**The Attack**

The fighting grew closer as Taranae and her team backed into the spaceport. The outside had been overrun and if the spaceport fell, the Pinnacle would be next. Vanessa stood, panting to the rear of the group and Kul’tak was as always in these situations, at his former Master’s side.

“What should we do now, Taranae?” he asked, with great concern showing on his face.

Taranae’s face screwed up as she concentrated. It was difficult considering all that had happened during the attack, but her mind reached out and surveyed the battle. The droids had been followed from the caves by droves of Geonosians, some on foot, some using their wings to soar above the battlefield and rain death from above. The fight was getting closer and forces were falling by the number. Reeling back her thoughts, she turned and faced her men. They were fewer than she had before they raced for the spaceport, but still enough to cause some damage. Mostly the Force users had survived, but a few non-force users and willing were still alive to fight alongside the Sith.

Opening her mouth to speak, she stilled as a sudden rumble shook the building. As if in slow motion, the floor began to give way as a great hole appeared and the sides of the opening crevasse slowly started to sink in towards the epicentre. The floor crumbled and fell inwards, revealing a passageway under the spaceport that surely must have led to the tunnels under Aliso and Taranae wondered just how far they reached.

In a flurry of movement, the hole erupted in a swarm of flying Geonosians and they were quickly followed by hundreds of droids as they poured into the building. Wasting no time, the Plagueis forces attacked, cutting down wave after wave of attackers. Taranae’s blades whirred and flashed as she cut down geonosians and droids alike, putting to use movements she had practiced and perfected in the training arenas. Decapitating a droid, she turned and swept at the legs of a following Geonosian as it raised its staff to attack her. The body slumped forwards as the creature clicked in pain, and she ran it through quickly with her saberstaff. Looking upon the scene around her, she knew that they would lose unless something drastic was done quickly. Ideas ran through her head and she found none of them plausible without losing most of her team. Suddenly her comm unit crackled to life.

“Taranae? This is Selika. We need a diversion. You need to stall the attackers and leave us a way through to the tunnels so we can reach the Queen. We have located her but we need you to draw the fighting away so we can reach her. Can you do that?”

She quickly looked around and met the eyes of her team. With a series of hand motions, she relayed her intentions.

“Yes, we can do that. How soon do you want us to do it?” she asked.

“NOW,” Seilka replied. “We need to move out immediately before the starport is taken.”

“On it.” She replied as the comm unit clicked off. Making sure all in the building heard her and knowing at least some of the attackers would understand her language, she shouted to the defenders.

“Kul, Vanessa and anyone else that wants to end this fast. Place charges around the doors. We’re going to blow them to stop reinforcements from the outside. We’ll leave open the tunnels and we’ll attack this point here and drive them all into the hangar where we’ll trap them all.”

“Understood!” came the reply, as all her team moved to begin placing explosives. There was a sudden crescendo of clicking sounds as the geonosians who had understood the exchange relayed it to those that didn’t as they kept on fighting. A rumble could be heard below as the message was passed down the tunnels and more attackers were drawn into the one tunnel below to stop the suspected trap from being triggered. Taranae sneered as she knew even more of the Queen’s troops were being taken away from her chamber to rout the Sith’s forces.

The defenders pushed the attack as more enemies swarmed the opening and the geonosians and droids fell by the score. Unfortunately, the ruse had always been a risky one and Plagueis forces were also beginning to lose ground as they fell to the weapons and sheer numbers thrown at them by the enemy. Plagueis began to fall back as the bugs began to gain ground and all seemed to sense that the battle had been lost.

Suddenly the attackers stopped. The battle droids looked around, confused at what they were seeing as nobody was directing them. The Geonosians dropped their heads and their weapons.

“Taranae, this is Selika. We have the Queen and she has surrendered. Well done, we knew you could do it.”

“Yes but at what cost?” answered the Sith. “We lost many good men today. We almost lost the Pinnacle.”

“But you didn’t.” Selika’s smooth tone replied. “And for that you will be rewarded. Meet me in my chambers after you and your team sort out the mess in the starport. Selika out.”

Taranae growled under her breath and motioned to Kul and Vanessa to start rounding up the prisoners. Somehow she sensed that this wasn’t completely over.