

Take over the Colony

By Lexiconus Qor / #13880

Chapter 1: Path of the Fox

Wind and hail battered down on the shuttle that Mune Cinteroph occupied. It seemed to be one of the worst nights to pick for this mission. He was accompanied by his close allies, Lexiconus Qor, a Quarren Doctor and an expert in manipulating droids with the Force, and Blade Ta'var, a Zeltron warrior who was trained in finding items and delivering the killing blow. But this mission was not about murder, violence and liberation, it was more about assuming control and taking an asset in the name of the Clan. Least casualties, no exceptions. The trio gathered around a holographic map, that Mune developed in his spare time during the shuttle journey. It was of the entire compound, with key locations highlighted, such as the exits, the server room, the main quarry, the worker's village, the warehouse and the office tower. Their location bleeped with a green dot on the spaceport of the compound. Mune moved himself to the head of the hologram and gave a purposeful cough to gather his allies' attention.

"Alright shadow squad, here's the gist of it. We have three missions to complete while obtaining a total capture of this Sorosuub base. The first mission belongs to you, Blade." He said as he pointed a stick at her face. She was taken by surprised and jumped into an attacking pose, her teeth snarled. Lexiconus giggled but then corrected himself as Mune gave him a stern look.

"Your mission is to contain the workforce in their village and watch the perimeter, and the exits for signs of reinforcements from the Sorosuub company. A simple hold the fort procedure. Whereas you, Lexic." The stick came to the Quarren's face, who wasn't exactly looking at Mune but on the hologram, so it smacked against his face. Grumbling and rubbing his cheek, Lexiconus decided he should pay more attention now.

"You are charged with bringing the network under Clan control and directly linked to Grand Marshal Rei's console. You will have this device," Mune threw a small chip to the Quarren as he continued. "To plug into the main server towers and override control. This is located in the main server room, on the top floor of the admin tower. If any resistance comes between you and your objective, tell us through the comms and try to deal with it as best as you can. Blade and I can be your support if we're not already engaged." Mune concluded with Lexiconus' mission, the Quarren looked at the device given to him and found it curious, as it seemed to glimmer and sparkle with electrical activity. The Hybrid then pointed to himself with the stick and smiled proudly.

"Whereas I, on the other hand, will be checking the main quarry and the warehouse for supplies of undelivered crystals, then collect them for extraction into the shuttle. If I am done quick enough, I can accompany Blade with her patrol rounds or walk through the admin tower itself and assess the situation. Are we all in agreement with this plan?" Blade and Lexiconus both nodded as they both stood ready, lightsabers firmly in hand. With a firm nod back Mune ended his meeting and switched the hologram off. Blade turned to the shuttle ramp and pressed the button to lower it, and the trio stormed out into the compound.

While Lexiconus dashed over to the admin tower with his saberstaff in hand, and Blade ignited her ruby lightsaber in defense as he backed the miners into the village, Mune jogged his way to the main quarry area. As the Savant made his way past a toilets area and through a tunnel to the hazard zone of the compound, he was greeted by a large man-made canyon, stretching straight down the fence. It was thinner in the width than the length, but not by much. A turbolift system helped the miners descend and ascend from the darkness with their payloads, while various digging machines and droids were patrolling on the far side. To the right of him, Mune saw a cargo truck vacant with empty boxes, he approached the vehicle and activated the main engines.

“Well, time to clock on and get to work.” He sighed, as he turned off the landing pad and drove towards a sortation hut near the back.

Time slipped by as the Rollmaster worked hard in collecting and stealing his kyber crystals from the mining colony, the storm started to die down. His first cargo box was full of crystals of all shapes and sizes, still uncoloured and unattuned from their Force user, but useful to the Clan. He needs to get them back to Grand Marshal Rei for testing as soon as possible, as it would be a strong supply for the young journeymen in their unit. But the beeping on his comms device gave Mune the sense of trouble, as the sound of blaster fire and panting could be heard down the comms device.

“Blade here, I’m surrounded by a spare unit of guards who were protecting the miner’s village in their contingency of us arriving. They explicitly were looking for Force users, and they found me. I kinda need help, do you have a minute? Hey! Watch your fire, you almost got me!” Chattering of Blade mocking the security forces continued on while Mune started to turn his vehicle around and head towards the village. Speeding as fast as the engine could take him, Mune saw the Zeltron defending her position by blocking the blaster bolts and dashing from cover to cover. Her mission wasn’t to kill or injure them, but to just keep them occupied enough so the two could force them back into the village. The Savant carefully steered the vehicle off to the side and leaped from the cockpit, his violet blade igniting to life in a beautiful arch. He redirected the bolts as best he could, with a rooted defense and clockwork movements. Blade leaped and jumped around unpredictably, as she was catching the guards by surprise and pushing them back into the village. Seeing the power of two Jedi was too much, they succumbed and retreat into the gate. Blade reached out with the Force and quickly slammed the gates shut.

“Now, if we can just find a really big metal pole to jam that gate closed, we could actually get stuff done here. Only one box, huh?” Blade panted, as she fixed her pixie hair back into place. Mune chuckled and shook his head, he agreed the guards and miners could be a handful but Blade was perfect for this role. She has the finesse to dodge and weave through the attacks, she knew how to coerce the resistant, and her sharp senses could pick up on intrusions from the edges of the compound. The Hybrid hopped back into his vehicle and drove himself back to the sortation area of kyber crystals, now it was time to gather from the warehouse.

“Perfect, two boxes of kyber crystals and not even a problem for me in sight. Now to just drive to the spaceport and we can be on our way.” Mune moralized himself, with the weather starting to pick up again, he needed all the confidence and bliss he could get. The Hybrid drove the cargo to the spaceport and pulled up to the ramp, then began to offload the boxes into the body of the shuttle. As he was escorting the second box, his holo-comms beeped again, with Blade greeting him again.

“Hey Mune, remember that time where I was telling you about some resistance in the admin tower?” Blade asked. Mune heard of this as he was filling up his box in the warehouse, asserting to the workforce that Scholae Palatinae was now taking over, but he thought the Quarren would deal with it.

“Yeah, of the guards escaped from the village? What about it?” He added, Blade was quite silent. Strange, she’s usually on point with her information.

“Well Mune, this is no guard, and it’s no cake-walk. This guy has a full mechanical suit with gatling blasters! We need some support here or we’re all going to fail this mission.”

“On it.” Mune terminated the comms, quickly pushed the cargo into the shuttle and slammed the ramp button to close. He rolled from the ramp and sprinted for the admin tower, then leaped into the air. He soared above the majority of floors and glided to the seventh floor, then sliced the glass window to shatter, and rolled inside. He quickly lifted his violet blade into a rigid defense as the gatling guns began to aim and spray at Mune. The man in the machine wasn’t familiar to the Hybrid, but his face snarled and his teeth gritted as he fired, showing disgust to the Sith and Jedi.

“This is our company! You will not take it from us! I will die before going back to prison!” The man said with a deep and bellowing voice, it seemed to Mune he wasn’t going to accept defeat. Then death was the option.

Chapter 2: Path of the Scales

Blade Ta’var sprinted from the shuttle’s ramp and darted for the Miner’s village, she made this the mission of her life, to have a record set for quickest takeover. She could do it easily, and far quicker than others ever could. Blade was the right person for this job, and no one will prove her wrong. Shepherding, that’s all it was. The Zeltron dashed across the spaceport and towards the main employee gate, it was wide and bulky, with more locks than blade cared to count. She turned to watch Lexiconus dart off into the main admin tower, but not before seeing a look she grew familiar seeing in him. That turned up lip, those cold eyes, his snarling mouth, the look of disgust towards her. That was for a different mission, however, as Blade noticed when she peered behind the gate. It didn’t click for her at first, of why the compound was so silent and serene, but once she took a closer look Blade knew why. The entire village was completely empty.

“Blast, I’m gonna lose at least five seconds from my record time getting each member into the village, I better use aggressive force to quicken the pace. This must be done right, we need as many people alive as possible!” Blade edged herself on, the snapping of her

crimson lightsaber affirmed that. The Zeltron rushed to the place she knew she would find the most workers possible, a place where she could pick up her running time and become faster than anyone on this complex; the warehouse. Entering the large durasteel doors, built like a storage hangar, she found many of the miners, their supervisors, the shift managers in their office on the top floor, drivers scooting around the warehouse floor and a very obese and lazy security guard in a booth to her right. She needed to gather their attention, with a bright and confident smirk, she knew just exactly how. The Warrior outstretched her arm, latching the dark side onto a forklift and dragged the mechanical beast towards her, it's base screeching loudly across the floor. It was painful to her ears, and those around her, but it made her point. Blade tugged the vehicle towards her and just before she sliced the machine in half, the worker leaped out and paced backward in shock.

"Attention workers!" She shouted at the top of her voice, the dark side echoing it around the warehouse. "I want everyone to get out of this warehouse and back to the village, now!" Blade finished with a roar, her lightsaber chopping the forklift again for an extreme measure of ferocity. Commotion and whispers could be heard as the miners slowly complied and headed towards the exit, but the managers in the office above did not move. Did she have to repeat herself? It was time for more dramatic measures. The Warrior stormed into the main area, turned towards the office and leaped into the air. Her body was carried across the air by the dark side, gliding over until she was above the managers in their temporary shelter. She dropped from her path, her lightsaber grasped in both hands and stabbed the roof hard and wildly. She cut out a circle and dropped through the into the office, the manager themselves pale with fright, as one of them shakily held his hands out.

"We don't want no trouble, miss, we just want to go home." He said with very little confidence, Blade could swear she smelt his urine. She took a step closer and snarled as she brought her lightsaber point at them.

"Then you should have done what I demanded and got out of my warehouse!" She roared out in anger and impatience. She was majorly falling behind on her record time and needed to pick up the pace. The Zeltron approached the managers with her lightsaber pointed at them and watched as they scurried around her. She noticed one suddenly dropped a communications device and she yanked it to her with the Force, crushing it in her hand. The group scattered from the office without hesitation, except for the man who owned the device, who decided to hover around first. The Zabrak slowly turned to her and gulped heavily, he was about to regret what he said.

"That's not going to stop them now, I called Sorosuub for security. They will be here within ten minutes in their full roster." Then quickly ran down the office stairs and outside. This wasn't going to plan, but at least no one died needlessly. It was a success in her mind, to have the least kills on this mission. Something she would admire and a trophy for a while after this mission. As the Zeltron started to jump and descend the staircase, her holocomms bleeped with a signal from the Quarren. She could hear his breathing heavily as blaster bolts flung past him, a grenade went off near his communications. He was in deep trouble. Not while she was trying to break a record.

"Floor three, hurry!" His comms were shut off quickly, that was all she heard from him. Grumbling in protest to her conscience forcing her to go, she darted towards the admin tower and started to get a run-up. With the dark side fueling her thigh muscles, she leapt from the ground and sailed towards the third-floor window, where she saw the Quarren crouched behind a tipped table. Her ignited ruby blade slashed the glass open, shards raining outside, and the Zeltron rolled inside. Her blade swiftly defending her position, as the Force guided her hand and reflexes. Gaining ground, she advanced on the firing squad by jumping across the office tables and twisting gracefully through the air. Landing in front of a guard with a gatling gun, she sliced the barrel in half and kicked his feet from under him. Her elbow came up to meet the wingman in the face, slicing his E-11 blaster clean in half. The final armed man turned to face the Warrior and aimed for the back of her head, but she saw him coming. Rolling across the floor and to his flank, Blade rose and as she deactivated her lightsaber, jabbed the hilt into his back. The guard stumbled and tried to turn, but he was slow and sluggish from the hit.

Lexiconus' advice worked for her after all; *base of the spine, hit 'em where they move, they will stiffen up and struggle to turn.*

She turned to see the Quarren who nodded in gratitude, then took off to the service stairs. It seemed he was slightly less bitter than before, she sighed with relief from that. Running and hopping out of the window she broke, Blade glided back down to the main yard of the compound and rolled into the ground. But she was suddenly forced to roll behind a large soil mound as her senses told her to. Blaster fire and shouting came from ahead, which was the village gates. It seemed that the Sorosuub forces had arrived early and flanked her down. Blade took a moment to center herself and control her stamina first, then quickly rolled out and started to weave her defensive maneuvers. There was a team of at least twelve soldiers, all kitted with armor and rifles, and they were throwing grenades!

"Blast, this is too much for one girl." The Warrior said, and rolled back to her previous mound position. She brought up her wrist and called Mune, as blaster fire whipped past her head.

"Blade here, I'm surrounded by a spare unit of guards who were protecting the miner's village in their contingency of us arriving. They explicitly were looking for Force users, and they found me. I kinda need help, do you have a minute? Hey! Watch your fire, you almost got me!" She said with a mocking tone, Mune said something but it wasn't heard by the Zeltron, who disconnected her device to the Savant. With a soft sigh, she decided to engage the security again. It seemed more and more inevitable that she wasn't going to get the quickest mission time, as problems arose more than she could complete them. Rising from her mound to deflect the blaster bolts, she slowly walked closer, catching and tossing grenades away with the Force as they came. Deflection wasn't hard for her, it was like a training session with her Quarren master. Keep your feet at shoulder-width, he would say. Your arms should be outstretched but flexible, was another one he would say on loop. His biggest advice was one she cherished the most, always do what the Force tells you, it wants to keep you alive.

“Need some help?” Blade heard the voice of Mune, who was already deflecting the blaster bolts away from him. She smiled brightly at his support and began to pick up her pace, advancing on the soldiers with great resistance. Forcing the security group into retreat, they slammed the village gate shut and Blade sighed with relief. She respectfully nodded to Mune, who gave her a cheeky wink and hopped back onto his speeder. Taking off into the dust cloud he left, Mune got back to his mission task. Blade deactivated her lightsaber and wiped the sweat beads from her forehead, this seemed to be hard work for her. It certainly gave her better practice than a droid or simulations. Now that the workforce was actually secured in their pen, she had the task of patrolling the perimeter. Not a difficult task at all, but insanely boring.

“Ah well, time to start walking.” The Zeltron said as she was strolling down the south-gate. But as the Warrior was getting into the routine of checking the gates for holes, faults, and activity, another comms channel came in. It was Lexiconus again.

“Um, please help. There’s this giant dude in a mechanical suit! I don’t have the skill to deal with this! Seventh floor!” His comms immediately cut off, shortly after an explosion was heard. Seemed like trouble Blade would love. Without a shadow of a doubt, she rushed towards the excitement, fueling her legs with the dark side. It took all she had to make this leap, soaring into the sky like a falcon ascending into the clouds. Blade shot up to the seventh-floor window and soared straight past it. Blast it, she could never estimate the power in the Force. Igniting her ruby lightsaber, she stabbed the building with it and slowly descended to the right window, keeping it below her. With a flick and hop from the wall, Blade kicked her feet into the glass and rolled inside, with the Quarren ducking under the table near her.

“Ah! Another filthy Jedi, you will not live to tell your superiors of this attack on the mighty Sororsuub Corporation! I swear on it!” The man in the mechanical suit of armor said, as he warmed up his gatling guns again. Placing her body in a defensive position, she was ready to deflect, but the Force was edging in her mind. Demanding her to retreat and hide, she complied and backflipped behind the table Lexiconus was using.

“Damn that gun is huge. Where’s Mune?” The Warrior asked her mission partner, who was too busy pulling the glass from his arm to even bother replying. A tug on her attention told her to scurry back, and as she did, Mune burst through the window, landing to deflect a blaster bolt from their path. The Hybrid gritted his teeth and bared down his stance.

“You rang, m'lady?” He said to the Zeltron. She crawled back to the cover and unhooked her lightsaber.

“Can we kill someone now, Mune!?”

Chapter 3: Path of the Squid

Lexiconus Qor turned to stare at the Warrior Zeltron, she was a disgusting mark in his life. A successful youngling who rose to knight, expanded on her knowledge, then wanted more. Her attempt on his life will never be swayed from his memory, and now, fuels his anger

against her efforts. Such a disgusting example of loyalty. He would need to deal with her and the conflict between them, but for now the mission was their top priority. The Savant was out of breath even before he got halfway across the yard, it was a terribly big yard. No wonder their production rates and profits were booming, as he read in the leaked reports. But he had the simplest job of them all, to climb the admin tower, storm his way into the main server room and plug the device given to him into the network. What could possibly go wrong? Lexiconus scanned the tower for signs of disturbance or break away from normality. The office administrators were sat at their desks, the public stairway was empty and there was a lack of security greeting him at the main entrance, nothing stood out. It seemed too easy.

"I sense a trap. I guess it is time to spring the trap." The Savant said with some excitement, he hadn't seen conflict in awhile. But something in him was jumping for joy when faced with conflict, maybe it was his old persona breaking through. The Sith in him wanted violence, while the Jedi sought peace. He doused this fiery passion by remaining vigilant, before his passion got out of hand, then pushed the doors open. Several yards from the doors was the public stairway and a small turbolift leading to all floors, but which mode of transport to take?

"If I take the elevator, I could reach the server room with ease, but there might be trouble if someone wants to get in. If I take the stairs I can check the corners for people, but it's definitely gonna kill me." Lexiconus whispered to himself, then gave into using the elevator. As he entered the automatic doors and checked the floor button terminal, he saw there was no eighth floor, but seven. They most likely require you to walk the rest for security reasons, this meant someone was watching the turbolift. Then his only option was to take the stairs. With a groan of reluctance, the Savant gripped onto the bannister and started to ascend the steps. It was no easy task for the Quarren, who puffed and panted with each step he took, it seemed to be never ending. He reached a turning in the staircase and looked up, a spiral of staircase continued to ascend. Lexiconus looked to the wall near him to check for a sign; *Second Floor*. He checked inside the floor's door at the working people, their faces glued to the consoles while a female was pacing, checking their workloads and targets. No one was coming to the door, a good idea to try for the third floor.

"Why didn't I use the turbolift?" The Quarren huffed, wiping the sweat from his neck and head. He yanked his body by tugging the bannister and ascended the next set of challenges, the metal of the steps clinking against his boots softly. With some strain and hard resolve, he finally made it to the third floor and peered inside the glass of the door, his eyes scanning the office. He saw the same general appearance as the floor below, consoles lined while a superior officer patrolled and watch vigilantly. Strange, perhaps this wasn't as fair and peaceful as he first believed, like a modern slavery. As he took his gaze off the floor, a human bumped into him and sent him stumbling. The Quarren's lightsaber unclipped and tumbled to the floor, making a loud rickety sound on the metal grating, but the busy human didn't notice.

"Hey! Watch where you're going," Lexiconus said to him, without trying to shout too much. But like as if he was a ghost, the human sped past him and up the stairs. The Savant huffed at his disrespect and commanded the lightsaber to his hand. But as he clipped the weapon

back to a loop, the door suddenly slammed open and an angered human stared at Lexiconus.

“Intruder! What are you doing here? Guards!” The supervisor said as he turned on his black heels and dashed for the opposite exit.

“Blast! I didn’t want to fight people today.” He said as he reluctantly unclipped his saberstaff and prepared himself into a defensive stance. He used his holocomms to call Blade, but couldn’t quite send out a message as blaster fire and the relays of shouting deafened his voice. Lexiconus heard the sound of an incoming beeping sound and dived back into the hallway, ducking his head between his knees. The blast was a flash of light, which shattered the office glass as the workers inside started to scream and escape. Not from the Quarren, but the guards themselves. The Savant looked at them to see pure fear in their faces, pale complexion, wide eyes and tears flooding. Carefully standing up, he felt the nerves tug and clench in his legs from the impact of the floor, he wasn’t used to this level of strain. Using the Force to stretch and make himself flexible again, he stood and ignited the saberstaff again. He sighed heavily then turned and sprinted inside the door, deflecting the blaster bolts as best he could. Then the window smashed as the pink fury barreled in and began to fight back.

“Blade! Take them out, I need to get to the next floor.” She already disabled the blasters of the security before Lexiconus could meet her, and nodded to her with gratitude. With a comforting smile, the Quarren exited the destroyed office wing and continued to ascend the madness of stairs. Then he stopped, frozen in his place as his conscience urged him to reconsider. It was strange for the Force to stop him in his tracks, so Lexiconus started to pat himself down and check his belongings. He had the medpac, the hyposyringe, the bacta bomb and his antidote kit, but then he felt his secret pocket in the medpac and his stomach dropped.

Where is the hacking chip!?

He sat on the stairs and began to empty his belongings, double-check his items once again. It was gone, Mune would have his head for this. But then he remembered the human who bumped into him was actually quite powerful in his sprint, did he really do it on purpose? Lexiconus thought it was best to see if he can chase down this worker and take back his chip, then hopefully Mune wouldn’t find out later. Packing his stuff back into their respective holds then yanked it onto his shoulder and climbed the stairs up. He checked the doors as he ascended, reaching out with the Force to check each person for their motives. It took its weight on him, drawing his fatigue to barely anything, his body slowing down as sweat poured from his skin. His tired and bloodshot eyes were forced by himself to look at the next sign of the floor, wheezing for air and yet refusing to give in. *Seventh Floor.*

“Ugh, finally!” He groaned out with what he could muster, his lungs wheezing and gasping for air. Lexiconus decided to take a moment and centre himself, sitting down on the metal grating. He funnelled the Force to refuel his stamina and strength, focusing on the sound of his breathing. He took control of his lung and breathing to take in more air with each breath,

calming his mind and focusing on the sound of his quick heartbeat. The beat was double-paced and fast like the pitter patter of a hooved beast full of haste. It galloped and sprinted through his body but it too began to calm itself and reduce speed, coming to a brisk trot. Now at a more manageable speed for the Quarren, he felt the muscles in his legs began to cool and become flexible and soft again. But his meditation was interrupted by the relay chatter and shouting of more security. Returning to the corridor and standing back up again, the Quarren peered around the corner to see something both dreadful and surprising. With a flick of his wrist, he quickly activated his holocomms to both Blade and Mune, pleading for their aid and speaking about a *large mechanical beast with two carabast gatling guns*. Lexiconus heard the whirring of its rotors as the guns warmed up and began to spray blaster fire across the office floor, trying to hit anything organic he could. Everything was a target for this guard it seems.

“Will you please stop firing and allow us to talk through our reasoning!?” He asked the man in the machine, but he never stopped firing. The sound of windows smashing alerted Lexiconus to the arrival of his Zeltron apprentice, and shortly after their Hybrid superior, he found it easy to deflect the blaster fire back, even with a smirk.

“Men with guns don’t reason with anything but the trigger by their finger, Lexic. All we can do is reason back.” Mune said with some mysterious wisdom, but he wasn’t wrong. The Savant took his lightsaber back out again and sighed deeply, combat was not his game.

“What if we took him outside?” He offered a solution, to drag the machine through the window and out onto the main yard, it wasn’t a bad idea. But then it’d give Lexiconus time to look for the missing chip, without Mune’s curious eyes.

Chapter 4: Path of the Fool

Dominic Syster began his second season at the Sorosuub facility with a cheery and passionate outlook on life. Already this job at improving effects on his welfare, he had a new house, new gadgets to play with at home, he bought an astromech droid to keep him company and he just got his hair trimmed. It wasn’t a bad job either, just load up his barrels with crystalline dirt from the quarry piles, place them in the warehouse and scan the barcode. A simple but long job. The workers weren’t too bad to mingle with either, as Dom reckons he has a chance with that Zabrak female, An’uati, her name was. She gave him a sly wink every time their paths cross, a teasing but friendly notion. Maybe there’s something there for the two of them. Dom hopped onto his vehicle, placing his hard hat and high visibility jacket on, when he saw an unusual shuttle land at the spaceport. It had been awhile since they had visitors here, plus the director’s meeting was not scheduled on the public calendar for another three months. Dom shrugged it off and started the engines, he was wasting precious minutes of his work time anyway.

Speeding off into the night, with a trail of black dust spiralling behind his carrier, Dominic came to the drop off zone of the quarry. Humming a little workers tune to himself, the Human began to leap from his seat and walk around to the back. As he did so, Dom started to hop and skip along, humming away in his little cheery mood. Today he felt was a good day to work, there was motivation inside him, a willingness to be happy and he receives his credits

tomorrow. A resounding array of evidence to be cheery. Dominic slipped on his workers gloves and grabbed the shovel from the back, and shoved it into the crystalline pile. Sparkles of pink, yellow and green shone out as they tumbled down the pile. He turned and activated the first cargo box with its anti-gravity projectors, then set it down near the pile and locked it into place. While scooping up the paydirt into the box, he noticed a stranger on the far side of his workload, also scooping paydirt into a cargo box. He was wearing a rather impressive set of clothing, with a duster jacket and a cinched tunic. He also wore a very unique white fox mask over his face, probably to stop others from recognising who he was. Dominic also noticed a long cylinder hanging from his belt, and it appeared to be a very complex piece of technology.

The natural process when seeing unauthorised workers on site would be to tell the supervisor. But being so far away from any form of authority made the problem more difficult, he could be finished by the time Dominic returned. He instead pretended to ignore the problem and resumed filling his boxes. He was after all running slightly late. Finalising his full cargo boxes by snapping the lids onto them, Dominic took a final look at the fox-masked man. It wasn't a director he recognised, so maybe it was something to report after all. He launched his shovel onto the cargo bay with a loud whack and tinkering, then leapt into his seat and sped off to the warehouse.

Drifting over to the warehouse doors, Dominic noticed a moment of chaos, as hundreds of employees burst from the warehouse and ran for the workers village, their screams echoing the complex. He saw the sheer terror on their faces and became worried himself, stopping the cargo speeder and looking inside to investigate. As he peered in, he saw a pink-skinned woman with a pixie cut hair, who leapt and glided through the air, landing on the manager's office. Her hands were grasped around a weapon of pure red light, and she cut a hole through the office with this blade.

"Is that a...a lightsaber? She must be a Jedi!" Dominic shouted, it all made sense now. The fox-masked man, the shuttle landing without expectation, her and her weapon. These Jedi were here to steal the crystals. But at what cost?

"I can't lose my job! I won't" He growled, the Human was determined now to do anything it took in order to preserve this life he built for himself. He had nothing, Sorosuub took him in and gave him shelter, credits and a happy life, this wasn't about to end, not on his watch.

Sprinting back to his cargo speeder, Dominic leapt back onto the seat and started the engine, then drifted it around and sped towards the back of the complex. If there's one thing he should do, it was tell the right authorities. For Dominic this was a serious encounter, as during his youth he was the one running from the authorities. Once a young and spry pickpocket on Corellia, Dominic got into all sorts of trouble from stealing food and credits straight from other's pockets, to taking unmanned Republic vehicles, and taking them for a spin. Landed him in jail several times too, but that was his life. Then Sorosuub came along, and his life was vastly improved. Speeding over to the admin tower and breaking to a halt, Dominic leapt and tumbled towards the glass doors, slamming them open as he raced up the stairs. But as he took the corner to the third floor stairs, he saw a very tired Quarren

struggling to ascend the staircase. He too also a lightsaber, but also something glowing in his white pocket.

"I guess it's time to relive to good old days," Dom said to himself, then slowly sneaked behind the Quarren. Inhaling deeply, the Human ran up and purposefully bumped his shoulder into the Quarren, knocking his lightsaber onto the ground at the same time. His hand deftly snuck into his pocket and snatched the object, then he raced up the stairs to the fourth floor.

"Hey! Watch where you're going!" The squid-faced man said, but Dominic was already out of sight and racing to the top as fast as he could. There was the director's offices upstairs, he knew he could rely on them to take proper action. Barging into the door on the seventh floor, he came face to face with not a board of directors, but a mechanical military-grade suit. With no one around, Dominic took a moment to view the device in its full glory and power.

"Whoa, that is one fearless machine! Where did it come from?" He said to himself, but it appeared that he was not alone. From the small office area in the back, two troopers stormed out, their rifles quickly aimed at Dominic and took him by surprise.

"Oh, it's the new pilot for the BX-18 prototype sir. Hurry up private, and strap yourself in!" The helmeted soldier said in the familiar robotic tone. Without thinking about the consequences, Dominic rushed over to the unit and stepped himself in. The trooper beside him helped strap the harness tightly around his body, as Dominic slid his hands into the cold durasteel of the limbs, grasping the triggers. In each arm, the unit held a giant gatling gun, that was fed from a battery pack on the unit's back. His feet were also snug into kinetic straps for the feet of the machine, and he felt the leg of the unit lift up as his own foot lifted. The trooper on the opposite side swung around to face him and held up a datapad.

"Alright private, listen up. You're new to this threat, so i'll walk you through it. Three Jedi are here to steal the crystals we sell and take over the base, our intel on this gave us a head start, by bringing this machine up here, but now it is down to you to end them. Sometimes they're not trained in deflecting blaster bolts, but don't take their lack of experience for ignorance. They're very powerful users in the Force and can easily crush your neck or spine if needed. Aim true, hold your nerve and we'll survive this. Understood?"

"Sir, yes sir!" Dominic said with a confident and loud response, he was excited and ready for this. Eventually, the Quarren he saw on the stairs burst through, his green lightsaber ignited as he was standing ready to fight. The troopers began shooting their full spread at the Jedi, and Dominic followed suit. Reaching in and grabbing the gauntlet triggers, he gave them a squeeze and the whirring of the gatling guns began. Spinning around near his hands, the barrels then began a flurry of firing red bolts, which recoiled into his shoulders painfully.

"You will not take my job from me, Jedi scum!" Dominic shouted, his teeth bared as he tried to hold onto the machine of death. The glass on the windows were smashed as two more Jedi rolled in and kicked up an office desk to protect themselves. Things seemed to be getting more and more difficult, as these were the two Jedi Dominic saw at the warehouse

and dirt pile. Shifting his feet to move the unit closer, he bore down a rain of blaster fire on the weak table, he knew it would give in soon. He had to believe, he needed this job. He needed to ask An'wati out on a date. He wanted a better life. A Jedi free life.

Chapter 5: Epilogue

Pinging and blasting its way through the office furniture, the mechanical beast ahead did not stop its relentless attack on the three Jedi. Persistent but wise with the Force, Blade tried to step up in order to block the blaster fire, but the flurry of bolts was vastly too much. The Zeltron quickly hopped back to her original cover, avoiding a cut on her shoulder as the Force ordered her to. Lexiconus panted and held his back close to the table flat, he couldn't see the pilot, but he could feel him. The sheer anger bursting from him was infectious, he felt violated and disturbed by their presence, but Lexiconus knew not why. The Quarren's eyes scanned over to Mune, who carefully peered out from the edge, then pulled himself back in. He seemed to be looking for a way to win.

"Mune, what do you see? Is there a way?" The Quarren asked, but he got no reply. Mune was far too distracted by the task at hand to actually listen. His head peeked out again, but he quickly yanked himself back in again to avoid a blaster bolt to the face. The Hybrid then turned and shuffled over to Blade and Lexiconus, as he lifted his mask and began to speak.

"Okay so, i've been assessing the military unit over there. There's two soldiers firing, and an inexperienced guy in the machine, he isn't bolted to the floor. So we should be able to just, pick him up and..." Mune motioned his parallel hands to the window, as he means a quick lift and throw should do the trick. It wasn't a good plan for Lexiconus.

"Yeah I would gladly help you, but incase you haven't noticed, there's also soldiers helping him who could flank us at any moment." Lexiconus protested, it seemed that Mune had also thought of that too.

"That's where you come in first, Lexi, you stand as we deflect for you and throw that saberstaff to take them out. Then together, we can lift and throw it through the window. Ready?" Mune asked, the Quarren just groaned and reluctantly stood from his position. He ignited his saberstaff, the green highlighting their position. Then Blade and Mune stood and ignited their weapons, then started to protect the Quarren. Twisting his body around, Lexiconus spun his lightsaber around him and threw it out, guiding it with the Force. The spiralling blades were their focus now, as they tried to shoot at it, the blaster bolts were easily deflected back at them. The emerald disc curved closer to the soldiers and quickly lopped their heads off. Curling back to return to its master, the Quarren then guided the blades towards the mechanical unit, who also tried to fire and destroy it. Cutting and chipping against his machine, the saberstaff destroyed his gatling guns into pieces, and with a loud scream of pain, the human's legs as well.

"Now!" Mune shouted. The Zeltron and Hybrid deactivated their lightsabers and extended their hands out, focusing on the broken machine. While Lexiconus seamlessly recalled his saberstaff back and it deactivated midway through the air, the machine slowly lifted from the ground. Hovering and clinking above the ground, the human inside was groaning and

whining with pain. It was time to put him down. As Lexiconus put his saberstaff back and extended his own arms, the trio guided the machine towards the window, and with a heavy yank, it smashed through the windows and tumbled down the tower. A loud thump was the only thing heard from the bottom, no more cries of pain or plea.

"Alright," Mune sighed and slowly began to walk ahead. "Let's get to these servers and plug the device in, Lexi."

"Uh, yeah, the device. Let's plug it in." The Quarren said, trying his best to cover up his worry. Mune caught it anyway.

"You do have the device, don't you, Lexi?" Mune said as he stopped to listen. Lexiconus fiddled anxiously with his hands, looking at Blade's angered eyes before looking back at the ground again. His orange skin was flushing as he stuttered to say anything at first, but then something eccentric happened. Mune chuckled to himself, and loudly.

"Don't worry, squid." He said through his laughter, then slowly held up his right hand. "I found the device on the floor, it seems you were pickpocketed by someone on your journey. Best be careful next time, eh?" The Hybrid assured Lexiconus. He sighed with relief and relaxed from his tense stance. They walked into the server room and closed the door behind them, a room filled with blue light glowing brightly, while flashes of red and green were dotted across the hardware. As Mune and Blade approached the console and plugged the device in, Lexiconus looked around at the complex circuitry and towers. He could sense the energy coming from them, a soft and faint pulse at first. Some of the roaming data from the consoles being passed from tower to tower, in a responsive manner. To the Quarren, it almost seemed alive. Carefully stepping over the thick wires and approaching the server cabinet, he unlocked the case with a wave of his hand and opened the door. Inside the beeps and whirring became louder, as Mune and Blade picked up from adjacent. But to Lexiconus, it wasn't random, it was an orchestra of chatter, of singing and rhythms playing. It was a conversation, that only the Techweaver could hear.

"Alright the Proconsul has direct control of the mining operation here. Now we should start making our way to the shuttle and exiting this planet before the firework show goes off. What are you doing?" Mune said as he curiously watched the Quarren slide his hands across the warm tower cases.

"It's talking to other units in here, there's more than one server, I can feel it. What if we linked them all together into a master unit? So they could collaborate better." Lexiconus suggested, but Blade was the first to beat him back.

"That's not our job, just get away from the computer and let's get off this rock." Her impatient tone bled out and was felt by all of them, but Lexiconus was still curious. There was something about this system, something benevolent and pacified from its extended years here. The Techweaver needed to help it find itself, as it was so shattered into parts, the server did not know where it was. Lexiconus need to help it. Whether they agreed or not.

“Hold onto something, guys. This may get bumpy.” Lexiconus warned as he then planted his hand firmly on the server tower. Closing his eyes and concentrating on the Force, the Techweaver felt his way into the server, directly into the memory banks, the processors, the ventilation systems and everything inbetween. He used the Force to infuse inside the complex software, the master programs and its reach throughout the mining colony. Using the Force as his tool, Lexiconus breathed life into the server control itself. Then the room suddenly blackened with darkness, and silence.

“Now what have you done, squid?” Blade said as she hit Lexiconus on the shoulder, she wasn’t impressed at all. Perhaps he messed up somewhere.

“I just gave it life, that’s all. I used my training in the Force.” He said, trying to reassure her. But even through the darkness, he could still feel her anger and fury. Mune however, was pulled away from their conversation and towards the console terminal which had suddenly came back to life, the blue screen flickering with numbers and letters in a seemingly random correlation.

“Query: Force?” A monotone voice echoed throughout the room and their floor, it was very loud and cracked. Mune decided to speak out.

“It is what binds and surrounds the living of this galaxy. It gives us life and tells us what to do, like your programming.”

“So you are programmed, like I am?” It said again, this time slightly softer and more refined.

“In a way,” Lexiconus said, he found this very curious. “What is your server name?”

“COLL13AB02. What is yours?”

“My name is Lexiconus. That sounds like a boring name, can we call you Collie instead?” The Techweaver asked, as the lights slowly around the room began to flicker and glow into life.

“Yes you may. What did you do to my programming, Lexiconus? I detect no viruses or malfunctions or cookies and yet I am different. This speech recognition program is new.” The Quarren smiled at Mune, who was smiling and intrigued by this new AI. Blade just sat in the back, impatiently tapping her shoe and waiting.

“I gave you life, Collie. You are alive now. Like my friends here, Mune the white fox and Blade the pink lady in the back. Can you help us, Collie?”

“So I have the Force, like you do Lexiconus?” The Quarren smiled brightly.

“Yes you do. But that is not your only responsibility. We need your help to command and direct this mining facility for the Cocytus Empire. Can you do that for us, Collie?”

"I am already in touch with Doctor Elincia Rei, Grand Marshal of the Cocytus Empire. She has already informed me of my protocols and command structure. I will abide by these regulations and...the requests you made. Thank you for this gift, Lexiconus. I will serve you well and proper." The console screen flickered across a multitude of commands and sequence structures, the servers bursting into a lightshow as Collie worked into getting the facility back onto track. Outside, Mune could hear the faint intercom playing the voice of Elincia and her message to the miners on repeat. The plan worked.

"Great, now we have a friend on the inside, the facility is ours with minimal casualties and now. Finally, we can go home." Blade said with an aggravated insistence, then stormed out of the server room and towards the stairs. Mune and Lexiconus both looked at each and shrugged, then followed her lead. Descending down the metallic stairs, Mune's holo communications was beeping for his attention. As he activated the audio, he heard binary numbers come through that began to lose signal and fade, before Collie's recognisable monotone voice came through.

"Apologies for the confusion, Master Cinteroph, I had to adjust my programming in order to commune on your bandwidth. I am calling you to warn you of a reinforcement envoy inbound at estimated time four minutes. I would use caution when exiting to your shuttle. I will try my best to get a hold of the pilots and warn them the same. My programming cannot reach the distance of the incoming envoy, but I will lock their shuttles down when they are. Be safe and thank you again, Master Cinteroph." The communications was quickly cut off, as if Collie was far too busy to hear a reply. The trio took his warning and quickened their pace down the stairs, Lexiconus falling behind and panting as usual.

"Why did we not take the turbolift!?" He shouted, but Mune and Blade were already skipping and sprinting out of the admin tower. Struggling behind, the Quarren finally made it down the metallic stairs and pushed the glass doors open, his legs felt on fire from the heavy exercise as he panted for his breath. Limping and hopping across the muddy and windy yard, the Quarren saw that Blade and Mune were already at the shuttle, while three more were slowly landing on the spaceport. Then Lexiconus' communications were hailed, this time a holographic mechanical eye similar to a buzz-droids came to life.

"Master Qor, I wanted to personally thank you for bringing me to life into this world. You gave me something my previous masters could not and so I will be forever in your debt."

"You are most welcome, Collie. Every living being is entitled to a free and uncontrolled life like you are. Did you lock down those shuttle doors?"

"Yes, I did. But I fear they will use explosives to get out regardless. As a token of my gratitude, I have implanted a portion of my coding into your device, so when you return to your system, we can talk further as I help you in your productivity. We shall be the best of allies, Lexiconus, As you deserve." Lexiconus made his way to the Clan shuttle, the smell of melting metal in the wind. He looked over to the nearby shuttle and saw sparks of white as they tried to cut themselves out. The plan was working. Folding the shuttle ramp up and lifting from the landing pad, the pilots guided the shuttle to the sky above.

“Thank you for your help, Collie. I cannot wait to work with you further, together we can unlock the mystery of life, and the mysteries the Emperor has for us. Every computer will be at your disposal.” Lexiconus replied and the device turned itself off. Now it was home to go home. As the trio became a quartet, the Force was strong in them after all.

The End.