**Double Dragon**

**Imperial Academy**

**Corulag**

**8 Years Ago**

Graduation day generally stoked all the emotions idling in young men’s hearts. The anticipation for a prime assignment, the fear of posting to the Outer Rim. For many it was a day to be remembered fondly. For others, it was much more than that. For on this day, Mauro Wynter learned many other *things* about himself and his family.

Standing rigidly at attention, Wynter kept eyes forward with the rest of the graduating cadets of one of the more prestigious Imperial academies. Thoughts of a glorious future and the pride that would surely swell the hearts of his family filled his head. However, the moment was to be shattered as the incoming first-year initiates marched by their podium.

From his elevated vantage point Wynter eyed one particular cadet intently. He had the same dark brown hair and piercing gray-hazel eyes. He had the same confident and measured gait. What was even more, he returned the same gaze and held Mauro’s incredulous eyes in suspense. Did he know this man?

Despite being a culmination of years of training and the inculcated rigors of military protocol, Wynter continued to divert his gaze to the assembled initiates. As the names of the incoming cadets were read off, Mauro waited intently to find out who exactly this man was. When the time came for the Commandant to address the man, he did so. “Incoming-cadet Wilhm Wynter.”

Utter disbelief crossed Mauro’s face. Several of his classmates turned to him in disbelief. His roommate whispered to him, “you never told me you had a…brother.” Mauro did not answer the statement and let the silence linger amongst his cohort. The remaining minutes of the graduation dragged onward painfully as Wynter waited to march across the clearing and confront his parents. From the distance, he made them out in the seated pavilion and realized their eyes were on him. He count tell from such a distance that his mother was greatly upset.

The moment arrived for the newly minted Imperial Ensigns to leave the podium and embrace their families. At the same moment, the incoming cadets marched off to indoctrination at the first-year barracks. It was for the best, thought Wynter at the time, for he knew not what he would say to this *Wilhm*. He raced towards his parents, and as he did his mother recoiled slightly behind his father. “Congratulations, Mauro.” His father stated dryly, awaiting the coming cavalcade of questions.

“Can you explain this *Wilhm* Wynter?” asked Mauro. “Indeed son. The fact is…Corulag is a long way from Coruscant so to speak, but the societal….necessities...you must understand. Your mother and I married very young. Entirely too young. If it were known we had a child out of wedlock then my chances of gaining a commission from patronage within the Corulag Defense Forces would have been dashed. I therefore would never had the ability to offer the family upward mobility to the Imperial ranks. As such…we hid Wilhm. We paid to have him raised silently whilst keeping tabs. I am sorry we never told you. It was only with *your* commission guaranteed that we could bring him out of hiding and get him accepted to the academy.”

That day was an important day. It was the last time Mauro saw his parents. He never did officially meet his brother. Sadly, nor would he. Ensign Wynter died fighting pirates in Wild Space leading an Imperial boarding party.