

The Journey Home

By Lexiconus Qor / #13880

The cave descended into darkness as the lick of icy and lethal wind soared around the pit, with only glimmers of light scattered around. Groups of trapped members sanctioned themselves from each other, careful in who they trusted and conserving their heat lamps with. The tension in the cavern was palpable by anyone during the twilight hours, as people turned against each other for food and water rations. Skirmishes broke out frequently at the centre of the cavern, as survivors were caught stealing or poisoning others. But eventually, due to the increasing fragility of the cavern, groups would try to escape and either succeed or fail severely. But through all the trials and tribulations, only a couple of groups survived to this point, including one Quarren. A very enraged, psychopathic and lethal Quarren.

MURDER. DEATH. POISON.

Lexiconus Qor sat in a fetal position against the glacial wall, rocking and mumbling to himself in his native tongue. Through the warmth of his palm, he formed a small bowl on the icy floor, and began mixing herbs and plants together, concocting all varieties of lethal doses.

“Three-quarter ounce of purple clove-shroom, two inches of cinderroot shavings, twenty minims of frostbite spider venom. Heat to boiling for maximum potency. I need a heater lamp.”

His eyes scanned the desolate and quiet cavern, the glistening of orange against the oceanic blue walls. Some of the heater lamps were left derelict and frozen over time, which made Lexiconus suspicious of their use now. Rust corroding the systems and ice expanding the hull into a slowed-down explosion, a common destroyer of technology. But he needed to try, he needed to win. He was always on the cusp of failure, with someone else coming to rescue him, something else keeping him alive or just the passing of time aiding him. But not today, today he would brew his own escape, formulate his own plan of attack, and forget this mass grave. Survival; a dying art. Crawling across the cave like a wolf, he came across the first heater lamp, clawing the ice from the hull as he checked for disrepair. Inspecting it the best he could, he felt it would be shorter to list the things not broken. The Quarren limped and slithered his way to the next few, checking them like before. The same outcome through most of them, however the most recent find was interesting. His claws scratched and picked at the think layer of ice all across the device, but he was ill-equipped for this excavation.

“Hmm, it appears this one was lost to the darkness many years ago. Years? Has it been that long?” He questioned himself, as time hasn’t been forgiving. His fingers peeled away and shrivelled against his skin from the dryness, as his eyes crusted and did the same. His robes had formed what appeared to be a loose fitting cloak, and he had no idea where his boots went. He seemed to be a shadow of his former self, the disciplined and cold-hearted commander of Imperium. But he was far from malnourished and weak, as the horizon of the wild and unknown was his playground. It was time to leave his temporary prison, and the only way he knew how. Up.

Crawling his way across to the eastern wall, he finally came to the first of the glimmering heater lamps, only for his eyes to be met with the truthful horror. Hunched over, fully clothed and locked into a statuesque pose, were three corpses. Frozen at the legs, their eyes were hollowed by the local arthropods that Lexiconus somehow managed to fend off or use in his alchemy. The lamp itself, however, was in perfect shape, and as the Savant grabbed the handle he felt a blanket of warmth he hadn't for a long, long while. Tears flowed down his eyes as his throat caught, the sensation of successful progression completed him. He could escape.

"Now, for my masterplan! Later guys, have..." He fell silent again, as the phrase running through his mind flooded him with the happiest memories he had. Memories of vast training grounds, ships soaring into the atmosphere and landing on his spaceport. Yes, his compound. Soldiers patrolling and training routinely, the sound of blaster fire and regiment songs filled his imagination. He dreamt of lightsabers clashing in practice, the brightly coloured weapons chopping down their foes, and the fight with his allies. With his student, the Zeltron. What was her name? His eyes looked up to the hole in the ceiling, his only route of escape as a small and agnostic prayer ran through his mind.

"...*Have a drink on me,*" He thought.

"I'll come save you, Palatinae. I promise you, with everything I have. With every fibre of strength, wit and cunning I have left. Fallax will fall. Forgive me, young one." He said the prayer to himself, as her bright pink face flashed through his mind. The smile that could brighten his day, tear him apart from the workload and bring him back to the Force. His sharpest Blade.

With a whip of his cloak, Lexiconus scurried back across the vast cavern and towards his miniature apothecary. He dropped the lamp next to him and reached inside his medpac, searching and feeling around the tools. His wiry fingers pulled out a chrome kidney bowl, it was perfect for the job. Screwing the lid from the heater, he threw it away and shuffled it closer. Precision was key here, as he lowered the bowl slowly towards his make-shift ice bowl, pressing the lip against the ingredients so only the fluids were being drained. He made a small stream into the kidney bowl, which grew stronger and stronger as the concoction down the basin.

"Careful now. Don't lick your fingers after this, or you'll never wake up." He whispered to himself, raising the kidney bowl from the drained ice. Satisfied it was filled, he placed it onto the heater and watched as the mixture began to steam. Wiping his hands across his cloak, Lexiconus then reached into his satchel and pulled out an empty hyposyringe. It was used before, but that didn't matter. The elixir of death he was making would sterilise all residue inside. A poison fit for a king. Even for an Emperor.

The sewer green fluid bubbled as steam consumed the western cavern, attracting a whole variety of arthropods to flood from their hives and tunnels, desperate for this heat. The Savant saw his elixir was finally at boiling and grinned wide. He picked up the boiling bowl with his hand, using the Force to resist the extreme temperature, and carefully extracted it

with the hyposyringe. The murky green filling the cylinder inside, his plan was successful. Now for the target. His bony hands picked and grabbed across his area, collecting the items and placing them into his make-shift satchel, which he threw onto his shoulder. Lexiconus stood and walked from his temporary home, taking one look back just to make sure he gathered everything, then walked towards the central area of the cavern.

“Now then, how to get up there?” Stroking his tentacles, the Quarren pondered about the route for a second. The Force couldn’t aid his athletics to reach that height, nor could he throw himself up there, but maybe he didn’t have to. Because others have tried their luck at escaping many times before, and some succeeded, there was items left behind. Scanning the area, Lexiconus saw a large pile of synthetic rope, tied to a vibro-sword, an unused flare, a broken comlink, and an empty tequila bottle. He assumed this was the attempt of someone from the sister House, but he couldn’t detect whether they failed or succeeded. No skeleton generally meant they got out, but scavenging arthropods and survivors of the Clan were susceptible of cannibalism. Now it was his time to escape.

Using the Force, he telekinetically grasped the hilt of the vibro-sword, which felt tied to the rope, and slowly raised it through the air. The blade pointed up and speared through the moonlight, shimmering silver down on Lexiconus, but his concentrated never faltered, never flinching. As the sword rose higher and disappeared into the moonlight, Lexiconus became frustrated his depth perception was ruined from his years in the darkness. It took several prodding and stabbed at the air with the telekinetically-controlled sword, but eventually he shoved the blade into the ice above. Sighing as he relaxed from the strenuous effort, the Quarren gripped the rope and gave it a harsh tug. The fixture was immovable, for now. Now it was time to ascend, to escape and to move onwards to his goal. Fallax had a needle with his name on it.

“Ugh, now the climb. Don’t give up on me, arms.” Lexiconus muttered, trying to reassure himself. As he leapt onto the rope and began to ascend, his self-confidence boost began to fall short. Panting and wheezing with his hand he placed, he could feel a heat rush to his arms, numbing and loosening his grip. Seconds turned into minutes, turning into hours as he scaled the two-mile height, never accepting his fears to look down. His face felt the pitter patter of small rain droplets being washed in by the wild winds above. It felt like liberty and freedom, the reality of the galaxy finally reached. Reaching out, his fingers gripped the hilt of the sword and he tugged his frail body up, rolling across the cold and soaked floor. The Quarren sighed heavily. He made it.

“Easy part is over, now to escape Aesirus. Get up, Lex!” Bumping his chest with his fist twice, a proud sign of self-confidence, Lexiconus forced himself onto his feet and scanned the area. Much of the Sorosuub compound was underground, with the exception of the admin tower rising from the mayhem on a tilt. Windows smashed, durasteel contorted and bent out of shape, the whole place was in disrepair. It wasn’t his plan to save the compound after all. Fallax really wanted to trap everyone here, the strong couldn’t break their way out, the smart would never bargain their way, and the people of guile simply fail to smuggle themselves through rubble. It seemed foolproof. But Lexiconus was no fool. He was Quaestor of Imperium, the ex-Sith and follower of the Force. Then it dawned upon him, he

never betrayed Xen, as the Emperor didn't issue this mission. To his leader's eyes, he was fully Sith. A flawless loophole for the Savant. But he needed a lightsaber in order to show his Sith heritage, one wasn't simply bought. Especially on the remote world of Aesirus. Then his eyes caught the sight of sapphire engines flaring and ascending to life through the atmosphere.

"Time is running out, Lex, now is not the time to shop for parts and scrap. First, get off Aesirus. Then shop." He assured himself, another two bumps on the chest. Extracting the Force to fuel his body and reserves, Lexiconus pushed himself to start walking, as he scanned for what remained of the Sorosuub company. Rumbles and the firing of engines were heard as an echo, but he became uncertain of their destination. It seemed the chaos that engulfed the Palatinaeans, also forced the miners and pilots to scatter to the four winds. The business of Sorosuub disintegrated before Lexiconus' eyes, and they knew they were now unemployed. Perhaps this could turn out well for the Quarren. He continued to walk towards the rumbles, quickening his pace as he saw another ship ascend to the skies.

Climbing above the rubble and sandy debris, Lexiconus saw a lone freighter with a Sullustan pilot, too busy refuelling the tanks to be concerned with the Quarren. Upon a quick scan of the rustic exterior, painted with orange stripes, a pair of turbolasers on the top and bottom, with the cockpit at the right side, it was an ancient model. The name escaped him but it mattered not, leaving orbit was what mattered. Crawling his way over the lip of the rocks and down towards the Sullustan, Lexiconus limped over and remained calm. The pilot looked at the Quarren with a gasp, his face falling pale as he was sure this was some native beast hopping and limping over. It wasn't until Lexiconus opened his mouth, that the pilot believed otherwise.

"Hello sir, I was wondering. Heh, wondering, could you perhaps allow me to board passage onto your ship, just until I get to the next space station or planet? I have contacts that could pay you." The Savant tried his best to sound sincere and calm, but only a husky and broken voice broke through, as if he were some deformed servant to an overlord. This however was no ordinary Sullustan, but a notable director of the Sorosuub corporation. He picked up on who he was straight away.

"Listen, Sith, I will not help your kind. You came to take our property and credits, stealing and extorting our employees. I will never stand for this again. The next time I see you, I'll shoot you." He blurted out, his voiced raised with anger. This was no good for Lexiconus, he needed off this planet and he wasn't going to let a single pilot stand in his way. But killing everyone who opposed him wasn't the smart way to do this, nor was it easy, as the Quarren was very weak, whereas this pilot could unhook his blaster quicker than Lexiconus would be able to limp over. He needed to play this carefully and be clear, sometimes the truth doesn't hurt.

"Listen Director Sorosuub, yes I am a Sith. But not the Sith that came here to extort your business from your hands. I am here instead to aid your people, from the earthquake that forced you to lose your property entirely. Yes, I was willing to kill your people in order to

achieve my goals, but there is something out there, something far more sinister than myself.” Lexiconus urged on, his arm pointed to the sky as he limped closer.

“Out there, in the Cocytus System, is a false Emperor. He is sitting on my ruler’s throne, destroying my people from the inside out for this faction called the New Dawn. His goal? To take full advantage of all galactic beings and indoctrinate them into his despotism. That includes you and everyone you know, and everything you own.” The Savant continued on, he could see the Sullust was starting to understand. Lexiconus pushed for his end point.

“But I know Sith Lords very well, and this one is a credit short of ideas. I’ve seen countless warmongers before, and this will not be the last. Together, with my allies, I can stop him. But I need off this planet first. To protect your assets, get me off this planet. Will you help?” Extending his frail hand as a sign trust. Hesitant at the beginning, the Sullustan reached out and firmly gripped and shook Lexiconus’ hand. Together, they entered the ship through the steps and the pilot began the pre-flight checks and take off procedures. Rumbling and roaring to life, the ramp slowly shut causing the hull to creak and twang into place. The ship tilted towards the sky, as the silver crescent of the moon glistened through the cockpit. Vibrations ran through the freighter, the ship ascending and breaking through the tendrils of lightning, flashes of pure light and bodies of dark clouds.

The curved horizon of Aesirus came into view of the cockpit as the freighter shot into space, the nearby sun glaring through the plexiglass. Breaking from orbit and into hyperspace, the Sullustan took himself from the navigation console and approached Lexiconus.

“You can use the communications to contact your people, I’m going back to Sullust. That’s probably too far for you, but I can drop you off anywhere along the way, in order to reach your people.” He concluded, the Savant nodded with gratitude and approached the holocommunications. Patching in the secret codes used by the Clan, he broadcasted an exclusive distress signal for his allies to hear. He wanted to make sure the Empire couldn’t pick it up, so he kept it to Imperium codes only, hopefully Fallax didn’t know them.

“This is Lexiconus Qor, I am in need of a rendezvous with anyone still alive from the disaster. Did anyone make it? I repeat, did anyone make the Sorosuub incident?” He said as clear as he could, awaiting a response. Silence greeted him for several minutes, forcing him to try again in case the signal died out. For what felt like hours, silence across the frequency was all Lexiconus heard. The seeds of depression began to set in, fearing all his allies were infact dead in that cavern, until a flicker in his ear caught his attention. A broken voice burst through the signal, unintelligent at first, but the Sullustan rushed to the cockpit and aided in refining the signal. It was definitely male, humanoid of some kind but Lexiconus was unsure who.

“Gah, hang on, these old ships have kinks in them. They just need a good,” He kicked the base of the console and the hologram completed itself. “There we go!” On the screen in front of him, was the ally he was just looking for. Covering his uniform and lightsaber with a weatherproof robe, Lexiconus could never forget the large, fluffy ears of Mune Cinteroph, System Moff of the Empire.

“Mune, thank the Force you caught my frequency!” The Hybrid smiled as he looked around for peekers, then replied.

“It is a good day when I see your leathery face again, Doctor Qor! I know you would persevere in the unknown. We need to meet up and get the ball rolling, I have dozens of plans for our campaign against the New Dawn, and I need your Imperial eyes on them all. Can I pick you up somewhere?” Mune asked, which is when the Sullustan intervened.

“My name is Director Sihko Dunb, you can pick him up on Florrum, I will give him a comlink so you know his location on the planet. I trust it shouldn’t take you long?” Direct Dunb finished, he couldn’t see, but Lexiconus furrowed his brow and glared. He will regret cutting in.

“Just three days, Director, it shant be an issue. Cinteroph out.” The blue hologram phased out and the Quarren stood and walked back to the crew area of the freighter. Sliding back into a seat, he brought his satchel up onto the table and searched inside. Feeling around, the Savant grasped onto the two emerald crystals he took from the cave, and placed them onto the table. It was vital that he had a lightsaber, and he only knew one way to get one. Limping back to the cockpit, he watched as the Sullustan checked his calculations of hyperspace, rerouting their route according to the hyperspace lane and softly hum to himself.

“Dunb, do you have any spare parts I could use? I lost my old lightsaber back in the caves, so I require the materials to make a new one.”

“Heh, you Sith and your lightsabers. Check the cargo bay at the end of the corridor, there should be enough to make your weapon. Enjoy the hunt for scrap.” Lexiconus turned off and limped towards the bay. Now he could rebuild what he lost, a tool for murder, for vengeance. A lightsaber, with a capable and healthy body.

Three Days Later...

Shadows and silence ruled over the cargo bay as Lexiconus Qor quietly meditated to himself, the glistening of emerald crystals hovering and circling around his lightsaber components before his peaceful face. Sliding and locking into place, the skeleton of a different type of lightsaber came into existence. One built for longer reach, better defence and a hardier form for the Gray Jedi. The crystals slid inside the metal of the weapon as their light faded into darkness, the final pieces locking into place. The Quarren opened his eyes and slowly caught the newly crafted saberstaff into his palm. It was slightly heavier than the average lightsaber, but the emitters were thinner than usual as the weapon retained most weight with the power cells in the centre. It took him the most time finding the best power cells he could, the rest was a cinch.

The door for the cargo bay whooshed open, as Director Dunb turned up and coughed to grab Lexiconus’ attention.

“Change of plans,” He said confidently, as if the Quarren didn’t have a choice. “We’re meeting Cinteroph on the edge of Cocytus space, you’re getting off in a few minutes. Grab your gear and get off my ship.” Then exited. It was time to act on this semi-permeable truce with the pilot. Standing with his new saberstaff and exiting the bay, he made his way to the cockpit and saw a shuttle come in, docking with the freighter. Together, Lexiconus and Dunb went to the docking area, the latch opening with Mune’s friendly smile and wave. The Savant turned to the pilot, shaking his hand firmly and smiled.

“Thank you for the lift to this point, you have been a major help in my cause. I am glad we met.” He pleasantly thanked the Sullustan, then yanked him closer. The infamous roar of a lightsaber blade ignited, the emerald light piercing through the pilot, who coughed up his own blood. Baptised in the blood and fear of his ally, Lexiconus dragged the blade upwards and severed his ribs, then deactivated his creation. The Sullustan collapsed onto the floor, as his final and blood-spat breath escaped. After bearing with the complaints, the insults, the cold glares and looks, the xenophobic remarks, Lexiconus felt free of Dunb’s dominating ways. And what better way to birth his lightsaber into the world, than the most Sith way possible. The death of an ally.

Mune gulped hard as he watched, distasteful of the experience.

“You didn’t have to,” The Quarren’s sapphire eyes pierced into Mune’s, the Hybrid shifting on his feet a bit. “The cocky fool got what he deserved. Now let’s return to Judecca, I am done with his relic.” The Savant asked, storming into the shuttle.

“Yes, Savant Qor. Nice Saberstaff, according to rumour, only the best Seers of the Force used Saberstaves as their weapon of choice. They could apparently wield them without touching them, and acted as an anchor in both the dark and light of the Force.” Mune replied. The title of Seer felt right to Lexiconus. He had been a Savant for only a few short months since leaving the Sith Order, but since learning the mysteries of the Living Force and the light side, he had grown wiser. More experience under his belt, more failures to his name, more power to his skills. Seer Lexiconus fitted nicely.

Lexiconus still noticed the expression of worry on Mune and softly patted his back to gather his attention.

“I am not a power-hungry Sith, Mune. That rigid Order is behind me. I only care about those too weak to medicate themselves, and those too poor to afford a cure for their ailments. The Force is guiding my mission to heal and aid all I can. Only a combination of the light and dark can help me complete this. Do you understand?” The Seer asked of his friend.

“Yes Lexi. You are a Gray Jedi now, walking the blurred line between both. I can only pray you succeed where others failed.” Another heavy sigh left Mune’s lips, as he looked into the abyss of space, it was clear the Gray path was a sore subject for him. Maybe that was a story for a different time.

“Only the Force can determine that now. My only hope is that Pravus doesn’t find out.”

Detaching from the freighter and flying further into the Cocytus System, the duo finally came to the lush green and brown orb they knew as Judecca. Both men stared at the planet with a heavy heart, as Lexiconus sighed with regret.

“Oh Judecca, it has been a long, long time. We will remove the taint, I hope.” He whispered, but Mune caught it anyway. The Hybrid smiled and patted the Seer’s back.

“Rebellions are built on hope, brother.”

The End