



SUBMITTED IN ENTRY TO DB COMPETITION: ROAD TO
DAMASCUS

Devil's Masquerade

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Clan Scholae Palatinae

NOTE: This story directly refers to events in the author's submissions to *Looking Home Campaign - Ptolomea - Out with the Old* and *Assassin Fun*, in which Elinia staged a botched investigation of her own alter-ego. Illustration *is* the work of the author, but was produced in 2011 for alternative purposes, and modified to suit the current work.

August 17, 2015

1 Prologue - Internal Warfare

She was still out here somewhere. She hadn't moved far, Rhiaen just knew it. A black taint enveloped the atmosphere. The planet itself was thick with a dark side fog that obscured the senses. The flora, once lively, bright, vibrant, felt colourless and grey. In the past Felucia had been dangerous but beautiful, alluring in a mysterious, threatening way. The planet had submitted to the darkness; evil filled the air. A long-forgotten Sith apprentice, a survivor of the Galactic Civil War, was lurking out here somewhere. Rhiaen would find her.

The darkness within Rhiaen's mind frightened her as much as the oppressive Felucian aura. A war raged internally as she battled to keep her mind, slowly feeling herself slipping into the darkness, she clung desperately onto her morality, feeling herself slipping like a climber with a greased hand.

Even the rational side of her mind was in conflict. There had been times she had embraced the darkness, felt a touch of the power of the dark side. *I am hunting the darkness* she would carve into the dirt with her bare hands as a reminder, staining the once pristine blue skin a dull shade of murky brown, while her soul showed flashes of darkness. She felt powers course through her body, emotions she never thought she had, her hatred for the darkness for everything that had happened to her. She even hated herself for feeling herself slip. However, during her inner turmoil, something remarkable had happened, something beyond even her wildest dreams.

“Nalia . . .”

“Yes, my sister?”

Her beloved sister had returned to her, in the flesh and blood, as clear as day in front of her, Nalia. Rhiaen didn't understand, was her death an illusion? Was this an illusion? It couldn't be, she could touch her. And yet, since appearing earlier that day, Nalia had acted as if nothing had happened, as if there had been no separation.

Attempting to take some downtime after a recent battle, Rhiaen tried to push the questions to the back of her mind, enjoying the time with her sister, as she attempted to teach to her a new dance she learned from the native Felucians.

2 The Sith and the Scientist

“Rhiaen is a fugitive on the run from the Dark Brotherhood.” Sith Warrior Mina Kordae nodded in acknowledgement of her Emperor’s brief. Long, dark hair covered the left eye of the assassin’s sharp, angular face, features largely covered by a thick black hood with the exception of her eerie, tainted orange eyes. To her left, an unremarkable figure had been called into her briefing. A togruta, still dressed in a long white lab coat, simple pattern of red and white skin, neither beautiful nor ugly, no distinguishing features besides her attentive eyes that looked as if they were unravelling the mysteries of the universe at every given moment. There were many places Mina felt that such creatures belonged, maybe a laboratory, or a graveyard, anywhere except on her mission. Mina shot Dr. Rei a sideways glance, threatening, intimidating.

“Rhiaen is a blue skinned Twi’lek, the latest intelligence suggested activity on Felucia. The Dark Council has entrusted the Empire with finding her and bringing her back to brotherhood space, unharmed, for the Council,” the Emperor continued. “This mission will be a significant step towards your promotion to Sith Battlemaster, Kordae. Dr. Elincia Rei will accompany you in the field. She brings a prov-

“I don’t need a scientist to slow me down,” Mina spat with venom.

“That’s an order,” Emperor Xen’Mordin demanded in an authoritative tone with the power to command a wild rancor into submission. “She assassinated Lou Khebe on Ptolomea and has tracked down Dark Jedi more powerful than you.” Elincia, The Lost Daughter of Palpatine, smiled on the inside, being the only person in the room that fully understood what the Emperor had actually just implied.

“Fine,” the Sith conceded this discussion wasn’t worth her life. “But don’t expect her to come back in one piece,” she added darkly. Elincia wasn’t best pleased by the arrangement either, her missions until now had taken place in urban environments, and this felt outside of her skill set, especially working with this assassin, but she knew better than to question a direct order from Xen’Mordin.

“You need to learn the importance of preserving Imperial Assets if you have any hope of leading in this clan while I rule,” the Emperor responded flatly. “You will leave immediately. A civilian shuttle has already been prepared for departure.”

“Immediately?” Elincia questioned with surprise before she could think. “There’s no time to study her first?” Mina’s eyes rolled at the word ‘study’. She immediately recognised her concerns were shared.

“The Dark Council were very clear on this one Doctor,” responded Xen with a sympathetic tone likely in the knowledge that Elincia performed better with time to prepare. “She is to be located ASAP. You will find dossiers on Felucia and Rhaien and valuable equipment aboard the transport. Dismissed.”

Elincia and Mina passed Pete from Sales on the uncomfortable silent walk to their ship. The ship was small, basic, with no visible weapons or defence systems, a craft designed for family transport, clearly chosen for the inconspicuous approach. Inside was simple but comfortable, containing little more than a couple of bedrooms, a small lounge and the cockpit. The only major modification was a small force cage, clearly installed for the transport of Rhaien Ust’essi. Elincia overheard Mina muttering under her breath about the lack of combat abilities of the ship as they boarded. She was a true Sith, she noticed, the stereotypical Sith, bloodthirsty and violent, cold and uncompromising, a personality not often seen in today’s Brotherhood.

“Take us to Felucia!” Mina barked at her support scientist, gesturing to the navigation computer. Elincia nodded respectfully, checked the datapad and input the coordinates for the landing zone. Following the ship’s silent take-off, the scientist took a seat in the lounge, besides a small crate containing binoculars and camouflage gear, perusing the information available to her. She began to read about an old Jedi padawan who fell to the Dark Side, but a familiar snap-hiss soon attracted her attention.

Pretending to read while peering behind the datapad out of the corner of her eye, Elincia watched Mina’s lightsaber form practice. The black cloak of the Sith was illuminated by crimson blade as she slashed viciously at the air. Shien, Elincia recognised the characteristic form immediately. A good choice, she noted, a perfect fit to her personality.

Elincia’s right hand very lightly caressed her own chest, running her fingers softly over the hilt of the lightsaber hidden in the inside pocket of her thick labcoat. As the Sith savagely swiped her weapon across the room with unbridled ferocity, the scientist observed all the different angles a master of Sokan could have used to cut her apart. She moved her hand away from her weapon, as tempted as she was to point out the wide open gaps in the Warrior’s form. Rhaien was a known practitioner of Soresu, she noticed.

Mina's rage would be a powerful tool to bludgeon through the maddeningly impassable defence of Soresu. Soresu users always caused her problems in her old life, they made fewer mistakes, were nearly impossible to effectively catch out on the counter. Elinicia didn't like her new partner, but she knew Mina would be a useful ally on this mission, but she couldn't help but feel concerned that her style might not be so well suited to bringing Rhaaien home unharmed.

"What are you looking at?" Mina snapped upon realising Elinicia was merely pretending to read. "Do something useful! Can you do ANYTHING in a fight?" she added scathingly.

Elinicia felt this a good opportunity to actually try to calm the Sith down. "Explosives and medicine," she said quickly, feigning slight fear, not enough to show weakness, but enough to not show defiance to the woman in charge. "I can make poison, grenades and heal your wounds."

"The Force heals my injuries better than your pathetic science," Mina responded harshly, while Elinicia's mind silently doubted that the healing arts were this particular Sith's speciality. "And explosions won't help us find a Jedi!"

The last point was difficult to argue with. "I know how to hide," she admitted. "I can move silently and keep undercover."

"As long as you keep out of MY sight," Mina said menacingly, "That might save your life today."

Their conversation was cut short when the ship finally made its descent into the jungles of Felucia. Pretending to be embarrassed about changing in front of Mina, Elinicia sneaked off to a private room to change into her camouflage gear; a long brown coat decorated with the leaves of Felucian flora, standard issue for the clan snipers. It was certainly more appropriate than her off-white labcoat, and in private, she was able to hide her lightsaber on the inside.

3 Alpha Predator

Elinicia and Mina departed their ship into a small clearing surrounded by thick Felucian flora. Thick black shadows obscured the undergrowth. The ground was soft underfoot.

The cacophony of background jungle noise inspired Elinicia's imagination to guess just how many different species of plant and animal must be living here. "Move," Mina demanded abruptly, sharply bringing the scientist back to the real world.

She took a low stance, making the most of her camouflage to blend in with the undergrowth as Mina led the way into the jungle with death in her eyes. "Just stay out of my way," the Sith commanded as she aggressively thrashed her way through the dense undergrowth.

"Do you even know where you're going?" Elinicia questioned above the tumult of Mina's rash movements through the dense shrubland.

"The Jedi will sense our presence here. She will come to us!" Escaping the densest part of the jungle into a slightly more spacious region, they found a small stream running across their path. A giant blue beetle four metres in length sipped at fresh water from the flowing stream. A decorative tree with a spiralling trunk turquoise in colour that touched the sky. As if somehow angered by the tree Mina vented her aggression, slicing the base clean in half with a savage swing from her lightsaber.

The tree crashed to the ground with a deafening thud that reverberated through the jungle. "If she's here, she'll hear us and investigate," Mina explained one of the dumbest plans that Elinicia had heard in a while and reminded her of why she took the position of a scientist in the first place, to avoid working with idiots like this.

"I'm not sure that's the be—"

Mina whirled around, eyes bloodthirsty, the signature whirr of the lightsaber sparked into life as the blade stopped inches from the scientist's throat. Mina stared murderously into Elinicia's eyes. "If I wanted your opinion, I would ask for it."

Elinicia took a nervous step back from the blood-red blade. She knew that Mina would think nothing of killing her in cold blood.

A sickening screech broke the standoff. Birds scattered, animals fled. The pair turned their heads to the source. Almost four metres high, green-brown skin, propped up on 6 long legs ending in thick, powerful claws bigger than a human body, the acklay charged through the stream with a deafening combination of its horrible screech and the rushing

water. The acklay reminded Elinicia of the lylek of her homeworld.

Mina charged with a terrifying battle cry, leaping through the air towards the predator with her lightsaber raised high above her head. She underestimated the speed of the beast as it raised a giant claw to swat her out the end, sending the Sith falling into the stream. Mina landed with a double roll, grunting painfully, becoming completely soaked before leaping back to her feet, visibly bleeding from her right thigh.

The acklay turned towards her, moving in for the kill on the soaked Sith. Elinicia pulled a thermal detonator from her belt, took a step forward for power and threw it towards the beast as it closed in. The explosive bounced off the beast's thick, armoured hide before detonating in a brilliant burst of red light, waves of heat radiated from the blast zone, water ripples spread upstream, the acklay was burned on the side of its body.

With its attention distracted for but a brief moment, Mina sliced the front-right leg from the acklay as it screamed in pain. Seeking to gain momentum in the fight, Mina slashed her lightsaber at the nearest leg, but the uneven floor beneath the chaotically flowing stream threw her off balance and she was knocked to the floor by a powerful strike to her face.

Once again Mina was sent splashing into the stream. She felt groggy, she tried to remain conscious. The beast closed in. Her head felt like the morning after a wild night out. Her lightsaber had flown out of reach. From her grounded position, Mina threw her hand forward, sending a blast of lightning, but the hide was too thick. The acklay was unfazed. She looked up at the terrible claw above her. The claw powered down towards the ground with planet-shaking force. Mina closed her eyes.

There was a moment of confusion. The acklay was confused. Mina didn't know if she was dead or not. Mere inches from the warrior's eyes, the claw hit an invisible barrier. Elinicia threw her camo suit to the ground, revealing a light, short robe as she sparked her lightsaber into action with a vibrant purple snap-hiss. Striking at the back of the beast, she severed the rear-left leg to another primal cry of pain.

"Leave!" Elinicia roared at the acklay, connecting with the beast on a supernatural level. An old fashioned Palatinaean from the days of animalism, the acklay responded to her request, and departed on its four remaining legs.

In the affray, Elinicia's disguise had dropped. The pink and white skin had reverted to yellow, the patterning on her lekku had disappeared. "What in the Sidious' name..." Mina groaned from her prone position. She was bleeding heavily from her nose, and blood was pouring from her thigh, dyeing the stream a shade of crimson. "Who *are* you?."

Elinicia pointed her violet saber at the Sith's throat in a mirror image of their earlier encounter. "I am The Lost Daughter of Palpatine, The Mother of our Special Forces, The Hero of Caliburnus. I am Krath Epis Impetus M'Nar... and you... you are mine."

"Impetus? But you died on Ryloth. You're supposed to be dead!"

"I got better," she said matter-of-factly. "Now get up and take this." Impetus deactivated her lightsaber and pulled Mina to her feet, giving to her a tube of bacta gel. "This will close the wounds and stop infection."

There was an immediate change in the dynamics of their relationship as Mina accepted the gel, following the Krath's advice. Mina still hated her partner, perhaps even more so now after learning of her deception, but she had a begrudging respect for the twi'lek. She was a clan icon and a legendary assassin.

"We move slower, quieter," Impetus said as they paddled out of the stream, with Mina still soaking wet. "This mission is difficult enough without having to fight the planet itself." Mina nodded and accepted she had a point, an unthinkable idea a mere ten minutes ago.

4 Theatre of the Forest

Quietly and slowly, they moved through the undergrowth. The forest on the other side of the stream was more spacious, the air less oppressive, sunlight poured in through gaps in the canopy. For what felt like hours they scoured the jungle on the hunt for clues to Rhiaen's location, allowing the Force to guide their search.

Following a brief period in which Mina struggled to get her head around what had just happened, the mission continued with Impetus and Mina working as equals for the first time since the mission began. While her combat skills were a shadow of what they once were, her skill with illusions and mind tricks had never been stronger, and this was one of the first opportunities she had had in a long time to put those skills to the test.



Impetus and Mina explore the Felucian jungle

Wordlessly, Mina gestured to the floor. Impetus trusted her judgement and dropped to the dirt, concealing herself in the undergrowth along with Mina. “Do you feel that?” she whispered to the twi’lek.

“I sense something...” Impetus replied, concentrating on feeling the Force flow through her body from the environment, scanning the jungle with her inner eye. It was faint, and distant, discordant, like a sound on the edge of hearing. “Neither light nor darkness.”

“Light *and* darkness,” Mina responded curtly, growing in confidence once more. Silently they crept through the undergrowth to the source of the disturbances in the Force. Mina was right, although it took Impetus longer to sense the two separate entities. The source of the light battled the source of the darkness. As they encroached closer, other senses began to pick up signs of battle. The sounds of lightsabers clashing, the cacophony of battle. Impetus and Mina took cover in a vantage point amongst thick shrubland.

On the crest of a small hill in the middle of a large clearing, two warriors were locked in combat. The twi’lek was beautiful, exotic teal skin bathed in the glow of a sapphire lightsaber, complemented by her flowing, light robes, she was as deadly as she was gorgeous. Her opponent, much less so.

Mostly hidden under a black cloak, a zabrak, she showed significant signs of age and

corruption, tainted yellow eyes, skin as white as chalk from decades spent basking in the corrupting influence of Felucia. She wielded weapons Impetus had never seen before; short twin lightsaber blades, blood red, that extended backwards down her arm. She had heard stories of the guard shoto, but never seen one in person before.

“I think we should sit this one out and observe,” Impetus whispered to Mina. Despite the Sith’s growing lust for battle, she appreciated the wisdom of observing her potential opponent, especially if they were going to battle this unknown Dark Jedi and her exotic weaponry.

She defended masterfully against flowing, powerful strikes from Rhiaen. The twi’lek struck against the mysterious dark warrior with ferocity, drawing on her hatred of the Dark Side, while simultaneously giving into it’s alluring power to fuel her rage.

“That’s not Soresu,” Mina observed in an accusing tone.

“She’s going mad here,” Impetus said softly. “We can’t rely on the dossier any more.”

“I want to fight her now,” Mina said impatiently out of frustration at having gone more than half a day without killing anyone yet.

The guard shotos deflected blow after blow, redirecting the blur of the blue blade with glancing impacts, sending sparks flying across the clearing. Her motions resembled a martial artist more than they did a lightsaber duellist as the twi’lek’s strikes deflected harmlessly away from her forearm. Every successful parry seemed to anger her opponent more.

She knew exactly where she was retreating, constantly changing the angle to ensure she always had room to step back. She delighted in taunting the Jedi, forcing her into a style she was not trained with. “Give in to the Dark Side,” she teased while maintaining an impeccable defence. “Let it consume you.” She defended another flurry of attacks. “Feel its power!”

With the word power she unleashed a vicious Force push at the twi’lek with the power of a thousand bombs, sending her flying across the clearing. Before even hitting the floor, Rhiaen collided neck first with a solid tree, and fell to the floor, unconscious. The mysterious assailant cackled and faded into the darkness.

5 Eye of the Storm

Her head felt like it weighed a thousand tonnes. Pulsing pains shot through her entire body. She felt groggy, confused, suffering from amnesia. Slowly, she began to open her eyes. Everything was blurry, like a fresh painting washed out in light rain, but she saw something, something amazing. A familiar face stared down at her, a teal tone, round features, identical to her own, like she was staring into a mirror. The only person in the universe she could recognise in her current state. “N - Nalia?!” Her voice was slurred in her semi-conscious state. “Am I dead?”

“No, but you tried your hardest my sweet sister,” Nalia replied serenely, staring back at her sister with warm, friendly eyes.

“But you... I saw...” Rhiaen was totally confused, the memories of Nalia’s beheading were seared into her mind.

“You saw only what Darth Necren wanted you to see,” said Nalia with a soft voice as sweet as sugar. “She was trying to lead you into the darkness.”

“I hate them,” Rhiaen choked back tears. “I’ll kill them, and everyone like them.”

Nalia held Rhiaen closely in her arms. “I sense darkness in you. You mustn’t let it consume you, you’ll become like them.”

“How did you find me??” Rhiaen moaned, her head still in searing pain.

“Our bond exists beyond time and space, sister. Wherever we are, we will always find each other. I’m sorry I couldn’t get there in time.” In her current state, Nalia’s words were comforting. She was tired, in extreme pain, and emotionally sensitive, but her sister’s survival helped her to feel that there was still some good left in the galaxy. She started to feel better as Nalia’s healing powers began to take an effect. Holding Rhiaen by the hand, she helped her back to her feet. The pain began to fade and she felt able to stand unaided, but even as her body started to behave with a semblance of normality, the emotional trauma was hindering the clarity of her thought.

“You feel tense, sweetie,” Nalia said serenely. “Do you still dance? It will help you relax.” She knew that if there was anything remaining of the old Rhiaen, it would be her love of dance.

Rhiaen smiled. She never dreamed a day like this would come again. “There was a dance I learned from a native Felucian tribe. Let me show you.”

Shakily at first, still slightly disorientated, Rhiaen began to demonstrate a tribal dance she had learned while camping with indigenous Felucians while searching for the enigmatic Dark Jedi. It was a moment of calm, feelings of happiness that Rhiaen had given up all hope of experiencing again.

The sisters danced in the clearing, relaxing, as Rhiaen felt the darkness in her heart evaporating, she felt at peace. She was grateful that Nalia still had the strength of heart to resist the corrupting influence of Felucia.

Of the corner of her eye, Rhiaen noticed a shadow moving in the darkness between the trees.

“Did you see that?” she whispered to Nalia.

“I did,” she responded softly but her voice quivered with a hint of fear. “Stay here, my sister, stay here and rest, you’re not strong enough to fight.” Rhiaen was concerned, she wanted to argue, she wanted to help her sister, but she knew Nalia was right. She would only be a liability in a fight against a Dark Jedi. “Eat these, they have healing properties,” Nalia said, throwing some small violet berries to Rhiaen.

She waited in the clearing, listening, sensing as she nursed her wounds and ate Nalia’s berries. She heard voices, then she heard shouting, but the disturbance had awoken the Felucian wildlife, prey species warned their packs as they scurried, the sounds of the forest amplified into a tumultuous crescendo that obscured the exchange. She could only hear individual words, she thought she heard *traitor* and *mission*.

The following sounds were unmistakable. Lightsabers activating. Lightsabers clashing. Battle cries. A scream of pain. She couldn’t sit and listen any more. Holding her lightsaber nervously in a tight grip, keeping to a low stance, she crept silently towards the duel.

Nalia had been victorious. Her human opponent was on her knees, one hand missing. Rhiaen recognised immediately this was a different Dark Jedi to the one she fought. Nalia

she held two lightsabers, one purple, one red, crossed in front of the defeated Sith's neck. Something seemed odd about her sister. Neither of the lightsabers were hers, and her skin seemed an odd off-tone, patches were a strange murky brown colour, like someone had dropped splashes of yellow paint into a blue palette. And worse, her sister looked like she was about to kill this unarmed captive. After her earlier lecture about not giving in to the darkness.

Just as Rhiaen was about to speak, the lightsabers crossed through the neck of the human. The head of the assassin rolled to the floor, lifeless, with a now permanent expression of fear and fury.

6 The Master of Disguise

Nalia turned to face her sister, both lightsabers in hand. The fight had changed her, she looked significantly different after the chaos of battle. Her face was more angular, her skin more of a yellow tone, her eyes sharper. Her cloudy mind had missed obvious signs. How did she not notice it earlier? The truth struck her like a lightning bolt on a clear day.

“You . . . you're not Nalia . . . YOU'RE NOT MY SISTER!”

Impetus dropped her disguise. The blue skin turned yellow, her face turned unfamiliar, her body shape looked different. Rhiaen's sapphire lightsaber sparked into action with the fury of its owner. Rhiaen felt rage like she had never felt in her life. More than she hated Necren.

“I'm going to kill you!” she roared at the twi'lek in front of her, charging with her lightsaber held high. Impetus dropped Mina's lightsaber to the ground, uncomfortable fighting with two. Allowing the force to propel her, she jumped out of the way of an attack from Rhiaen, landing on a low branch of a nearby tree.

Rhiaen seethed with rage. She gathered up all her rage, all her hatred, consciously drawing on the power of the dark side. She threw her hands forward, manifesting all the darkness in her heart into one hate-filled attack. Sapphire blue lightning sprung forwards from her fingertips, with power she never knew she had, bathing the whole forest a shade of blue with a sound like an explosion. Impetus was taken completely by surprise and was caught square on the chest from the blast of lightning. She yelped in pain, and fell off the branch to the soft jungle floor.

Rhiaen panted for breath, immediately tired by the immense effort she had put into her attack. She walked towards the downed twi'lek. "I'm ... going to ... kill you," she gasped, her breath drawn out in rags. She fought against the tiredness and fatigue, drawing upon her anger, and upon the darkness, to give her strength. She enjoyed the power of the dark side.

From her downed position, Impetus threw a telekinetic push through the Force. It was weak, she hadn't fought this much in years, but it was enough to knock the exhausted Rhiaen off balance, and buy her a few seconds more time. The teal twi'lek stumbled backwards a few steps, then gained her balance and gripped her lightsaber with renewed resolve, but she started to feel groggy. Impetus slowly clambered back to her feet, exhausted, but able to maintain a rough combat stance. She edged back from Rhiaen, maintaining a safe distance, watching, waiting.

Her eyes began to close. Her grip loosened involuntarily, her lightsaber dropped to the ground. She tried to keep her eyes open. "What ... have you d," she couldn't finish her sentence, she collapsed to the ground, unable to move, compelled to sleep. Impetus walked over to her, arduously kicking Rhiaen's lightsaber away from reach.

"The berries were coated in a tranquiliser. I wanted to capture you without a fight, but my colleague was too impatient. You will wake up with no memory of this." Rhiaen drifted off into a deep sleep.

7 Epilogue - Lost to History

Aboard the ship, after a long rest, Elincia refreshed her disguise, and reflected on her performance. She was angry with herself. The whole mission had been a complete mess, although that was partly down to her idiot partner. She had suffered cuts to her limbs, and serious burn marks on her chest which she was unable to heal with her diminished skill with the Force. This would have been child's play to her five years ago, as would the mission. She knew she had been lucky, extremely lucky to leave Felucia without more serious injury.

Dropping her disguise had not been part of the plan, although Mina left her little choice by angering the acklay. Disguising herself as Nalia, she felt was a stroke of genius, and the only part of the mission she felt was a success. Mina's intervention of the dance

lesson was not a mistake, Mina had to die. No-one can know Elinicia's true identity and survive.

She was able to convince Mina that disguising herself as Nalia was a good idea, and Mina, respecting her skill with disguise from the double life she lead, begrudgingly accepted. But she knew that acceptance would not last. By prolonging the time with Rhiaen, she waited for Mina's impatience and lack of trust to get the better of her. She manufactured an opportunity to both gain Rhiaen's trust and kill Mina at the same time. Mina was predictable and Impetus had managed to remove her blade hand with a counter strike. With Mina dead and Rhiaen's memory lost from tranquilliser-induced amnesia, there were none alive who could break her cover.

Her duel with Rhiaen had been very poorly fought. Retreating to higher ground was a Sokan technique she had executed many times in the past, but letting her guard down was sloppy. Her fitness had become atrocious, she should not have been so tired or careless. Nonetheless, she was grateful that the mission had been a success. She hoped that the Emperor would give her some leave when she got home. She compiled a report, chronicling her acquisition of Rhiaen's trust, of Mina's death in battle, and her poisoning of the berry allowing her to capture Rhiaen. It was not an entirely untrue version of events. She would never mention the mysterious, enigmatic Dark Jedi to anyone.

The Brotherhood could not allow it be known that a scientist had prevailed where their Sith Warrior had failed. When the official report of the Rhiaen's capture was released to the Brotherhood's internal news network, there was no mention of Elinicia's name, or of Scholae Palatinae. Her exploits were attributed to a Krath of a different clan, and she was forbidden to speak of it. Less attention suited her double life anyway, and she was financially rewarded in secret.

The Emperor was the only one who would connect Elinicia with this mission and the full story would die with her. Elinicia's influence, her achievements, would never be revealed to the public, History would never know what she had accomplished.

The truly greatest acts of manipulation will forever remain unknown