

Planet X2-8893-3

Unknown surface location, Quadrant 16

34ABY

Pounding. That was all Xolarin felt in his head. A headache on steroids ravaged his mind. And then there was that churning feeling that came from the waning adrenaline levels mixed with high blood pressure and heart rate, making him ill if he dwelled on the feeling too much. Of course these were all accompanied by several pinching pains covering his body, the result of lacerations from glass, metal, and mother nature.

“Ok, let’s get a message out.” Xolarin frantically pressed a series of buttons in the A-wing fighter he had been sent in, which was now careening down through the atmospheric shielding of Planet X2-8893-3, not quite burning up but also not doing so well. “At least if I die,” the Jedi said to himself, “someone will know.

The ship shook violently as it hit the sound barrier within the atmosphere. “Battle Team Zirael, Clan Odan-Urr, this is Acolyte Xolarin in Green Squadron Fighter A-121GHZ. I am ” The scout vessel shook again and the com link went noticeably dead – sparks flew from the apparatus and the signal went to static. “Damn it!”

That was one of the last things he remembered from the passover flight. Xolarin had been sent to scan this planet and something had broken down on the ship. And now he was here on the surface in the middle of a forest, thick with conifers and ferns and fog, the smell of his burning ship a hundred meters away or so. He had ejected before impacting, and had been lucky enough to have one of the ships that had a small emergency pack in-tact in the seat. It had a small medkit, a survival kit with about two days of rations, and a basic scanner.

Xolarin’s head was pounding less now so he was able to focus. He grabbed the medkit and took a small hypo out of it and jammed it in his thigh. It would soothe any pain from burning or lacerations, and maybe help lower his heart rate a bit. He tossed the hypo back into the medkit and rest back on his hands again.

“The Force is my ally, I shall not want but for its will.” The Jedi repeated the words he had used so many times before in training and in a few missions. It was calming for sure, and it made him focus less on his surroundings and more on the Force, at least for a short bit. And with that calm, and the soothing from the injection, he was able to rest and eventually make a small fire for the nightfall that came all too quickly.

Noises. This time his head and heart were not pounding, his ship had stopped burning, and the small camp fire was tamped out by now. And yet there were noises. Xolarin arose from his small shelter – the ejection seat he had tilted up against one of the big redwoods. He grabbed a snack bar out of the survival kit as well as the scanner.

“Nuts,” Xolarin said, tossing the broken scanner aside. That would have come in handy. But as he crunched on his bar, he heard noises again. And this time, he needed no scanner. The Force prodded his mind and he grabbed on to that poke and closed his eyes, reaching out and following the source.

Life was abundant here, more than almost anywhere he had ever been. But he was attuned enough in the Force that he could pick up more than life. He could pick up slight movements of animals, shifting waves of Force energies in sentient beings, and even whispers of the Force from other adepts nearby. He sensed no heavy use of the Force, but there were definitely some sort of sentiments about. Had they heard or seen his crash the night before? Or perhaps they had smelled the wreckage. Were they coming after him, or did they fear him? This was an uncharted planet so it was completely guesswork as to what he would find.

Xolarin managed to lift himself up on his feet, stopping his meditation and putting some energy into aiding his physical self. He needed to avoid using the medkit as much as possible. He grabbed the survival kit satchel and put it over his shoulder.

As he walked away from his wreckage and towards the group he had felt. It actually was not far and one could assume they had most definitely taken notice of his crash. But why had they stayed away?

As he neared, he could make out smoke trails and and smells of civilization. They weren't completely primitive, as there was metal and other materials used in their village or camp. But they did not appear to have any major weapons or vehicles. There were even a collection of small animals off across the encampment. It was clear this was some sort of nomadic group or, more remotely so, an exploration group from another world. Something was peculiar though.

Xolarin had not been too noisy and he was staying well out of the way. But it became clear that he was watched and noticed when a spearhead jabbed into his side, not quite piercing the skin. “Yow!” he said in a bit of a calm yelp.

“Vorch’a no gund!” said the man holding the spear. And he was a man, human mostly, and had an odd collection of furs and leathers, mixed with some synthetic materials on his boots and waist. No modern weapons were noticeable, although he wouldn't put it past them to have something as advanced.

The Jedi raised his hands and came out of his scouting spot. “I’m unarmed, and I don’t understand you.” Ok, that was a lie – his lightsaber was hidden within his cloak.

The man, surrounded by his companions, cocked his head, and then made a chortled grunt. “Ju’nasta ka effent.”

Xolarin shook his head and shrugged and before he could react further, the blunt end of the spear swung around and smacked him in the head.

“Kawaik, no’ju?”

The words were blurred, but it was the same voice from before. Xolarin moaned a bit and went to feel his head only to notice his hands were bound. It felt like his lightsaber was still with him, although his pack was definitely gone. He looked around and saw the same men from before, joined by a few others.

“You are awake, no?” The voice was clear now, and it spoke basic. Definitely added to the peculiarity of things.

“Yes, and my head is pounding again, thanks to you.” Xolarin lowered his head unintentionally, yielding to the throbbing pain that teetered his consciousness.

“But you alive. Normally we kill, ask after.” The man gave a grin, although Xolarin wouldn’t see it. There were a couple chuckles from his companions.

“So why wait,” the Jedi asked bluntly. He figured he was about to be toast anyways.

The man laughed low and slow, like a Hutt. “This time, we barter supplies. We give you drink, keep you alive.”

“How kind.” Xolarin looked up, using his low levels of energy to give him a boost of confidence, reaching out a bit with the Force. “But my... superiors might not know where I am – my ship is fried.”

The man looked over at his friends, who laughed again. “Then we make you hurt, and find a way.”

Xolarin squinted as he examined the man. He was mad, utterly crazy. They were all a bunch of savages. They had obviously been visited by others off world or, as he had posited early, come from another planet altogether. But they were coo-coo for sure, and he was caught right in the middle of their insanity. “Why would you... I don’t...”

“Don’t worry,” said the man confidently. “Your people will find a way. They always do.” He smiled warmly and nodded. It would put a sense of false comfort in most, although Xolarin knew better. And sure enough, another blow from the staff came to Xolarin’s torso, this time with the pointy end. That did not feel good at all, and hopefully the savages had a way to mend him in addition to inflicting torturous pain.

More importantly, he hoped that there was some trace of his ship going down, even if his communication failed to go through.

Xolarin shook his head, writhing in the new pain, grunting and coughing. “The Force is my ally, and I shall... not... want...” His mind faded to black once more as his physical body overwhelmed his consciousness.

Static. The fumes of the A-wing had dwindled and almost all of the ship was mere metal and scrap, strewn about the forest. But static could be heard, faint and quiet. The emergency communications beacon had survived, somehow, and was tossing out its signal towards the stars. And in all the fates of the Jedi, against the odds Xolarin faced on this mission-gone-wrong, a glimmer of hope rang true, even if no one was in the immediate area at that moment to hear it.

“ do you copy? Fighter A-121GHZ do you read?” The static broke as a voice came through. “Xolarin, this is Turel. Do you copy? A team is on its way, just hold on.”