

Justinios Drake, momentarily out of the reach of his attackers, took a moment to reflect on the course of events that had caused him to take up temporary residence in the ruins of the Library of Lears. It all began with a set of ancient star charts that Professor Drake's graduate assistant had found deep within the university archives. The maps had led the Aleena to the impressive repository on Karufr and the knowledge that this Library belonged to a group of Force users that called themselves Clan Taldryan. Justinios' excitement wore out quickly once the turbolaser fire began raining from the sky.

The reptilian academic recalled approaching a group of soldiers shortly after he had regained consciousness and realized he had survived the bombardment. To his surprise the troopers responded to the request for assistance with blaster fire, which had provided Professor Drake the motivation to squirm his way back into the twisted mess that had once been the Library.

*What a waste, the professor thought to himself, the entire library was destroyed before I even had a chance to read a single tome and to make matters worse I blacked out before I could take any measurements of the orbital bombardment.*

The Aleena's mind turned back to the present and the fact that the troopers had also not yet given up on their extermination attempt. Justinios' untimely demise was only being delayed by a debate on the best way to accomplish this goal. One trooper believed that a thermal detonator would be able to make it through enough of the gaps in the rubble before exploding, turning their quarry into a shrapnel pincushion even if the energy from the explosion wasn't enough to turn him to dust. Another suggested that an anti-tank missile would penetrate more of the wreckage than the thermal detonator which would allow for a detonation much further into the ruins. As two sides formed to discuss the merits of both options Justinios decided that he didn't need to work through the equations himself. *In either scenario, the probability of mortal wounds is very high.*

The blue-skinned professor began to look for exits out of the ruined building that would lead him away from the soldiers when he heard what sounded like superheated plasma cutting through both organic and inorganic matter. As someone who spent their life's work studying Force users it wasn't difficult for Justinios to identify the device making this sound. The most

obvious cutting tool that used this type of technology was the fabled lightsaber. The screams of the Aleena's former predators indicated they were on the receiving end of the weapon in question. Justinios paused to consider making contact with whomever had dispatched the soldiers. He knew there was no guarantee that this new combatant would be any less hostile towards him as the previous group.

*Considering my complete lack of other options the risk is justified.* With that thought Justinios carefully wiggled his reptilian body back out of the ruins. As he reached the edge of the debris pile Professor Drake saw was an armor-clad human kneeling over one of the corpses, two lightsabers hanging from his belt. Justinios poked his head just far enough out of his hiding place to initiate contact, "Um, hello?"

"I wondered if you'd come out of there", the human said to him while maintaining his focus on whatever he was searching for. If the lightsaber didn't give him away as a Force user, the human's ability to sense him within the rubble definitely did. Excitement shot through Justinios' body as he realized was having his first interaction with someone who could physically manifest Force energy to effect the physical world!

"Seeing as the last group that I had asked for assistance immediately shot at me I hope you can forgive any reluctance on my part," Justinios replied with most of his body within the relative safety of the wrecked building.

"Who did that? These guys?" The man said gesturing to the bodies strewn around him. "I don't think they will be bothering you anymore. My name is Rian Taldrya and my ship is the last chance you'll have to get off this planet alive."

With no alternative Justinios knew the only prudent option was to befriend the warrior. He finished his exit from the wreckage, brushed himself off, walked over to Rian and bowed, "Professor Justinios Drake, pleased to meet you."

Rian laughed, "There will be time for introductions after we've escaped the warzone." As his rescuer stood up Justinios was awed at the full array of weapons and armor on display. "You're that off-worlder that got access to the library are you not?"

“Yes that is me!” The Aleena got very excited, even being in the middle of an invasion couldn’t dull the professor’s enthusiasm for his research. “I was here to find evidence to prove my hypothesis,” Justinios said rather smugly, “that the Force is connected to the physical world through some form of sub-atomic particle we have yet to be able to discover.”

“That is some amazing stuff little guy but we really need to keep it down and keep moving. Someone is going to come looking for these guys.”

Justinios continued in a whisper as the duo began to walk through the destroyed cityscape, “If I can identify this particle and study it I may be able to...”

Rian grabbed the professor by both of his tiny shoulders, “Unless you want to get chopped to pieces by one of the Justicar’s lackeys I recommend shutting that blue mouth of yours until we have made it to my ship.”

Justinios needed no further clarification to the Jedi’s request and remained silent until they had reached the well hidden shuttle. Rian waved his charge aboard the craft and quickly jumped into the pilot’s seat. As the warrior began to prepare for liftoff Justinios plopped himself in the co-pilot’s chair. “I have to ask, why did you save me?”

“The same reason you were given access to the Library of Lears,” Rian said as the ship launched into hyperspace, “someone on Karufr noticed you were Force sensitive and we had hoped to recruit you into our ranks. I’ve been making runs for survivors since our enemy’s main forces are chasing what remains of...”

Justinios lost focus on the words coming out of Rian’s mouth as his brain tried to process the revelation that he was Force sensitive. *Wait am I a Jedi? Are they going to train me? What kind of experiments can I run now? Do I get a lightsaber?*

The thoughts came faster than even the professor’s agile brain could handle. “I’m sorry... Rian I just need a... reset.” As the last word left his mouth, Justinios slumped over in the co-pilot’s chair, his overloaded central nervous system having caused him to faint.