

“Kill them all and worry about the details later.” Justinios Drake ordered as his undersized strike team held position on the roof of the terrorist infested facility that until recently belonged to Kagu Shi’s organization. “Thanks to Kooki our ‘friend’ is dead and I plan on taking this facility over for the SRI. We will have plenty of time to properly dispose of any evidence that points to my ‘abilities’.”

To her credit, the rule abiding Laes Celyn was beginning to become accustomed to her role as attache to the impulsive Quaestor of House Ektrosis. “I had assumed as much and planned accordingly. Kilo I assume you are familiar with Briefing 12-72?”

The midnight black painted droid responded to the affirmative. “Yes Major, that is why I suggested to our leader that we land on the roof.”

Justinios didn’t like being manipulated but he was extremely happy that his team was finally beginning to gel. The Aleena knew many of his methods were unorthodox, even in the unorthodox world of the Dark Jedi Brotherhood, but the strategic analysis of his *KX*-series droid and the intense tactical planning skills of the Major were starting to align more closely with those methods. Justinios gave both of them a lot of credit because he knew it had been, and continued to be a challenge. He suspected that deep down they both secretly enjoyed pushing their skills to the max keeping up with him.

“Excellent.” Justinios turned his attention to the single member of the local authorities that was attached to the mission. Officer Morvit was a human male, clad head to toe in armor that indicated his affiliation with local law enforcement.. “Ok buddy you are about to see some things that might blow your mind so I am just going to put this out there.” Justinios had actually discussed this part ahead of time with his own crew and was happy with the little speech they had come up with. “You may be wondering why a tiny blue alien from a meaningless planet is an officer in an Imperial feet and the answer is that I am not an officer. My authority actually stems from my abilities with the Force.” He paused a moment to let the line sink in.

The Aleena continued without waiting for a response, “As you can imagine I would like keep this little secret, not even everyone in our fleet is fully aware of my capabilities.” A lie but a necessary one to make Jusutinios seem like an outlier among even the Taldryan fleet. “The problem is that my abilities give us the best chance of mission success. They also give you the best chance of surviving this mission, do you agree?”

The officer nodded to the affirmative and Justinios moved to the last phase of his monologue.

“Good. Just know that I will closely guard this secret, even if it means violence. Anyone else that is told it will die, anyone I think might have been told it will die, as will anyone close to them just for good measure. As we fight together you will see that there isn’t much in this star system that can stop me from fulfilling these promises. I would take no pleasure in these killings. In fact it

would have been much easier for me to kill you at the completion of this mission but I place a value on lives and would rather trust that you can keep a secret. Do we have an agreement?"

"We do, sir," the officer responded through the speakers in his helmet. "You don't stay alive in my line of work in this system without learning to keep your head down and your mouth shut."

Justinios clapped his hands together in jubilant celebration. "Wonderful! As you can imagine I have a lot of discreet work I require assistance with and it pays well. If this goes well I can foresee additional earning opportunities for you in the future."

"Roger that," was the only reply but also all that was needed.

"Sir, I have broken the encryption on the access hatch. We are ready to begin our infiltration." With a smile Justinios appreciated the efficiency a little advanced planning could give to a situation. With Kilo well aware of the chat Justinios would be having with their outside party member the droid knew to use it as his cue to begin slicing his way into the facility.

As the three members of the strike team jumped through the hatch, Justinios regretted even more that Shi was dead. The "businessman" would have likely been able to break back into his own surveillance system and provide intel. As it stood, all they had was a floorplan and the knowledge that every sentient being inside would be attempted to kill them. This meant the only plan that even Major Celyn could formulate was a basic search and destroy. Unluckily for the enemy combatants, improvisation was where Justinios shined.

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Between the lightsaber of Justinios Drake, the durasteel fists of the droid Kilo and the blaster of Officer Morvit, most of the terrorists spread throughout the facility were quickly dispatched. Justinios was also feeling very good about Morvit holding his tongue regarding his powers. If anything, seeing the Jedi in combat had likely cemented the idea in the security officer's head. Most specifically there was one engagement in which Justinios used the Force to jump over the front of an enemy combatant firing a repeater cannon, deflecting the shots in mid-air, landing on his shoulder and bisecting him longitudinally from skull to testicles. The Quaestor was feeling very confident that the lawman wouldn't see it worth the risk of incurring his wrath to give up the secret of his abilities.

The final surviving three members of the team that initially took that facility away from Kagu Shi were now holed up in what was likely a central control room. Smartly, the trio had destroyed the control panel before barricading themselves inside. Unfortunately for them, Justinios' lightsaber was making quick work of the durasteel door. After Justinios finished his cut he focused intently on the plug that was awaiting removal from the entranceway. Putting all of his metaphysical might behind it, the Aleena sent the metal circle flying into the control room.

Blaster fire immediately answered and the lack of any screams of pain indicated the plug had not crushed anyone on its flight path. This scene had already played out multiple times as Justinios and his team cleared the facility. Slice or lightsaber through a door, lob a grenade inside and then clean up. But when Justinios look over at Officer Morvit he wasn't reaching for an explosive device of any kind.

"All out." The lawman had been short on words for the entire mission but those two cut deep because Justinios knew what his only other option was.

Igniting the blue blade of his lightsaber he simply said, "You two better be right behind me." With that the Aleena leapt through the hole, missing its still molten edges. All of his attention was focused on deflecting the hail of blaster bolts being sent his way. Although the Force gave him insight on just where to move his blade and when to use his agility to evade the deadly streaks of red, the intensity of the assault prevented the Jedi from sending the blaster fire back at the attackers. Luckily, Kilo and Morvit entered the fray after a few moments.

Before any of the terrorists could direct their fire at the two new targets, Officer Morvit took cover at a console next to Justinios and began raining fire of his own at the enemy to the far left side of the room. The Twi'lek he was firing at swiftly ducked behind his own makeshift cover in response, another computer console. Simultaneously Kilo took on the assailant to the far right side of the room. With a single leap from his powerful mechanical legs the droid landed behind the blaster toting human. In a flash, Kilo grabbed the terrorist by his golden hair and smashed his face into the durasteel wall behind him. The body slumped to the floor, either dead or unconscious.

With only the terrorist in the middle left firing at him, Justinios could only just now give focus over to identifying it as a her and the her as a Rodian. He was also able to deflect a few blaster bolts back her way which caused her to change her tactics. Instead of sending a hail of blaster fire across the room she had to resort to popping off a few shots and then retreating behind her chosen console. Justinios has to give it to her, facing a Jedi, now outnumbered, would have lead many to give up and beg for leniency. Whatever organization these assailants belonged to, they were dedicated to their cause.

Out of the corner of his eye Justinios noticed a well placed shot from Officer Morvit catch his prey in the neck. Now alone, the Rodian began firing wildly at all three members of the Taldryan strike team with no regard for her own safety. The lawman began laying down covering fire without being told. Meanwhile, Kilo picked up the body of the human he had taken out and literally threw it at the Rodian.

Audibly laughing at the silliness of seeing a limp body flying through the air, Justinios called upon the Force for a burst of speed while the Rodian was distracted. With a flip that he was able to perform with just his own raw athleticism, Justinios mounted the computer console and stabbed his lightsaber straight through the top of the ducking Rodian's skull.

The satisfaction of clearing the facility was immediately replaced by confusion as Justinios noticed viewscreens that were in front of him were all showing multiple rooms holding what seemed to be wampas. Confusion turned to excitement when the Aleena realized just what he had stumbled upon.

Waving Kilo over, Justinios reopened a comm line to Major Celyn. "Major I am having Kilo send you a live feed from the internal cameras inside the facility. It seems our dead Supreme Director candidate was into a bit more than illicit pharmaceuticals."

"Are those, wampas!?" the Major exclaimed as Kilo's secure feed began transmitting to her office aboard the *Paragon*.

"Yes they are. I need you to immediately contact our agents in the SRI. We need to locate and surveil all of Shi's former holdings. If he was experimenting on wampas who knows what else that man was into." Justinios was giddy at the opportunity and was now almost happy that Kooki has killed the man. Instead of hoping the former Imperial scientist would join them and share all of his secrets, the SRI now had a chance to take what they wanted. Sure, they would need help in doing so but there were plenty of skilled warriors in Clan Taldryan's ranks that might help, especially if it meant getting a leg up on the Ky'Liam's and the other local crime lords. All of those other syndicates, as well as law enforcement and the Ky'Lian's themselves, would also be looking to absorb or destroy Shi's operations. "Don't even worry about the after action report, I will take care of that."

"Are you sure sir, I know how much you despise paperwork. I could assist." Kilo's offer was appreciated by the Quaestor but he knew the droid's report would be far too detailed.

Justinios also needed to ensure the SRI moved quickly on Shi's holdings. "No, assist the Major by doing your best to categorize the priority level of each of Shi's holdings based on how you believe their operations could be used for military research. Plus Rian can pry this facility from my cold dead hands and I will do whatever it takes to keep it under the SRI's control." *Even if that means taking some liberties with official reports*, he thought to himself.

Looking over at Officer Morvit, Justinios had an idea that would help him cement their new alliance. "Officer, the role of lawman is often a very dangerous job with a pay rate not exactly in line with said danger. Is that a correct statement?"

"Yes it is, sir," the law officer replied, still using the speakers in his helmet.

"I will be in the market for information regarding the facilities once run by Kagu Shi. If anyone I trust happens to be in possession of such information I would be happy to reward them for it."

Morvit took off his helmet, revealing his face for the first time. Completely bald, with a heavily scarred face, the lawman's visage matched the job he held. As a smirk formed on his face and he simply replied, "Roger that."