**The Gift of Friendship**

**New Tython**

**Arca Praxeum**

**Jedi Council Chambers**

The pale light of New Tython's twin moons shone through the halls and corridors of the Arca Praxeum, as midnight's darkness shrouded the halls. All of the Praxeum was still and quiet, only Jedi Sentinels to patrol the halls; built within ancient Harakoan ruins along the side of a mountain, the Praxeum had an archaic feel, timeless and removed from the politics and struggles of the nations below and beyond.

Silence was all that filled the corridors, for tomorrow was Life Day, and the Jedi of Odan-Urr would depart to the continent of Kamuekiko to join their Wookiee allies in the village of Gradrrbecca. Gifts would be exchanged, Life Day contests would pit Jedi against Wookiee in contests of strength, agility, and skill, and all would celebrate another year of freedom, peace, and growth on the planet.

Naturally, Gui Sol was out of bed.

Prowling between corridors and through secret passageways and air vents, the youthful man's dark skin blended into the shadows well, his dreadlocks tied back to keep from dragging in the dust or getting in his face. He often wandered the Praxeum at night, sneaking off to the library to read up on exciting battles and esoteric secrets, or sneaking down to the kitchens to pilfer a late-night snack. He wiped some dust from his cheek as he crawled from the confines of a secret nook in the stone, his hand brushing over the Kiffar tattoo on his face.

His Master, the Jedi Councillor Liam Torun, praised his natural stealth talents and encouraged him to practice often; the young man simply took these expeditions as a chance to do just that. The trick, he'd learned from Liam, was to wander the night with a clear mind, calm poise, and no hostility. The Sentinels were always watchful for enemies - but calm, peaceful friends barely even stirred their watchful senses.

Liam was the reason Gui was out of bed this evening. The old man had been training him for months, refining his skills - and Gui had just learned that he had no Life Day gift. That would not do.

Quietly, Gui crept into the stone chambers that Liam lived in while at the Praxeum. Torun was often at Fort Pernicar to the south with the rest of House Hoth, or on his endless pilgrimages to the other nations of New Tython. Tonight, he would be away - and Sol would capitalize on his absence to figure out what to get the old man. His eyes roved and peered about, taking in the man's sparse quarters and feeling his heart sink.

Unlike in the old Order, the Jedi of Odan-Urr often had items and trinkets, signs of their old lives. Liam was a rare relic, a fading remnant of the time before the Purge; Gui had known he was raised in the Jedi Order on Coruscant, but seeing the man's empty chambers drove home how he was deeply, entirely, a Jedi Knight. A white travelling cloak hung on a coat peg; a simple cot sat, its tan covers scattered and unmade. A footlocker sat wedged beneath the cot, the only other thing in the room.

Sighing, Gui pulled out the locker, looking through the contents.

What he found told him little of Liam, except what he already knew. A whale bone necklace,made by a Harakoan child of the southern Iwu Tohora tribe for Liam when he'd found her father in a blizzard sat beside a number of other small trinkets and gifts. The lightsaber of Master Kemmin, Liam's old teacher, rested in the bottom of the locker; Gui took it out, activating the worn hilt and looking the green blade up and down as it split the darkness.

It's light illuminated something else; slowly, Gui reached in, retrieving a rusted piece of metal and wiring.

Gui drew the object out into the emerald light, finding what looked to be an old memory unit. Ancient wires extended from rusted, pitted durasteel, the black marks of fire and carbon scoring present beneath the dust and corrosion of ages. A faded logo appeared on the underside, one Gui didn't immediately recognize; it took him a bit to realize it belonged to the Confederacy of Independent Systems, the same separatists that Liam and his Master had faced in the Clone Wars so many decades ago.

He scratched off some dirt with his fingernail, revealing four characters. "R5-T4," He said to himself, pocketing the core. "Nice to meet you." With that, he slunk back into the night, until coming to his own quarters.

The contents of Gui's chambers could at best be called messy, if one were being generous. Inventions, modified machinery, and spare parts littered the floor and the bed; his small worktable was scattered with tools, a half-dismantled blaster pistol and the unfinished hilt of a lightsaber resting beside a glinting yellow Kyber crystal. Brushing things aside, he took a small holoprojector and a handful of tools out, setting to cleaning and dismantling the memory core.

Half an hour in, he connected it successfully, as a grainy holorecording sprang into the air.

Leaning back, Gui watched as the flickering figure of a Jedi Padawan leaned forward, his hands busy below. "R5-T4," The youth said, his face soft and scared like that of a child. "Think I'll call you Rusty. I'm Liam," The boy said, as Gui nearly fell from his chair.

For the next few hours, Gui browsed logs from a period of years, watching as a lanky, chubby-faced youth grew thicker and tougher. He saw the first wisps of facial hair that would form Liam's beard appear between recordings, watched as his hair went from the tidy Padawan style to a shaggy, unkempt mess. It ended with one final recording, dated several years after the first.

"This is Padawan Liam Torun of the Jedi Order," Liam said, hope alive in his eyes. "I am stranded on Umbara, and have been since my Clone Troopers turned on myself and my Master, Kemmin. I am requesting immediate evacuation from the Republic and the Jedi Order." With that, the message looped, as if intended for broadcast.

Gui leaned back, cutting the broadcast as he thought over what he'd just watched. The Empire would have been in control of Umbara and the rest of the Galaxy; he looked to the memory core, to the carbon scores and burn marks, and realized what sort of answer the stormtroopers would have given his Master at the time. This droid had likely been destroyed.

This droid, who had been Liam's one friend for decades.

An idea formed in Gui's head. Frantically, he sprang up from his chair, scrambling for parts and mechanisms from a dozen dismantled droids. His tools began to spark and smoke as he worked, soldering metal and attaching bolts; this would be a Life Day Liam would remember well.

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Hide drums pounded and wooden flutes shrilled pleasant tunes as Liam Torun-Urr hobbled through the village of Gradrrbecca, his wooden walking stick thudding off of wooden platforms and bridges. A smile creased the man's face, hidden behind a white beard that covered his burly chest. A wild mane of snowy hair flowed down his back and shoulders, above a face lined by seven decades of service to the Jedi Order; bushy white brows rested above brown eyes, faded gray by the cloudy cataracts of blindness. He smiled as he went, nodding to Wookiees and Jedi alike as they called out to him, his ears and the Force guiding him on his way.

Liam loved these sorts of things. The joy