**Retrieval**

The Right Wing of Dread removed the macro binoculars from her eyes and squinted at the compound. Security was tight here and her mission was a crucial one. The acquisition of intelligence from the base was her primary task, as enemy forces had been receiving classified information somehow. It was Taranae’s job to find out how.

The warm breeze blew across the ravine from where she had been carefully watching the influx and outpouring of troops from the base. It seemed impregnable to her save one area; a lookout tower on the eastern side. Rolling onto her back, she opened her pack and placed the binoculars inside, carefully shutting the clasp on the pack as she did so. The piece of equipment was a long-time friend to her and he would hate to lose it. She slung it back over her shoulder and stood up, brushing the dust from her robes as she moved stealthily into the shadow of an outcropping nearby. It was imperative that she was not spotted before she had a chance to put her plan into action. Her hood was up on this day, hiding her bright red hair. It would easily have given away her position to any watching guards around the base or, indeed, the tower itself. The only way in seemed to involve taking out the watchtower so she could enter unnoticed. She concentrated and felt the flow of energy through her. Stepping out, she sprinted towards the outer perimeter, her image becoming a blur as the Force fuelled her dash. She stopped abruptly as she came up against the base of the tower and glanced upwards. She saw the barrel of a weapon protrude from over the top of the surrounding fencing at the top of the tower before it disappeared again. Listening carefully, she heard muffled mumbles that hinted something had been seen, but fortunately for her, the *something* was deemed un-noteworthy. Breathing a sigh of relief, she checked the security of the pack on her shoulder and gripped the first handhold she could find.

Slowly and carefully, Taranae ascended the tower, easily finding foothold after foothold. The tower was old, and there were numerous gouges and raised areas that she found easy to hold on to and she quickly reached the top. She listened and could hear the guard above her as she deliberately began to reach over the fencing above. She could see her enemy’s feet and followed them with her eyes as they paced to and fro as the lookout did his duty. As he next passed her hiding spot, she leapt and grasped, catching hold of his uniform and deftly pulling him over the side of the tower. He made no noise as he hit the ground and she thanked whoever was watching over her as she pulled herself up into the structure. Looking around, she found it to be a typical lookout tower with nothing but a box for seating. She moved to the Base side of the lookout and peered over the edge. Below, troops marched by, oblivious to her presence and exited by the front gates. Past them, an entrance to the base beckoned and she decided that it would be the best point of entry for her subterfuge attempt. The data had to be in there somewhere, and she sensed it was close. Leaping from the tower as the troops dispersed, she landed lightly on her feet and she backed up to the bottom of the tower, hiding in shadow. The area seemed to be empty now except the couple of guards on the front entrance. She sprinted across the space before her and dashed inside the door. Stopping inside to catch her breath she glanced around and saw a terminal nearby. The perfect way to obtain the data she needed. Keeping her senses on high alert, she moved in a half crouch to the terminal and fumbled in her pack. She took out a small electronic device and plugged it into the terminal which started to spin, its circular movement showing that the device was doing its work.

A lone figure stood a short distance away watching the quaestor submit to her treachery. She stepped forward and ignited a yellow bladed lightsaber. The hiss of the ignition brought caught Taranae’s attention and she spun, drawing her DL44 from its holster and firing off a salvo in one swift movement. Her opponent flicked her wrist and deflected every bolt as she steadily advanced on the sith.

“What do we have here?” she mused, more to herself than anyone else. “A saboteur, maybe? Or are you after something more important to your *leaders*?”

The last word was spoken with a vehemence that chilled Taranae to the bone. The enemy facing her seemed unhinged and a little mad. This could be a dangerous mix, so she carefully and deliberately drew her saberstaff, taking care to only ignite one blade.

“I hoped you would do that,” she quipped, “If you hadn’t done, you would be dead by now.”

As she finished her sentence, she threw her lightsaber, the weapon arcing away towards Taranae. She ducked at the last moment and the blade cut a deep line into the wall behind her. As she rose again, the blade soared back to her opponent and she deftly caught it in one hand with a flourish. “Nimble too, this should be interesting.”

“I wouldn’t do this if I were you,” replied Taranae. “There’s more to me than meets the eye.”

“Oh I’m sure there is, little one,” she smiled back; “I look forward to finding out exactly what.”

She dashed at Taranae with her lightsaber swinging wildly. This was not the attack of any sane enemy. The woman was clearly mad and the sith decided that this had to end quickly for her own sake. She rolled to the side as her enemy charged and rolled up onto her feet to take up a battle stance as the Twi’lek came to a halt, laughing maniacally, her tresses slapping her face as she spun around to face her again.

Taranae concentrated and a terminal further along the hall moved upwards carefully. She hoped this plan would work as she needed materials to work with for it to be effective. Her enemy advanced with a mad smile on her face. Gesturing, Taranae threw the terminal as hard as she could but at the last moment, the twi’lek spun on her heel and clove the object in half. It smashed into pieces as it hit the floor and she laughed again, madness seeping into the mirth.

“A good try, but futile!” she laughed.

“I think not,” the quaestor replied, as she gestured in a circular motion. The twi’lek was taken by surprise as the pieces of the machine began to whirl around her, picking up speed as the metal became deadly missiles and it was now Taranae’s turn to laugh. The small tornado picked up speed and the objects inside the whirlwind began to cut into her hapless enemy. Her opponent screamed as sliver after sliver sliced into her and she battled with her lightsaber futilely as slowly her defences wore down and she collapsed in a bloody, lifeless heap on the ground.

Taranae quickly flicked off her blade and dashed to the download terminal. Sure enough, the data she needed had already been found and she pulled out the device, placing it in her pack. After one more look around the area and a glance at her fallen foe, she quietly exited and sped across the compound, clearing the fence easily and racing to her hiding point. The data on the stick would prove invaluable to Plagueis and show exactly where the enemy was getting its information. Then they would destroy the informants, no matter what steps they had to take...