



[GJW XII Phase One] Fiction: Extraction

By Quaestor Savant Alara Deathbane dossier: **12681**

Extraction

23:00 Hours, Deep Space Aboard the *IMS Tipoca II*

“GET TO THE SHUTTLE! NOW!” Alara roared at the top of her lungs as she violently trudged through the corridors of the medical station. From left and right people were running for their lives; Children were crying. Men and women were filing out from their battle stations to find their loved ones. The Collective, whoever they were, hit their mark on Clan Scholae Palatinae for sure.

Just when it was getting better for us, tears dripped down Alara’s cheeks, Our Clan and House was finally starting to get on their feet. The enemy has to be around here somewhere... And they’re going to kill us all if I don’t do something. The Quaestor of Excidium, known as the Executor to her peers, continued to fly through the halls and waved people onwards to escape from further danger.

She then shouted the words that everyone dreaded to hear; “Soldiers! Get to your stations, NOW! The House needs you!”

Most of the nearby fighters agreed and obeyed her command. Some hesitated and came forward after tears streamed halfway down their face or family members begged them not to listen. Alara cursed quietly under her breath as she tried to maintain her position for her people. In an elevator to the right of the main hall, doors opened to reveal technocrat soldiers -- all with miscellaneous cybernetic features -- following what must have been their Devaronian leader. These hideous... whatever they were... began killing off everyone that ran past them by shooting blasters and smacking victims with batons.

“Charge! Now!!” Alara grabbed her sabers off of her belt and soared through the air in a jump to prevent any further Excidian deaths. With a cross of her arms, she severed the head of a soldier before her. The Savant pivoted herself in the air to knock down any other enemies that were too close for comfort. A familiar face belonging to that of Antonai popped up to fight alongside her against the horde of robotic-humanoids.

“Somebody, use lightning! Let’s fry these sons of bitches!” her friend Rosh called from behind. The room was filled with the sounds of stampeding, lightsabers clanging together, and blood spilling onto the carpeted floor.

“You can try your worst, but my soldiers are augmented to withstand any Force powers you freaks may try to throw at them.” Kerwin’s words slipped off his slithery tongue like poison. The towering figure silenced everything that got too close to his path --

Extraction

whether by fear or by his own baton. Alara shifted her grip on her dual sabers and prepared herself for the fight ahead. “Now... Are you ready to exit the station like those who have fallen all around you?” Kerwin smirked evilishly and grinned with his crooked, sharp teeth.

“Unfortunately, it appears as though I will have to escort *you* out of the station. No one threatens my apprentice like that.” Braecen Kaeth’s voice came from the elevator shaft as his stomps reverberated through the elevator’s metal roofing. A seared sheet fell to the floor that allowed him to enter through and burst into the hall to charge at the Devaronian. The Quaestor’s hopes were restored at the sound of him. She stepped out of her leader’s way and began finishing off the leftover technocrats around her. Her lightsaber resounded against flesh and metal. With a quick look towards the other combatants, Alara saw Braecen and Kerwin already mid-battle, attacking each other with speed that belongs to true Elders of their craft.

“Watch out!” Rosh shouted at his leader. With a quick spin of her head to get back into action, Alara barely missed an electric baton swing that was directed right at her. The Dark Jedi growled at the sight and quickly chopped off the arm belonging to the baton and stabbed the technocrat with the other.

There are so many of these soldiers... We aren't all going to survive this, she pondered what to do next and suddenly spotted children hugging to the walls, crying and shouting out for help.

“Alara! Get the children!” a familiar voice hollered from the other side of the hall. The she-Marauder looked over the crowd and spotted a pair of grey Ewok ears poking up and down through the crowd in attempts to be spotted. Alara was in no position to argue with the middle-aged teddy bear. She thrust herself towards the line of children and scooped them up one by one. Three children immediately clung to her neck while she dragged two older children by the hands. The half-Sephi leapt through the horde to run alongside the Ewok. However, another explosion hit the side of the ship which sent the entire vessel into a convulsion. More screams and yelling burst through the aisles. The Savant’s fellow Excidiaacs and Imperials flew into air around her and tumbled on top of each other. Alara pulled her furry friend out of harm’s way and hunched her back over the children to protect them as she forced them to hold on to her waist from the front. Gregryck shouted all sorts of sharp brogue swearing as he held tight to the woman’s leg.

“We --- ARGH! --- Need to get these people to the shuttle bay! -- OW!-- Do you know if it's still in shape?” Alara spoke between grunts caused by bumping into light fixtures



Extraction

and door corners. The ship shuddered and moaned in the attempt to stabilize its position. The 'Red Alert' siren could hardly be heard over the painful cries of the injured people attempting to hold still. Once the ship's position was stable enough to allow passage, people teetered onto their feet down the hall towards the nearest exit. Lights flickered vibrantly in each weaving passage. The neon glow quickly flashed on and off and refracted onto corpses that were already lining the *Tipoca* halls.

"I t'ink so! That's where Jorm and Shadow were 'eaded with yer nephews!" Gregryck spoke such hopeful words Alara didn't deem possible at this point. All around them were such forlorn people wearing despairing faces. *Is it truly possible to get out of such a hell like this? And will it even be worth the escape if such a band of enemies is coming after us?*

"Don't yah dare start, Alarrra!" Gregryck flashed her a snarling frown from in her arms. His tiny teeth reflected what little light of the rooms were left and shone under his flared, curled lips. "I know exactly what yer thinkin', and yah need tooh stop! It won't help us in this situation now!"

"I KNOW, DAMN IT!" Alara hollered while leaping over dead bloodied bodies. "I just need to **think!**" She looked further down the hallway to see Braecen continuing his fight with Kerwin, along with many other Excidiacs who kept hurling themselves towards the Technocrat soldiers.

Suddenly, the station was hit once more.

Hall lights permanently dulled around them as a giant hole was illuminated by the large explosion. Before Alara could turn to see it directly, a Quadrajet suicide bomber was blocking the hallway and caused space's vacuum to begin its dirty work on the nearby passengers. Braecen and the others were on the other side. A quick dart of her amber eyes directed her to her next move: The doors right behind her. She immediately hopped over its threshold and slammed the emergency close button. Before its full closure, people were already getting sucked into the lack of oxygen and exploded in shrapnels before her very eyes. She fell towards the closest wall and managed to grab hold of a light fixture which she clung to for dear life. Fingers suspended in the air pointed towards her as their owners begged for mercy before meeting their cruel fate. The Executor watched more people flash away from view. The doors clicked to an automatic close, and the room was stabilized for a few seconds more.

Extraction

“KEEP GOING!” Alara hollered to the group of survivors around her. The children she carried; a young Twi’lek, a Quarren, a Human male, an Umbaran female, and a Zabrak were practically covered in blood from the scene that was closed off from them not moments ago. Tears dragged down their blood stained cheeks and gasps could hardly escape their tightened lungs. The Excidiaac tugged at the children and urged them forward over yet more corpses surrounding the walkway. The room’s angle forced those who were left to scramble up the carpet at nearly a 45 degree angle. Alara could feel her weight being held back from all the children with her, but she pressed on and channeled the Force to give her as much strength as she could.

“MOTHER, NO!!!” The Zabrak attempted to let go of Alara’s hand to run to its mother’s feeble figure already strewn in blood and headed down to the angled ground, but the Executor grabbed hold of his wrist before he got too far.

“It’s too late, child! We need to go, now! She’d want you to!” Gregryck, still at Alara’s side, practically yanked the child’s shoulder out of position.

“But I CAN’T LIVE WITHOUT HER!!” The Zabrak cried incessantly.

“YES YOU CAN. I LIVED WITHOUT MY PARENTS. YOU CAN TOO. NOW, COME!” Alara refused to let the child win the argument. The child stumbled in fear and anxiety, but continued on because she urged him to.

Finally the sight everyone was waiting for came into view: The *Tipoca II* shuttle bay entrance.

“FORWARD, EVERYONE! IT’S OUR **ONLY** CHANCE!” The Quaestor shouted louder. The lights were completely out now. The only illumination was from the shuttles that hummed at the ready from inside the bay. Around fifty people of all species and ages galloped and inclined up the shuttle hull’s fenced and elevated bridging to get into the nearest escape shuttle. Gregryck grabbed a few children off of Alara’s shoulders and led them towards the nearest shuttle craft. In the perilous chaos, people were thrown left and right, tripped over, and flung to their death below.

There is nothing I can do to save them... Braecen can take care of himself... The Savant kept telling herself these things in attempt to convince herself not to go back for the others.

Extraction

The Umbaran child at her side was suddenly stunned at the deathly scenery around them and could not walk any further. She froze in place, unable to move.

The she-Marauder shook her Sephi head and snapped out of it. “We need to go, **now!**” Alara hollered at the child. Before the Umbaran could change her mind and obey, another Quadjet Bomber burst through the bay’s side and made impact with their bridged path. A wave of metal resounded through the rail bars immediately snapped walkways apart. Alara reached out to grab the Umbaran’s hand, but the girl did nothing and only stared at the Quaestor as the floor under her was removed. In a matter of seconds, the girl was swallowed by the darkness underneath.

“FWEC!” Alara howled in sorrowful frustration. She immediately started to chuck the two left over children into the nearest escape shuttle. She pushed as many people ahead of her as possible before the Collective caused another homicide before her. The new Quaestor was nearly sucked out of existence if not for a hairy comrade who managed to grab hold of her forearm from inside the shuttle. The Ewok shouted in Ancient Sith and beckoned the Force to provide him with godlike strength. He successfully tugged the girl inside to safety right as the shuttle’s ramp lifted from the loading bridge. Gregryck led her safely to the ground as the shuttle’s exit snapped shut. A droid from the cockpit shouted a quick warning before sending the shuttle into hyperdrive, which only sent more passengers flying through the air.

Once a safe distance was created between the shuttle and the Collective’s Forces, the shuttle came to a slowing halt. Helpless passengers who forcefully gathered on the back of the pod slid down over top of each other and attempted to regain their footing.

A sudden trembling took over Alara’s body. Upon rolling to her own corner of the deck, she immediately grew weak and lost the contents of her previous meal. Another droid was already at her side to clean the mess when she lifted her head, tucked stray hairs behind her trembling pointed ears, and spotted her medicine-man friend Gregryck at work with injured Excidiacs and Imperials around them. She looked out to the window, nausea symptoms breaking her into a sweat. She saw only a few successful shuttles by her ship’s side, while other shuttles were not so lucky and had collided with each other or the other Bombers. Her fears came to life before her very eyes; the *Tipoca II Medical Station* was no more. Auras of fire and destruction surrounded the remains of the glorious station and engulfed whatever major chunks of it were left. Alara helplessly looked over to her people and shook off her illness to lend a hand to whoever she fell in front of first.

Extraction

“Alara, rest. You’ve done all you can.” A familiar droid, her very own Security Droid nicknamed Hephaestus, kneeled at her side and gripped her shoulders carefully.

“Not now, Heph. I need to-- I need to help them.” Alara growled between sobs and reached out towards the nearest injured child.

“You’ll exert yourself too far. You have already. We will take care of them. Rest.”

Before the half-Sephi could insist, she fell into a state of unconsciousness on the shuttle’s deck and watched the world fade to black.

05:00 Hours, Deep Space Escape Shuttle 094 of the ISN Tarkin

Alara’s eyes drearily blinked open to the dimly lit scenario around her. Several droids were still tending to the injured, and others were feeding those that were not already asleep. Everyone seemed to be in much more comfort, though fear and horror were still thick in the air. Suddenly, a warm presence shifted near the Savant’s leg. Alara turned over to see the young Zabrak’s bright crimson eyes staring back at her in the darkness. He had tucked himself into her side while she slept as if to further protect himself.

“Can’t sleep, little one?” Alara blinked surprisingly at the boy.

“I was thinking about what you said... Did you really get on without any parents? At all?” his scratched throat asked earnestly.

“Aye,” Alara nodded without hesitation, “I was sent off to mercenaries at the age of 3. I escaped their slavery at the age of 9 by poisoning my captors, and managed to steal their ship in order to fly to Onderon. There I lived with the Jedi for a bit. Then I disappeared into the woods to discover my own path.”

“You did all that... With no help?” The Zabrak jaw dropped from behind his dry, cracked lips.

Extraction

“No. Not exactly. The Force guided me. It eventually led me to that Ewok over there.” Alara smiled, paused, sat up for a moment, and placed her bloodied hands over the boy’s, “The Force will guide you too. You’ll never be alone.”

The Zabrak nodded, sniffled, and rubbed his tears away with a bare knuckle. “Does it ever get easier... Being without your parents? Will the hurt ever go away?”

Alara thought for a moment, then shook her head. “No, child. It won’t. But I can promise you this: If you continue to fight for yourself and for what you believe in, you will grow big and strong -- strong enough to carry that pain and allow it to motivate you. You’ll learn to manage it.” The Zabrak sighed in understanding between his sobs and tucked himself into her arms before collapsing from exhaustion.

“You know, Alara. You’d be a good mother one day.” Gregryck’s voice came from behind her. Alara’s pointed ears flicked slightly at his words. She turned her chiseled profile around to make eye contact with her previous keeper.

“Don’t let Jorm hear you say that.” Alara half-chuckled a moment before realizing she didn’t even know where her beloved was; or if he even survived the attack.

Did anyone survive the attack?

She brushed off the thought and continued the conversation: “And even if I would be, it’s only because the Force let me be raised by a teddy bear.”

Gregryck tried to prevent himself from letting out a hearty chuckle and winked at the girl. “Mark my words, Lassie. Yer a mother to yer crazies whether or not you ever bear a child of yer own. Get some more rest, now. Everyone is well taken care uff.”

“You too, Gregryck. We will all need what strength we have left for the war that is following us now.” Alara swallowed hard, and laid down to look upon the Zabrak boy once more.

“Aye. Goodnight, ‘Lara.” Gregryck yawned from behind the half-Sephi’s back and turned over to sleep.

As she studied the boy’s face, she realized he could not be more than 11 years old. *Such a pity he has been exposed to death and destruction at such a young age*, she thought

Extraction

to herself, *And this war has only just begun. What more shall my people be exposed to before the end comes?*

An unexpected beeping nearly made Alara jump out of her skin. Her datapad, its screen crushed from the chaos from before, was blinking with a message from Elincia Rei.

“Good, at least I know that someone is alive,” Alara slowly got up, lifted the child carefully and placed him gently onto the floor, and headed towards the bridge of the shuttle. “Open the communication signal to the *ISN Tarkin*. I need to transfer my message there from the Consul.”

“As you wish, M’lady,” A droid controlling the screens nodded and flicked the switch to do the Quaestor’s bidding.

“This is Alara Deathbane, Quaestor of Excidium, aboard Shuttle zero-nine-four of the fallen *Tipoca II Medical Station*. Come in, *Tarkin*.”

Alara made a quick flick on her datapad screen as her face shone with Elincia Rei’s holographic reflection on the ship’s glass screen before her. “Ah. Good. You made it out of there alive. How many are with you?” the scientist spoke calmly, yet concerningly.

“No more than 20 of us, Empress.” Alara bowed her head to her leader. “I’m afraid I had to leave many of us behind... Last I saw Braecen he was facing a Mr. Kerwin Drake.”

Elincia’s face churned into frustration as the Togruta bit her lip. “Hmmm. That’s not good. Have you heard from anyone else?”

“No, M’lady.” Alara shook her head shamefully.

“You’ve done what you could. Thank you Alara. I will be communicating with the other escape shuttles that survived the blast and will direct you to--”

“Empress! They’re HERE! Cruisers, everywhere! I’ve counted ten of them -- mostly heavy! I don’t know HOW they found our coordinates but they’re headed this way and they DON’T seem too welcoming --” Mune Kitsune’s voice echoed from behind the Elder as screams suddenly came through the speakers. Alara’s Sephi ears flurried at the shriek of them. With a cry she raised her hands to cover them.

Extraction

“ALARA! Get the survivors somewhere safe! Head back to Cocytus. Hide there in its corpse! We will --”

The Augur was cut off by feminine laughter through another communication signal:

“Crimson’s back, BABY! It’s time to make you Force Freaks PAY!”

A large explosion reverberated through Shuttle 094’s speakers, and the communication signal was suddenly disconnected as the screen quickly faded to black.

Alara’s jaw practically dropped to the ground. She blinked repeatedly to try and grasp what just happened before her. A voice owned by the Force instantaneously echoed in her mind: *“Ignus Manus.... The Fire Hand... Now is your time.”*

Before she could react further, the Quaestor was out of consciousness once more and was teleported to a bloodied, darkened battlefield. Its skies were heavy with fleets and its ground decorated with soldiers’ blood. She saw herself mounted on her trusted tusked cat Artemis with her favored saber pointed towards the cloud-covered sun. With a holler, her figure and her feline darted down a hill towards the battle.

“War is just beginning. The Battlefield has been chosen. Ignus Manus, Fire Hand. She whom our warriors will be led.”