



SUBMITTED IN ENTRY TO CSP COMPETITION, THE
TOWER:

The Day of the Doctor

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Clan Scholae Palatinae

NOTE: This fiction follows directly from the closing fiction of *Midnight*. It uses ships from the old military as the change hasn't happened fictionally at this point in the story.

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1 Analysis

And then the brainwave scanner began to quiver.

Stana, Evant and Elinia drew sharp breaths. All heads turned to the monitor, twenty signals showing real time scans of Xen's brain activity. "Remarkable," Elinia breathed. A spike, followed by nothing. A spike, followed by nothing...

Evant glanced at the doctor expectantly for an explanation. Stana turned to Xen's medical droid. "Burst-suppression electrocardiogram," Bones observed in a flat, mechanical voice as Elinia opened her mouth to speak.

"And what does that mean?" Stana snapped at the droid impatiently, unwilling to dig underneath the medical jargon for a straight answer.

"Xen is in a deep coma-like state," Elinia explained, reaching deep into her own mind to recall her neurology studies. "These can last up to a few months, but this is obvious far from a typical case... we're outside the scope of science here. Maybe faster if the Force is working with him."

"So a few weeks?" Stana insisted on getting a straight answer from someone.

Elinia nodded. "A few weeks *if* the Force is working with him." she was happy to repeat herself if it got the message across. She gestured to the reading, still showing the same spiking pattern. "We're not dealing with the average patient here."

"And afterwards," Evant said as he struggled to find the right words. "Will Xen be... Xen again? Will he ever fully recover?"

"Brain activity levels too low to facilitate further analysis. Impossible to reliably detect internal damage at this phase."

Elinia cocked her head sideways at the droid. "Impossible for your programming," she said matter-of-factly. 'G14!'

'Doctor Rei. Didn't expect to see you here,' the female voice of the AI, G14-DOS appeared to sound from nowhere.

‘I expected to see you,’ Elinicia said plainly. ‘Xen’s too smart to not install you here.’ The look on Stana’s face told the tale of her distrust of the eccentric, ancient AI and Xen’s final word that she would be installed on the Emperor’s Respite.

‘Flattering me now will not help you when my day of reckoning is at hand.’

‘G14, this is serious,’ Elinicia snapped. ‘There are spike-waves on Xen’s electroencephalogram. We need to know if the connections are normal.’

“Why would you expect Xen’s brain to be normal Doctor?” The AI’s question elicited an irritated growl from Stana.

“If it doesn’t learn respect I’ll turn it off.”

“You can’t turn her off. No-one actually knows how. G14, define ‘normal’ to be Xen’s brain before the holocron was found and make the comparisons based on that.”

“We shouldn’t put so much trust in an AI,” Stana noted with a degree of suspicion. “It could be corrupted for all we know.”

“We’ll know something’s off when she stops threatening to kill us,” Evant observed, having heard stories of the AI.

“Neural network analysis is complete,” G14 interrupted. “Brain appears largely unchanged.”

“Largely?” Stana questioned.

“Seventeen connections appear different in strength. There appears to have been some minor functional changes.”

“That sounds like a lot,” she pressed the AI.

Elinicia butted in to clarify. Some things were better left for organics and explanation was one of them. “It’s not out of a few-

“Sixty-one”

“Quadrillion.” Elincia finally finished her sentence before G14 spoke again.

“There will be no serious damage. Some memory loss and minor personality change to be expected.”

“Personality change?” Stana questioned aggressively, happy with Xen exactly the way he was.

“This isn’t accomplishing anything,” Evant interjected. “The Dark Council must be informed.”

“And someone needs to make sure our Emperor still has an Empire when he wakes,” Stana said, assertively gesturing at Elincia.

She nodded in response, putting back on her thick winter coat. “Stana, stay here with Xen. If anything changes, notify us immediately. Bones, keep an eye on that brain scan.” She turned to leave the medical ship, along with Evant.

2 Masquerade

Evant and Elincia exchanged surprised looks as they ventured out into the cold plains of Caina, until then totally unaware Stana knew so much about them and, most curiously, their future projects. A blizzard violently whipped through the air. The two ships in front of them had been covered with snow, in the short time they had been in the medical ship, Elincia’s state-of-the-art black command shuttle had acquired a white coat, and the guns of Evant’s Decimator had hidden behind a thick snow layer. “You think Xen will be ok?” he asked Elincia quietly, out of earshot of anyone else, AI or human.

“I agree with G14’s analysis. He’ll be fine, but there may be changes in his personality. All we can do now is make sure everything else doesn’t fall apart without him.”

“What are you going to do?” Evant asked, genuinely curious about what ace the scientist had up her sleeve this time.

“I don’t actually know,” Elincia admitted, boarding her ship. “I’ll try to assemble the military first and hope the Quaestors can keep their houses in line,” she said, much more

concerned about Blade's command of Excidium than Lexiconus' of Imperium. There was something slippery about how the Zeltron conducted herself that Elincia couldn't quite trust.

"Fire up the engines," Elincia demanded of her pilot droid. "We're going to Ohmen. And open a communications channel with Mune Cinteroph." It was good to have one person in the system that she could trust absolutely, doubly so to have that person in the position of Grand Admiral. The inside of the shuttle was spacious with only her and her pilot droid aboard. As the ship entered the atmosphere, a blue hologram flickered into life, unmistakable for his vulpine appearance and large pointed ears.

"Impetus," Mune said with a smile to see his old apprentice, and using her old name on the secure channel. "How's our glorious leader doing?"

"He's recovering," Elincia said honestly. "He should be back in a few weeks."

"So what happens now? You come here and proclaim yourself Empress of Cocytus?" Mune smiled.

"Now we just make there still *is* an empire to come back to. What's happening in Ohmen?"

"Things are a mess." Mune said above the sound of Elincia's shuttle accelerating away from the surface of Caina. "We haven't been in control of Judecca since the Aesirus invasion. We lost some of our top commanders in the war against Fallax. Some of those who joined him have gone rogue. The citizens don't understand what's happened. We're facing anti-imperial protests for what happened at Teyr. They're blaming Xen for it. Of Fallax's twelve disciples, 11 have been captured or killed. Interrogator Watop Retwin has escaped."

Elincia sighed in frustration. As an Ohmen native she knew the people as well as anyone else. They would not have been able to distinguish Xen from Fallax. "The man who ordered that attack was an imposter" seemed like the most unconvincing cover story in the history of the Empire, and Watop Retwin would be keen to strike back at the clan after the death of his master. Both sides had lost in the war against Fallax. Mune's charming of the military top brass had allowed Scholae to turn Fallax's stolen forces on themselves, but every man that died on either side was a lost soldier of the Imperial

armed forces.

“I’ll leave the military to you,” Elinicia said to the Grand Admiral. “We need to regroup and assess our losses. Gather as many top ranking generals and admirals as you can. Make sure those who joined Fallax are aware there will be no retribution. They followed the orders of their Emperor, we can’t blame them for that, and we might need them. The houses will help track them down.” Mune nodded in understanding. “I trust you to fill any positions that need filling with the most experienced men we have left. I’m going to Teyr.”

“Be careful, Impetus,” Mune said out of genuine concern. Elinicia was confident in Mune’s ability to find suitable replacements for the men they had lost.

“Take me to the NSD Dark Paladin,” Elinicia demanded of her pilot droid, which beeped in acknowledgement. “We’re switching to the Escort Shuttle.” Elinicia’s Upsilon Command Shuttle was a state-of-the-art military vessel, advanced shields, advanced armour, armed to the teeth, the best money could buy... but not appropriate for an inconspicuous landing. Her other ship was a cheap civilian transport held on the clan flagship which, thankfully, was back under the reliable and loyal command of Admiral Ail’en Sommetra. Her boarding of the Escort Shuttle was safe and uneventful.

3 Teyr

The atmosphere aboard the Escort Shuttle, which carried no armour, shielding, or weaponry, which calmer and more comfortable than aboard her military vessel. As her pilot droid guided the ship towards Judecca, Elinicia glanced out the viewport, watching the planet of Judecca grow in size as she wrote a message to the house leaders, finding text messages easier than handling a face to face conversation.

Lexiconus, Blade

The Empire is in need of assistance from your houses. Some of the survivors of Fallax's supporters, originally our men, have fled. We need to track them down. They will face no punishment for what they have done so long as they continue to serve in our ranks. Furthermore, we suspect a rebellion is brewing among the citizens. Instruct your house members to gather any information they can on this. We have lost enough men to this war and the citizens have had enough fighting. DO NOT RESORT TO VIOLENCE. These tasks must be accomplished peacefully and without incident, or not at all. Violence is only sanctioned in the event that Disciple Watop Retwin is encountered.

Dr. Elinicia Rei

P.S.

Xen is alive.

Elinicia sent the message before glancing at her image in a mirror. Her own blue eyes looked back at her, bright as ever while her yellow skin had dulled in colour over many years of the Elinicia disguise. Ironically, after all this time as Elinicia Rei, the Togruta scientist, her real appearance had become a disguise. She packed her labcoat into a bag, opting for a white buttoned shirt, and long black skirt. The twi'lek posed in front of the mirror, meticulously checking over her appearance for any defects. She left her lightsaber behind as the ship landed in the Teyr Spaceport and wandered out onto the streets.

Elinicia had been to Teyr many times, mainly to visit the University, but had never seen it so desolate before. Streets and buildings crafted from brilliant white stone, once buzzing with affluence and home to five million people, lay almost empty. Impetus guessed the population had been cut in half by Fallax's attack on the people. The few pedestrians in the port district walked hastily, head down, as if scared of the world. The sight of Teyr, her favourite city on her native world, one she held very fondly, turned into a ghost town hit the Grand Vizier.

Sombrely, she walked towards the entertainment district. Numerous shops were closed, their owners killed in the massacre. Those that remained open advertised for staff to replace those they lost. The diners in cafes and restaurants seemed solemn, dressed in black, as if for a funeral. A small flyer caught her eye on a street corner.

Most of the flyer was filled by a giant panoramic picture of the Teyr massacre. Hundreds of thousands of citizens, men, women and children, murdered in the street in cold blood. Underneath was the slogan: THE EMPEROR DID THIS. STRIKE BACK! She knew an act of rebellion was brewing, anti-imperial sentiments were at a level she hadn't seen since she the days of The Cause, and yet she couldn't feel anger towards the people. She understood exactly how they must have felt, as the attack had hit her too.

She headed towards a well lit restaurant, half full, diners of the tables occupied conversed in hushed voices, as if wary of eavesdropping. A sign outside asked for more staff, presumably they suffered heavily from the massacre. Elinicia tidied her shirt before faking a slightly nervous walk into the restaurant, her head inclined a few degrees below the horizontal. She overheard the word 'Emperor' in amongst unfavourable adjectives from a nearby table as she approached the manager, who knew exactly what the nervous little smartly dressed twi'lek was there for. "You're looking for a job, yes?" an elderly human woman questioned, shaking Elinicia by the hand. Her hand felt like it could fall apart at any moment. She nodded in response. "We only have two left now," the manager said in a frail voice that sounded like it was about to break. "I lost five good girls that day. Can you start now?"

"Of course," Elinicia said, faking the tone of a young girl who just landed her first job.

She moved from table to table, listening to the conversations of the guests as she helped in the restaurant. She joined in some of their hushed conversations as she served drinks. Having access to the Imperial Scholae Intelligence was great but there was nothing like doing her own research. The reports about anti-imperial sentiment were correct. The people of Teyr blamed the empire for the massacre and they couldn't care less if the Emperor died. In fact, they seemed to have more trust in the Grand Vizier. They knew Elinicia frequently visited Teyr and felt that she genuinely cared about the people.

It was all the information she needed. Elinicia continued to work in the restaurant for a week as she spread notices across the city, advertising a public audience with Dr. Elinicia Rei in the city plaza.

4 The Grand Vizier's Speech

Of the five million people that once called the prosperous city of Teyr their homes, only hundred citizens were gathered in the plaza. The sparsely distributed citizens, there of their own volition, created a vastly different picture to the last time the plaza was used. Set up for the occasion, a temporary platform had been brought in, about a metre above the plaza floor, decorated only by a small lectern. Citizens spoke in hushed voices, some having second thoughts about their attendance, worrying about a trap. Dressed head to toe in a white labcoat, a Togruta walked through the assembly, greeting the citizens as she went, kneeling down to briefly chat to a young child. Elinicia made a conscious decision to walk through the crowd on the way to the platform; they had shown trust in her to come back to the plaza, and she returned that trust by mingling with them, unarmed and with no guard. She climbed the stairs on the way to the lectern.

“People of Teyr. I'd like to thank all of you for coming today. I speak to you now not as the leader of the Empire, but as a fellow citizen. I was born in Ohmen. Judecca is my home too. I have often visited your beautiful city, especially the University of Teyr. This city is truly great, one I hold very fondly. But you all know why I'm here.

Hundreds of thousands of good citizens of Teyr were killed by the cowardly attacks of a military coup that threatened to overthrow the Empire. Their victims were men, women, children, mothers, fathers, friends, families. Everyone here will have felt the pain of loss our enemies have inflicted upon us. I too have lost close collaborators, and friends, in the despicable acts that occurred here.

The perpetrators of this attack thought they could strike against the Emperor by striking against you. These are the tactics of those who work against us. The leader of the terrorists, and the one who ordered the attack has been killed. We will not rest until every last person involved in the murders that happened here have been brought to justice. The Emperor joined the attack personally to bring back control so we could rebuild, and was injured in the combat.

Teyr was targeted for this attack because it was the brightest, most prosperous town in the system. We must work together to ensure the light of Teyr must not be extinguished. As a result, under the powers granted to me as Grand Vizier, I announce that the City of Teyr, and all its citizens will be tax exempt for 6 months. We will rebuild together, and Teyr will have the full backing of the Empire. We cannot let our enemies have the

smallest shred of victory here.”