behind their defensive fortifications who, thanks to the machinations of an Obelisk Consul, allowed her to place several sentries to hold off any suspicious characters... It would simply not do if Scholae suddenly found itself short of financial support because the upper class had suddenly been targeted by some disgruntled bunch of miscreants.

Pensively, she followed the twisted series of tight turns at a jog, and the defensive labyrinth soon gave way to the city’s merchant district where the majority of the city’s inhabitants were located. Once there, she stretched her mind outward and took in the city proper in her mind’s eye. She could feel the families and the vermin. The citizen’s pleas and everyday doldrum was overwhelming her. She had to slow down and stop to clear her head as a sea of sentient beings threatened to drown her. She simply wasn’t used to this much activity around her, so she retreated into an alleyway, and took out her encrypted datapad.

Her fingers slid across its surface in several consecutive motions as she sifted through the information she had on the Survivors, whose leader was an infamous man called Fias Zhan. She’d never heard of him until now, but apparently he’d been a thorn in Scholae’s side a while now. The last strike against his group on Caina had been at a research lab.

“*Bioweapons*” she muttered to herself as she read the file again. She already didn’t like this Zhan fellow. However, current intel indicated that power was being redirected to one of the city’s abandoned warehouses in the western district. It wasn’t too far away now.

*‘The good thing about all these people stuck together,’* Calindra thought, ‘*is that I can hit and run more easily. I’ll hit them hard, and then disappear.’* She was itching for a fight after the Zephyr, and she wanted to hit someone really hard, so it was a very determined Dark Jedi that stalked the city’s streets and headed towards the warehouses.

**Abandoned Warehouse Complex
Daemon City – Merchant District**

“WATCH OUT!!!” one of the sentries shouted in warning as a dark figure flung several projectiles their way. One of them avoided a first, and a second. A third missed… his friend was also distracted by several projectiles, and was forced to dive behind one of the crates nearby.

“I see him..!” the young man said as he jumped over a bunch of wrecked storage bins and shelves, his blaster blazing shots before him, “he’s heading for the exit..!”

*'Him?*' Calindra though with a frown. It was like they thought that only a man could have brought down the warehouse on top of their ragtag group of mercenaries. Miffed, she headed towards what seemed to be an administration section of the warehouse complex. The more senior of the two sentries nodded and suddenly disappeared in another direction. Oh, and he was a Force user too. Whatever he was up to, it was probably not in Calindra’s best interest.

Calindra wasn’t exactly surprised though, and she cleared her mind to reduce her presence in the Force to a barely perceptible shimmer. *‘Let’s see just how good you are…’* she smiled as she cleared the door with the younger sentry on her heels. Once inside the administrative building, she slowed down in what appeared to be an empty hall, and then listened passively through the Force.

*‘Left!’* she felt him pass a rusted messenger droid, and… *‘He’s circling around..!’* She immediately noted an empty reception area and dodged in.

Her talents in the Force let her cast illusions, but she didn't need to waste her powers here. She'd already come prepared. Taking away the wrappings from around her face, her blond hair cascaded down to her shoulders and her pretty face was again free. She dropped the cloak beneath the desk and adjusted the uniform she’d taken off one of the mercs before she ‘brought the house down.’

Sensing that the sentry was about to turn the corner, she quickly hit one of the nearby door activator switches with the palm of her hand. The doors hissed open just as she fumbled for the floor.

“You alright?” he asked her, believing she’d been pushed down. Just then, the door shut with a clank. With a small glance of her eyes, she stared at the door and the sentry nodded, turning his back on her as he headed towards the exit.

Dark Energy suddenly leapt out at him from her hands, and he was thrown back by the force of her attack. His blaster clattered on the floor a few feet away. *‘They always underestimate blonds…’* she thought with a satisfied grin as she ignited her lightsaber in his back.

He stared down at his chest dumbfounded to see the red blade piercing him. The searing white hot burn of the blade hadn’t caught up with him before she felt his life leave him. It had been mercifully quick; which was – exactly – what you should do whenever you had a Force user to confront in the near future. Anything more would waste precious time.

Speaking of which…

She felt more than saw the blade coming, and with her lightening reflexes she redirected her lightsaber and parried the blow, twirling, and vaulting as she did so... She landed on her feet and saw that her opponent’s red blade roaring down at her. She smiled, and with a flick of the wrist unleashed a burst of Force energy towards the man wielding the blade.

The blast hit him in the chest and sent him and his blade flying into some of the stacks of empty crates nearby. While the man was getting up, she fiddled with her earpiece and switched the mode to play music from her combat playlist. The man was talking to her, yelling something, but she ignored him. *“Thought you'd change the weather..? Start a little storm, make a little rain, but I'm gonna do you one better,”* she sang as she advanced on him, *“I’ll block the sun until you pray. I’m a tornado, looking for a soul to take.”[[1]](#footnote-1)*

Their blades met again, a fury of light and sound followed as they parried and blocked each other’s attacks. She pressed on, relentlessly: *“You're gonna see me coming by the selfish things that you did. I'm gonna leave you guessing how this funnel is gonna hit. I'm a tornado, looking for a man to break.”[[2]](#footnote-2)*

She suddenly stopped pressing her attack, somersaulted backwards, and swept the ground with the Force in a kinetic blast of energy, lifting dust and debris and peppering the man in front of her with shards of metal and glass, plus everything else time and decay had felt worthy of leaving on the ground for her. The man was temporarily blinded, so she sent another blast of energy through the ground. The weakened structure gave way, and the man fell into the darkness below.

*“I'm gonna lift this house, spin it all around, toss it in the air and put in the ground. Make sure you're never found, oh yeah”,[[3]](#footnote-3)* she said as she leapt in after him, twirling as she did so; red blade streaking down in an ark of death around her as she descended.

She felt his fear, and reveled in it. She wasn’t just some blond anymore; she was a very real threat now. He’d never expected this amount of fury when he had snuck up on her.

Their blades met, and the song’s refrain kept coursing through her head, echoing the last lines she’d spoken out loud: *‘I’m gonna lift this house’* was followed by a parry and downward slash. They both locked blades and gritted their teeth at each other; the red light from their sabers exaggerating their features and casting ghastly shadows around them.

He took a page from her book, and she was suddenly flying backwards towards the cave’s rocky walls. She hit the wall hard, but her armour and her martial arts protected her from most of the harm. She slid to the cavern’s floor and steadied herself, her gaze intently on him.

She was angry now, and her irises glowed with the power the Darkside was giving her through her anger. She tilted her head and her neck popped. She shrugged her shoulders and they cracked. ***“The winds are getting stronger and the sky is falling through. You ain't got much longer, 'til the rage rips off the roof. I'm a tornado and I'm coming after you and your masters,” [[4]](#footnote-4)*** her voice thundered as she unleashed her furry.

Dark energy burst from her hands, and arched through the cavern, catching the man in her electric web of energy. Lightning crackled and hissed, electric blue hues mixing with the red of her blade casting purple shadows as the man wreathed in pain at her feet. Her blade descended on him mercilessly one final time, his screams echoing through the sub-terrain suddenly silenced in mid-scream.

*‘So much for Caina’s Survivors,’* she thought grimly as she searched the Force user’s body for clues. Her hand found a code cylinder which she pocketed before finally leaping out of the cavern. She left the body for the rats of Caina’s undercity.

1. “[Tornado](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaEmQJG2HHU&feature=youtu.be&t=51s)” - Lyrics by Little Big Town [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid, slightly changed for effect. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)