**Delayed Arrival**

**Shadow Academy  
Private Quarters of Erik Cato**  
Who knew that a message could cause so much trouble? The signal was picked up by the Shadow Academy who transferred it over to the private quarters of Erik Cato. Recently promoted to Hunter, his studies were getting more and more difficult. He didn’t have the advantage of local knowledge, having only arrived a year ago and so extra efforts were made to catch up on the recent history of his clan. Five years ago he didn’t even know what the Force was called and now he was to be its master one day.

Lothal astromech BG78 was busy accessing his living space’s terminal when the message came through. The droid accepted the data and projected an image of his master from over 700 parsecs away.  
  
“This is Lilith Versea-Stormwind. We require your presence in Sang Karash at once, apprentice. There have been some terror attacks by genetically altered individuals in the industrial district and we need all the help we can get. We've set up a temporary command centre. More details will be transmitted en route, including our coordinates. Leave immediately!”

The message ended as abruptly as it began.

After alerting his instructors and requisitioning a small shuttle, Erik plotted a course to the Orian system and the jungle planet of Aeotheran. When he finally exited hyperspace, the newly appointed Hunter was met by two old Z-95s with no registry broadcasts.   
  
“Pirates! Transfer weapon power to shields and engines. We’re getting out of here.” He shouted quickly to his accompanying astromech. Gripping the controls tightly, he veered off to the left and entered a roll to evade a series of ion blasts from behind their ship. The shuttle was not well equipped for combat and it took all of Erik’s concentration to stay out of harm’s way.   
  
“Plot a jump, BG. We can’t take much more of this!” He could hear the droid moving across the cockpit to an access terminal port to plug in.

A questioning whistle was heard over the roaring blasts of ion.  
  
“I don’t care just jump now!” The ship lurched violently to the right without Erik steering it and faced the nearby green planet. Erik’s eyes widened as he heard the hyperdrive activating. The ship shook violently under a direct hit from an ion blast and the cockpit lit up in a surge of electricity “WHAT-“  
  
They appeared on the other side of the planet, having made a near suicidal jump out of hyperspace. Everything in the transport went black.   
  
“-DID YOU DO?!”  
  
BG78 unplugged itself and moved closer to Erik, assessing him for damage. Seeing nothing but some finger burns, it turned around and started beeping and whistling on its way to a nearby wall panel. The droid informed Erik in binary that all systems were down except life support and that they were running out of emergency power quickly. Staring out of the cockpit window, the tall Sith clenched his fist angrily. The lush, green planet was getting closer and closer.   
  
“If we live through this you and I are going to have a serious talk about what is and isn’t an appropriate jump point! We’re caught in the gravity of the planet. Unless you want to burn up in the atmosphere I suggest you move faster! Get the engines up. Once we have power we can deal with the rest.” Reaching out with the force, the wall panel was torn from its frame and tossed aside, giving quicker access to the astromech.   
  
The hull began to warm as they fell toward the surface. BG78 was swiftly cutting and replacing wiring while Erik poorly assisted as best he could. They cannibalized what they could from non-essentials and reconnected various systems until BG gave Erik a signal to start up the engines. He leaped into the pilot’s seat and gripped the controls to level out so that they were taking the least amount of resistance. A few systems came to life and he slammed his fist on the ignition. The engines choked for a few seconds before humming back to life. He yanked the controls toward the sky, pulling the ship out of freefall just miles from the treetops. The heat started to dissipate but the engines stalled out from such a strong maneuver. The engines died again.   
  
Cursing loudly, the darkly clad Sith nosed the vehicle back toward the planet and into a glide for the nearest clearing. “We’re crash landing. Secure yourself.” He took a deep breath, checked his safety restraints and braced for impact as the transport crashed through the tree line. The astromech let out a scream as branches slammed into the hull and cockpit windows, battering the already abused craft. Reaching out with the force, he slowly concentrated on a barrier in front of the windshield, protecting it as best he could from damage. He closed his eyes and focused only on the barrier’s integrity, pushing away all doubts of survivability. Seconds later there was only darkness.  
  
It was hours later that Erik gained consciousness. He groaned and slowly rolled onto his back. Other than some bruises and cuts he, the ship and the droid were relatively intact. The astromech had fallen in such a way that it could not return to an upright system. The human started to crawl and eventually stood up shakily, assisting the droid to its standing position. Together, they assessed the ship and found that that it was no longer space worthy, the engine wouldn’t start. Again. The damage was critical however the engines were still intact.   
“Alright BG. If we can get the engines started we will have power. We can’t leave the planet in this shape but if we can get to a nearby city we can find help.   
  
  
It would be hours in the humid jungle before they could get the engines working and the power to transfer properly. The wildlife had scattered when they impacted the planet which saved them the trouble of fending off predators. When they were able to lift off again they could only manage to skim along the tops of the trees, gliding noisily at top speed to get back to a sliver of civilization. It would be days before reaching somewhere helpful but once they arrived they boarded a medical transport to Seng Karash to complete their arduous journey.