

**Imperial Scholae Intelligence,
Judecca,
39 ABY**

The slim Quarren Battlemaster locked his eyes onto the glowing blue screen in dedication, as the information from the drones streamed in. The lens zoomed in on a horde of zombies sprinting through the jungle while a largely built two-headed zombie followed shortly behind. Lexic pondered about the logic involved to release their own allies and colleagues into monstrous beasts not capable of sentient thought ever again. His thoughts were cut short when the Proconsul of Scholae Palatinae walked smoothly through the automatic doors and towards the console. The Zeltron stopped next to the Quarren and stroked his cleanly shaven chin in hesitation, waiting for his Aedile to speak.

“You need to find them, and you need to end them. Before they end us.” The Proconsul’s authority spoke through his words and the Aedile spun on his heels and marched out of the dimly lit office.

As Lexic came out of the secluded office he was faced with a dark steel corridor, dark luminosity and labelled with various signs for important offices. Coming from the eastern direction a trio of armoured soldiers were speaking and laughing together while knocking their unequipped helmets together. Confident in their skills and carrying a sense of calmness, Lexic could detect they can handle themselves and approached with an offer. The female Zabrak in the middle looked up at the Quarren who faced them and they all quickly saluted in silence. Unfortunately their helmets were in the saluting hand, which caused a very nasty head bruise and some grunting in pain. The Battlemaster slowly stroked his cheek in disbelief and brought out a datapad with covert coordinates to the Judeccan jungle.

“Can either of you soldiers pilot? I need a transport right now.” Lexic shoved the datapad into the female’s chest, who was taken back by it and studied it. The soldier to her right was a muscular Human with dark skin, his accent came out tropical as he spoke.

“I can do it for you, sir. I’ve been a pilot for three years.” He said before being interrupted.

“Good, follow me.” The Aedile stormed between the soldiers and down the hallway, forcing them to jog close by. Once down the corridor and outside to the landing bay the soldier tapped his passenger on the shoulder for his attention.

“Sir you must know, I cannot go with you on this mission. Consul’s orders are to drop you off and pick you up.” The soldier managed to pant out and Lexic stopped in front of the shuttle to contemplate this. He was going into an unknown area alone, without aid, reinforcements or ranged weaponry of any type. Lexic was going to be in a comfortable environment, there were no loose assets to control or order and he was doing what he loved best; the hunt. A short smile crept across the Quarren’s face as he turned to face the female with the datapad. He could see she was disturbed by this odd look, for an aquatic being with no lips and ivory tusks it wasn’t natural.

“I wouldn’t have it any other way, soldier. Let’s warm her up and head out immediately.” Lexic lifted his hand and opened his palm, the Force latched onto the shuttle’s ramp and lowered it smoothly then entered.

Several hours later in an unknown location

As a violet light painted the sky and clouds in a calm sunset, the shuttle quickly swept into the treeline and rustled the trees and foliage with hot winds. Saplings crack and bend while the bushes peeled back and rolled away as the shuttle stopped shortly before the leaf litter. Lexiconus opened the shuttle door and jumped out, landing softly on his feet as the shuttle quickly shot off into the sky once more. The Battlemaster took a glance around with a pair of night vision visors in order to find heat signatures or traces. His eyes scanned the floor thoroughly as he detected various footprints of different animals, beings and dark creatures combined. There was however one very chilling footprint that not even the most useless in survival could miss. When the Quarren slowly walked forward his eyes stared at a large oval hole in the jungle floor, slowly filling with water and broken wood. The massive hole was not natural as it was oddly deep and fresh. It was not an explosion either, as the hole itself was not holding burnt material. Lexic jumped into the water and inspected the mud walls closely, finding small serrations on the walls, and rounded domes on the lip of the hole. Then it sunk in, his stomach jumped as his face turned pale. The Aedile quickly jumped out of the hole and inspected the path ahead, seeing more deep holes and domes on soil.

“it’s the...Abyssal.” Lexic whispered to himself, already familiar with the twenty story tall abomination. Some of his clan brothers would joke about the Quarren’s similarity to the beast, and create familial ties to it. Normally this wouldn’t bother Lexic as he would shrug it off, but right now he needed to find his ‘brother’. Lexic sprinted in the Abyssal’s direction and deeper into the jungle trees, his face filled with hatred.

Further into the dense foliage and wet leaf litter, Lexiconus forced his tired body to continue onwards. He used all the fresh water in his bottle and refilled it from the collected water inside plant leaves. The Quarren was also halfway into a bright orange fruit that was juicy with each bite, when he finally saw an opening in the forest grounds. On a bed of bright yellow leaves were a peculiar arrangement of chiselled stones, circled around a glass altar. It appeared to Lexic to have been used for a sacrifice, as a small ritual dagger sat in a bowl indent with blood and what appears to have organ parts. The Quarren stepped closer and prodded the raw organ pieces, they were dark in colour and diced precisely.

“Someone lost their liver it seems. Zeltrons would be a good candidate for this, ah Eether you’re in trouble.” The Aedile chuckled at the thought of his Proconsul on a surgery table, but left it as just that. Lexic inspected the surrounding area further for any signs of recent activity apart from the altar. It seemed the blood was fresh and the organs were too, but there was something else freshly used. A small scraping in the ground below led behind Lexic and towards a concealed alcove in a boulder. As the Quarren knelt down and ran his fingers across the ground, he saw the floor was foam and he ripped it clean off. A bright emerald glow shone directly to his cerulean eyes, causing him to shield his face and fall onto his back.

“Fwecing crystals! The Force never relents with alchemy.” Lexic grumbled to himself as he slowly stood back up and cleaned his robes down. The Quarren reached into his medical bag and took out a lightsaber for safety, it wasn’t his own personal blade but a loan from the Clan will be useful even if dispensable. Lexic stared down the glowing hole as he took in a deep breath and fell through it, sliding down the smooth rocky wall. Colliding with the wet stone with a loud bang, the Battlemaster fell onto the floor and twisted his wrist against the wall. Shrieking out in agony and cursing to himself about this foolish idea, the Aedile forced himself onto his feet and limped further inside.

The walls glittered with lime colouring as the crystals grew bigger the further he walked. They resonated a high pitched sound that felt unusual and invasive to the Quarren, while the vibrations danced across his leathery skin. Lexic felt a soft and cool wind coming from ahead, which he perceived as an opening into something larger. He came to a set of stairs that led downwards deeper into a glowing trail, expertly chiselled and dry as bone, the Aedile tightly gripped the lightsaber and descended slowly. The roof of the corridor curved higher as the walls expanded into a large domed room with human-sized shards and a table in the centre. On there sat a large goblet filled with fresh water dripping from above. On the ceiling was a crystal like no other and represented something utterly menacing. Smooth in texture and bent into curved shapes representing many tentacles, Lexic could see why Vanis might of worshipped this and the beast from the depths of Judecca. Suddenly the place lit up with a sapphire glow as a hologram of Vanis himself appeared from behind the goblet.

“This chamber was designed purely for the use of worshipping the Infinite Empire, succumbing to their whims and most importantly for the advancement of their research and military. It stands as a last resort for when the tough comes, but now they are gone and this expense has not been used. I will make sure to test this power on the undeserved of this planet. The false Empire will crumble by the power at my fingers! I am death!” The hologram raised it’s hands in the air and slowly the corridor behind Lexiconus closed and blended into the walls. The Battlemaster wasn’t phased by the theatrics and looked around the room for an exit. Then a large clunking sound echoed through the room as a gush of water plunged from the roof.

“Oh Vanis, you fool. Once I get out, i’ll find you and you will regret locking me in here.” The Quarren growled at the hologram which froze and deactivated. He swiftly ignited his cherry blade and sliced the goblet cleanly in half. This disrespect wasn’t going to be accepted, and vengeance will be served.