

**Somewhere on Shili,
Ehosiq System,
34 ABY**

With the scorching sun rippling orange waves across the savannah, midday approached the area. The dry and dusty heat whipped and snared around the plants, who shrivelled in fear and became brittle. Cross-legged and calmly breathing, Lexiconus Qor sat in the dirt as feelings of serenity and peace filled his mind. With just a simple leather hide wrapped around his valuables, he was left vulnerable to the environment around him. But that's just how he liked it, peaceful yet deadly.

Crackle...

Qor's gill perked back and caught the light sound, but his body retained its peaceful state. The bush in the distance rattled and snapped like rice in a container, it was coming towards him. Qor reached out and felt the presence of the man, his affinity to the Force was tainted and corrupt, giving the Quarren a cold and warm touch simultaneously. Retreating from his senses, Qor felt an intrusion into his own mind, prodding and searching the memories to the best of their ability. Then one word came out like an orchestra at their crescendo.

Sith...

The being shuffled hastily in the dirt, snagging on a rustling bush and sprinting a distance away, leaving the sense of fear and determination in his absence. The clumsy footwork of the being made the Battlemaster chuckle.

"Where are you going? There's nothing *that way*," He shouted, as a frightened flock of avians soared from the nearby tree. Leaving a sense of confusion and worry, the being returned to the Quarren, tripping and stumbling on more branches. The unorthodox footing of the being made Qor chuckle more.

"Those are called branches, you cannot destroy them with your boot. Nor will they destroy you, unless it's a Neti *Undesirable*." Lectured the Battlemaster, as he wriggled his hips to alleviate some numbing pains. With a soft sigh, the being spoke.

"Yeah? Well I know Neti, they wouldn't be just lying in this deathtrap." He spoke with a raspy voice. As Qor slowly opened his eyes, he saw the familiar face of a Human. With stubble caressing his chin and neck, a dark 'tail on the base of his head and a pale complexion. It was a face he was informed of before.

"Well, it is a surprise to see a *Sorenn* out in this region of the galaxy. Especially the good-looking one." A nervous chuckle left each of their mouths almost in sync, while Turel, a wanted Jedi, rubbed his hand across the burning skin of his neck.

"Here, take a seat." Qor softly requested, while a large bottle of purified water ascended to the Jedi's face. Turel happily took it and carefully planted his rear onto the dirt, a wave of

dust leaving his immediate area. The Vanguard carefully opened the lid and gave it a soft sniff, while staring at Qor who closed his eyes into a peaceful state again.

“How do I know it’s not poisoned?” Turel inquired with suspicion, as his sharp eyes darted across the Quarren’s face. He examined for micro-expressions, signs of amusement or worry, but the Battlemaster remained as calm as the rustling tree nearby.

“You should search my mind again and find out, I have nothing to hide.” Qor quickly replied, the tension thickened as Turel’s instincts were pushing him over the edge. His speech became rustic and crackled, his lips broken and dry while his eyes were invaded and bombarded with the silt of the dirt. This was a terrible experience for the Jedi. Gambling on his instincts, the Human poured the cool and refreshing waters into his mouth, gulping heavily.

“So what are you doing out here, and without protection?” Qor queried, he had to wait several seconds as Turel devoured the contents of the bottle, then carefully positioned himself so the sun wasn’t in his eyes any longer.

“Cargo run for lightsaber supplies, I am my own protection.” The Battlemaster laughed loudly to himself. It was a good hearty laugh he hadn’t shared in a long while, but it made the message clear. Turel didn’t have the foggiest of what protection was around here.

“You may be able to shoot and slice your way around here, Jedi, but that fancy work isn’t going to keep you hydrated or fed. The Akul will have your body by nightfall. Out here, the Sith aren’t the deadliest thing alive.” Turel had finished the bottle within a minute, the empty plastic was thrown away by the Jedi who wiped his stubble from the cool water and used it on his heated neck. Reaching to his side, Qor pulled out another bottle and a dry cloth. Quickly turning the bottle and wetting the cloth, he carefully placed it on Turel’s overheated neck, sensing the immense joy from the Human immediately.

“The sun is the deadliest, before you ask. It can kill a man while he tries his best to survive.” Qor continued, as he resealed the bottle and packed it back away under the dirt. It kept the bottle cooler than Turel, which made things much easier for the two. But the Jedi was confused, surely he wasn’t the only one struggling here.

“So why aren’t you struggling out here? Is the Force this powerful for you?” Turel huskily replied.

“The Force keeps my body cool, resistant to heat, this just feels like a cool winds breeze to me. I thought the Jedi were all about control and preservation.” A statement with the hint of a question, Turel wanted to explain his beliefs but the heat was becoming unbearable. In the distance, a small cloud of dust slowly grew and developed from the silvering horizon. A vehicle started to appear from the clouds of dust and hastily approached the duo, but Qor remained calm. Turel was not feeling comfortable with this.

“Is that a speeder coming towards us? Did you call for backup?” The Jedi began to grow frustrated and snapped his slughthrower from the hilt, the tip pressed against the Quarren’s jaw. But still, Qor remained calm.

“Cargo drop for me, I too came for lightsaber parts. Cover your mouth.” The Battlemaster said with a muffled tone, as a dry cloth appeared over his mouth and gills. The Jedi watched as a speeder began to grind and turn quickly, while a wave of brown and white clashed and engulfed the two men in dust. Turel quickly yanked the wet cloth from his back and covered his nose and mouth, but his eyes stung with the silt and glass from the dirt around them. His eyes turning pink, he noticed the men lifted a large crate which dropped onto the ground, then sped into the distance once more.

“Perfect timing.” While the dust began to settle and layer the turu grass once more, Qor stood and walked to the crate, then activated the levitation device on it.

“Thank you for your company, Turel. You can keep the spare bottle under the dirt, and good luck with your parts and stay hydrated. The second deadliest is lack of water.” With a sharp nod and smirk, the Battlemaster strode off with his cargo.

“What an unusual Sith.” Turel thought. He hated the wild.