

## **CORRELLIA CAPITAL CITY, SPACEPORT 3-E, 0800 HOURS, 6 WEEKS AFTER THE CLEANSING OF NEW TYTHON**

Arron Saylos stepped off the transport and stretched his arms. Correllia's crisp, cold morning air was a stark contrast to the suffocating heat on board the cramped, run-down freighter that had transported him to the core worlds.

Honestly, couldn't the Inquisitorius have afforded slightly better transport? Evant had given him some excuse about needing to keep a low profile while on Inquisitorius missions, to which Arron agreed...

...but why did low-profile have to mean horridly unpleasant? Surely his cover could have been an obscenely rich idiot on vacation? He was in the core worlds, there were thousands of those here.

Breathing in the cool air one more time, the Cathar quickly put all thoughts of his accommodations from his mind and began doing a mental run-down of his mission details.

1. Intelligence had confirmed that the Correllia Engineering Corporation contained known Jedi sympathizers willing to provide transport ships to the Jedi.
2. Jedi were going to meet with representatives of the CEC and obtain a corvette to aid the Jedi.

**OBJECTIVE:** Prevent the acquisition of said ship and eliminate the Jedi

*corollary:* Achieve object as quietly as possible.

**Secondary objective:** Identify sympathizers to be dealt with at a later date.

Opening his eyes, his mind returning to the here and now, Arron began the descent from the ramp and onto the Correllian city streets.

Civilians were already making their way from their homes and beginning their days, blissfully ignorant of the hunt that was about to begin in their city. Arron grabbed onto the arm of a civilian walking past him, and older gentleman graying at the temples.

"Excuse me sir," he began in as polite and innocent of a voice as he could manage. He imagined it conflicted with his somewhat gravelly voice. "Could you tell me which direction the CEC Headquarters building is? I know it's around here somewhere."

The man's bright blue eyes gave Arron a once over, his gaze noticeably lingering on the copper colored cybernetic that served as a replacement arm. If he thought the Cathar dangerous or suspicious he gave no indication.

"Right down this road," the old man said pointing at the street directly to their left, "And it will be on your left after about eight blocks.

"Thank you sir." Arron smiled at the old man as he continued on his way, wondering if it looked as phony as it felt.

The sound of thunder cracking in the distance drew his gaze to the horizon. He could see thunder clouds gathering in the distance, a mar on the otherwise blue sky. Arron sighed.

He really hated the rain.

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If Arron were completely honest, he did *not* hate the Jedi. Not that he particularly liked them, mind, but more of a cold indifference. He had only occasionally encountered members of Odan-Urr, and had been born decades after the original Order's fall.

He knew the Grandmaster hated them, anyone could see that. And he knew of many Dark Side wielders who despised them for whatever reason. But he simply had no reason to hold animosity for the Jedi.

These things would not stop him from completing his mission.

Arron Saylos might have been young by the Brotherhood's standards, but he had seen enough and experienced enough to know one thing: The universe is brutal. To survive you have to be even more brutal.

He would stop these Jedi from completing their goal here. It was nothing personal, just doing what he was ordered to do.

Arron knew that if he broke those orders, and somebody found out it would be him the Inquisitorius was sent for, and he wasn't about to risk his neck on the chance that he could hide it from them so he could save some strangers.

So here he sat, directly across the street from the main building for the CEC, waiting for his contact to come in or out. Flipping on his data pad one more time, Arron again took a look at the contact's face. A middle aged human, dark brown hair graying at the temples.

Apparently some Inquisitorius agent had convinced this gentleman to sell out the Jedi-along with their supporter-for a lump sum of credits. Under a cover identity of course, pretending to work for the New Republic, or Black Sun or something.

After about 3 hours of waiting (and playing some games on his Pad) Arron finally saw the greedy gentleman exiting the building.

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It took Arron twenty minutes to get the information. Idiot tried to press him for more money. Arron convinced him that was...a bad idea.

The Jedi's contact was named Crux Lomar. High level member of the CEC. He was the only member of the group who actually knew who they were dealing with. Arron would "convince" him to guide Arron

The Greedy Idiot (as Arron had mentally and quite justifiably dubbed the individual he spoke with) had also been kind enough to inform Arron of the man's place of residence (and after only one broken finger!).

The CEC apparently provided higher leveled employees with fancy housing in the best part of town. Arron stood in a suburban area with identical homes lined up and down the streets. If The Greedy Idiot had not provided him with Lomar's street address Arron probably never would have been able to track it down.

Lomar didn't have a family. Arron had made sure to inquire from the Greedy Idiot. Arron didn't involve children with stuff like this.

Which is why he felt no guilt at all in simply breaking the door down. Arron entered the home fully expecting Crux to come rushing out demanding to no who he was, or possibly for him to try and bolt out another exit.

Neither sight appeared.

Arron began to search the home for the wayward executive. First the kitchen and living room located on the first floor, and then the bedrooms on the second, and quickly came to a very frustrating conclusion.

CruX Lomar wasn't here.

Had he gone out somewhere? Unlikely, the Jedi probably would have warned Lomar that the Brotherhood would be looking for the Jedi and anyone possibly connected to them.

Had he been tipped off? The Greedy Idiot was the only person who knew Arron was here, and the fact he had sold the man out in the first place made it unlikely that he would try to warn his colleague of the imminent danger.

Arron could stand in the abandoned building all day and try to guess where his only lead had fled to, but time was short.

If Lomar had somehow been tipped off, then he was most likely going to warn the Jedi now. Arron would need to hurry if he wanted to catch his quarry before it fled the planet on a shiny new corvette, much less maintain the element of surprise.

Arron began searching. Something here would work. Closing his eyes and retreating into himself Arron expanded his senses out into the strange web of The Force, searching through the house until....he found it.

Eyes snapping open he rushed down the stairs and into the living room and grabbed the data-pad that had been sitting on a table.

He allowed his connection to The Force to once more return to the forefront of his mind, calling on his feeling the invisible threads that connected one thing to another in The Force.

Out of all the items in the house this one had the strongest remaining connection to Lomar. Arron guessed he had held it for several hours before leaving, probably doing digital paper work for the CEC.

Arron wasted no time-still clutching the data-pad in his cybernetic right hand, he bolted out the door and began following the Force-threads through the streets and toward his target.

The small part of the back of his mind that wasn't focusing on maintaining the connection noticed that the storm clouds for hours ago had moved in and settled over the city, casting the sky with a darkening gray even as the first drops began to fall.

That part of his mind that noticed it sighed. He really hated rain.

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This was it. Arron as closing in, he could feel it as the Force-Threads began continue to become stronger and clearer. The city streets were largely empty now, people having moved whatever business they might have had indoors to escape the pouring rain that had finally burst over the city.

He had tracked Crux into the outskirts of the city, the dilapidated ghettos and abandoned warehouses. One specific warehouse caught his interest, as the threads promised that *this* was where his quarry had chosen to hide. An old building, barely still standing, with dozen of crates of very sizes all ling the front.

Arron dropped the data-pad, it's purpose now serve, onto the soaking ground allowing it's screen to crack. He drew his lightsaber from it's resting place within his sleeve, carefully concealed behind the black cloth of his jacket, and began to make his way towards the entrance.

He was of course, somewhat surprised when one of the aforementioned crates flew out of it's resting place and very nearly crashed into him.

Luckily the aim was poor and veered just a few feet to his left, enough for Arron to jump out of the way and into a low crouch, the azure blade of his saber now aglow in the rain.

Arron didn't have to wait long for his attacker to make his prescience known, and Arron was once more surprised to see the same old man whom he had stopped on the street that very morning.

*So that's how they knew I was coming!*

The old man must have been concealing his presence in case the Brotherhood sent someone after him, something he hadn't thought to prepare for like an idiot apprentice. And Arron hadn't even bothered to conceal himself.

*IDIOT IDIOT IDIOT!*

What would his master have said to such a stupid mistake? If the old Jedi had any intention of trying to negotiate with the Cathar, he wasn't going to give him the chance.

Letting his rage fuel his actions, a crackling arc of electricity formed in Arron's still-living arm, and jumped forward towards the calm old man.

Wasting no time, the Jedi sprang forward and to his left, dodging the dangerous blast.

The bright yellow of his own lightsaber now ignited, he launched two more crates in Arron's direction, these ones much better aimed, but Arron also much better prepared.

Two swipes of his violet blade destroyed both projectiles mid-flight, and a third sent his blade spinning through the air, a deadly violet disk with the Jedi's throat as its primary target.

The expected sound of saber cutting flesh never came however. Arron telekinetically called his blade back to his hand, the Jedi nowhere to be found. He escaped while Arron's attention had been on the crates.

But Arron wasn't out of the game yet.

Extending his senses outwards, Arron tried to locate his target but found nothing. The Jedi was concealing himself again. He could sense something else...smaller, but noticeable, not inside the warehouse, but close by. Crux Lomar possibly?

Whoever, it had to be a better lead than standing in the rain all day. Arron made his way through the winding streets, his mind locked on the smaller life.

Moving purposefully down the rain drenched streets Arron caught up to the moving target quickly.

Two figures moving down the soaking wet streets. Now that Arron was close enough to see them, Arron could distinguish between the two in The Force.

One he could tell was Crux Lomar, and the other was shorter, but it's connection to the force allowed it to overshadow Lomar's presence.

The Jedi's padawan? Had to be it.

"Get away from them!" came a shout from directly behind him. Arron turned to see the Jedi bright yellow blade in hand.

"Master!" came the high pitched voice of the padawan.

"I told you, take Crux and go! Now!" barked the older man.

"But-" the young one began to protest, but his elder silenced him with one glaring look. And the child did as he was told, Lomar following closely.

Arron let them go, turning to face the Jedi.

The two simply looked at each other, and the duel began again.

Violet met yellow.

Arron slashed, the Jedi parried.

The Jedi tried to stab at Arron's stomach but Arron reposted.

Arron was no longer aware of the passage of time, his mind lost in his rage. But he was still aware that one mistake from either combatant would end the battle.

In the end it was the Jedi's. One slash over-extended, and Arron knew to take an opportunity.

He side-stepped while the Jedi was off balance, and kicked the old knight's legs. When the Jedi stumbled, Arron cut down on the hand that held the lightsaber, severing it at the elbow.

The old man cried out in pain, but only for a moment. Clutching his stump, he was on his knees in the rain, and looked to Arron's snarling face.

Arron looked back, and the look the old man wore was not one of fear, or even pain. Though breathing heavily Arron recognized the calm acceptance in his eyes.

Arron was starting to get why the Brotherhood hated the Jedi so much. He raised his blade and prepared for the final, hate fueled strike.

"NO!" Arron heard a young voice cry out, and both victim and killer looked to see the young padawan, his green blade at his side rushing towards them.

The old man looked back to Arron, his ace now holding one of pleading.

Arron knew what the old man wanted, without it even being said.

He knew he shouldn't.

If anyone found out, Arron was as good as dead.

He was supposed to kill them both, and Crux, and get off planet before anybody knew what happened.

*Oh Force, I hate my life.*

Arron deactivated his saber, turned around, and began walking down the soaking wet street.

He didn't turn around even once. He wasn't even tempted. He didn't want to see the infuriating old Jedi smile, or the boy's look of confused relief.

He was going to have a lot of headaches for the next few days.

The rain continued to fall.

He really hated the rain.



P.S. if this story is awful, don't spare my feelings.