



SUBMITTED IN ENTRY TO SURVIVORS COMPETITION: THE
PHILOSOPHER

In Role

Author:

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Clan Scholae Palatinae

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1 The Perfect Candidate

FROM: EMPEROR Xen'Mordin
TO: Dr. Elinacia Rei
SUBJECT: Terrorist Threat (URGENT)

Dr. Rei,

This calls for someone of your expertise. We're anticipating a terrorist attack on the University of Teyr. Stop this attack by any means necessary. Operatives from ISI 04 will shadow your movements. Signal with the code word 'philosopher'.

For the Empire,

Xen'Mordin Vismorsus

Elinacia immediately knew exactly why she had been picked for this task ahead of the Dark Jedi of the clan. It was common for the scientific community to be irritatingly wary of imperial involvement, preferring to be left alone to conduct their own research. They were more compliant when dealing with a familiar. Having rose to prominence in recent as one of the most prolific scientific researchers in the Cocytus System, Elinacia had numerous contacts at the University of Teyr, and was familiar with its layout, simple but practical, faded stone bricks quaint but tidy, reminiscent of ages past. She had always had a soft spot for the place, frequently visiting on short retreats from the oppressive atmosphere of the Dark Jedi dominated capital. Teyr was comparatively more relaxing.

Instinctively the twi'lek assassin exchanged a short glance with her reflection. Her bright blue eyes were hidden behind murky green lenses. The togruta who stared back wore a long white labcoat, stained and frayed, the very model of a university scientist. The disguise was so instinctive to her now she barely even noticed the transition. Elinacia Rei was her new reality, the past life of Impetus M'Nar was a mere distant memory.

Her first step was to go straight to the source, to travel to the University of Teyr and investigate. The short journey gave her just enough time to make her arrival known. Her support operatives did their best to stay out of sight as they followed, unknowing that their scientist was the founder of their unit, knew every trick in the book was acutely aware of their presence.

"Professor Zavala?" Elinacia called the first person to mind, the casually spoken human professor, long-standing head of mathematics, had links across the entire university community. "I'm on Imperial business, clear some office space, ETA 20 minutes."

“Only for you Eli,” his laconic tone, slightly slurred, sounded permanently intoxicated.

“You know everyone here,” Elinia continued. “In your opinion, what’s the most valuable department at Teyr?” she asked, trying to narrow down a potential target from someone she knew would have no understanding of terrorism.

“Weird question El...” he slurred. “I wish I had a fraction of the credits the business school get,” he said with a sense of bitterness about his tone. Credits seemed an odd motive to Elinia, she was hoping to glean information on valuable equipment.

2 The University of Teyr

Teyr was in the height of term time, the university buzzing with students in every corridor, the narrow passageways through the building amplifying the claustrophobic atmosphere. Elinia pretended not to notice her team, dressed in typical student attire, blend in with the crowd as she made her way towards Zavala’s office.

As much as the academics distrusted the empire, they would not dare outright refuse such a clear imperial order. Elinia’s workstation was set up and clearly marked, the terminal already logged in with full access to the university’s systems. She got straight to work on scanning the business school database for any anomaly. Meanwhile, her support team staked out in a nearby café, indistinguishable to the untrained eye.

Zavala was right on one thing: the wealth of the business school was immense, dealing in billions of credits annually, funded by the biggest and most powerful corporations in the system. Elinia recognised many of them, links to the Cocytus’ natural resource exports industry, major players in food imports, but nothing jumped out at her as targets that would hurt the empire. Whoever these terrorists were, the political climate of the system made it clear to her they were out to damage the empire, the university itself was clearly not the primary target.

Elinia made calls to various academics, heads of security teams, anyone she could think of, but despite the willingness of the university staff to help, likely due to her academic reputation, she made no leads. Just as she cut what felt like the thousandth comm call, the door opened.

“Professor, you coming to the conference?” said a middle-aged rodian that stood in the archway alongside a young, casually dressed student. Elinicia recognised as the rodian as a fellow researcher but didn’t know his name. The confused sideways glances he kept giving his student suggested to her that he may have been one of her support operatives.

Elinicia’s eyes lit up. “Conference?”

“I’ve got better things to do than socialise with a load of engineers. Especially not those Imperial morons,” the professor responded dismissively.

“Tell me more,” Elinicia said to the researcher.

“Have you booked your attendance?” came the sceptical response.

“I don’t need to book my attendance,” Elinicia said calmly.

“You don’t need to book your attendance,” he confirmed. Elinicia suppressed a smile. That never got old. “The first Global Judecca Engineering Workshop... It’s a collaborative event between our engineering department and the RevengeX shipyards. Mostly corporate, their whole board will be there.”

Elinicia’s mind had been made up. As well as a cornerstone of the empire’s economy, the RevengeX shipyards were a key supplier and valuable port for the fighter corps of Scholae Palatinae. A conference involving the board of directors would be an ideal target.

3 The Conference

Elinicia arrived in time for the opening reception, having easily talked her way in. She took a seat towards the back of a large lecture theatre, as with everything else in Teyr, simple but practical, if a little cramped. While talks tediously dragged on thinking this person and that funder, Elinicia’s eyes drifted across the audience from her strategically chosen spot.

Her trained eyes scanned the room, looking for anything out of place, anyone that seemed preoccupied, unfocused. Unfortunately, in a talk like this, that usually happened to be half the room. She recognised some of her support operatives, they had positioned themselves around her, blending in with the crowd.

Following the introduction, conference delegates were ushered through to a welcoming

meal. Her solid practical shoes clipped against the hard stone floor of the dining hall. Someone had paid quite a price for this, a delicate mix of aromas filled the air from the expertly prepared buffet table, besides a selection of the galaxy's finest beverages.

Everyone was in one place, mingling, socialising, exactly the environment Elinicia was hoping for. Taking a glass of liquor, Elinicia kept to herself, observing, sensing for something out of place. Her operatives had expertly blended in by socialising with each other. Others looked distinctly out of place.

She downed the remainder of her liquor, feigning drunkenness, stumbled across to an awkward looking academic, deliberately bumping into him, taking the close contact to feel deeper into the elderly man's mind. He was thoroughly confused and intimidated by the social atmosphere, but a genuine academic. Not the one.

Through the corner of her eye she spotted a young human, eyes covered by dark glasses, face hidden underneath a shadow of greasy black hair, awkwardly trying to get out of a conversation with an overzealous professor preaching his wonderful ideas to anyone that was near. She moved closer, observing. There was something out of place about him. His voice carried uneducated tones. She had spend enough time with the Cocytus academic community to recognise.

Elinicia rescued him from the conversation, extending a hand of friendship, "Dr. Elinicia Rei," she said welcomingly, extending a hand of friendship.

"Jervon... Jervon Lorenz," he responded tentatively. "I came here to talk with the galaxy's greatest minds, but all they're interested in is their science," Elinicia detected a lie. An attempt to throw the conversation off subject to mask his lack of knowledge.

"So what are you here for?" she feigned interest, keeping him in place long enough to explore his character, search his being through the Force.

"Making the world better," Elinicia detected honesty in Jervon's response response. "The Empire... there must be a way out. These guys are meant-ta be geniuses by they can't see the big picture. We have no freedom and they do nothing." Elinicia detected a detonator hidden in the guy's jacket, her senses heightened by premonitions of danger.

"Well..." said Elinicia slowly. "I'm not much of a philosopher."

A stun baton was immediately plunged into his back. Jervon slumped to the floor. Elinia immediately backed back into the crowd. There were many gasps, then the room fell silent. “Imperial Intelligence,” said a terse voice that cut through the silence as the operative removed the detonator from the prone Jervon. “Go back to your thing.”

Not daring to deliberately defy Imperial orders, the scientists did their best to pretend nothing had happened. Elinia blended back in with the crowd to enjoy the rest of the day at ease.