

Full Circle.

A submission for the fiction competition: **[VOICE] Harmonic Growth**

Written and submitted by Knight Appius Wight of Clan Vizsla.

Prologue

A single, jet black M3-A Syck Fighter launched itself out of hyperspace into the dark and glittering star filled void above a planet the ships pilot hadn't seen in over twelve years.

Mandalore.

Despite being his homeworld, the pilot couldn't shake the numbing feeling that overcame his body. His breathing was shallow and his heart thudded against his ribs as the sound beat in his ears. He tried his best to ignore the sensations that built within him in order to pilot the Syck M3-A Fighter past the mandalorian moon of Concordia, before approaching the planets atmosphere. But he was a mixed bag of emotions.

"Are you sure about this, Appius? You know Roark, Cole and Montresor won't be happy if they find out."

Appius glanced down at the command console that displayed the message ever so clearly. Though he already understood what Lawrence, his R3 astromech unit was saying. He paused for a moment, unsure of how to respond before taking a moment to think over his answer.

"I'm sure. They'll just have to understand this is something I have to do." He replied with his tone taking a slightly deeper and quieter tone than usual. Something that honestly surprised Lawrence somewhat.

Just like the rest of Clan Vizsla, he was ordered to return to Zsoldos and await further instructions in regards to missions. The Clan's reputation spread throughout the galaxy after the success they achieved in the recent war within the Lyra 3K-A system. This reputation would no doubt would bring on more clients.

More clients meant more contracts.

More contracts meant more missions.

And more missions meant more credits.

'Credits, not words.'

That was the way of Clan Vizsla.

Appius had gone on ahead of everyone else to give himself as much time as possible to do what he wanted to do. But as he gazed at the dried up planet below he couldn't help but wonder if he made the right decision.

Would his family in Clan Clars remember him? Would they welcome him back? Did they even know he was still alive?

These were just a few of the questions that plagued his mind throughout his journey. Still, there was only one way to find out. It was time to put old demons to rest.

"Oh, I'm sure they will understand when one of their junior members disobeys a direct order. What could possibly go wrong? Everything. That's what."

Lawrence's sarcasm and concern was duly noted by the Sorcerer.

"You worry too much, Lawrence. Everything will be fine, we will get back to Zsoldos and no-one will know any different... I hope." Said Appius as a twisting feeling began to form in his gut.

He didn't know why, but as they approached the sun dried planet below he had a particularly bad feeling overcome him.

Chapter 1

The worst part of every flight Appius ever committed too was the turbulence and it was no different through Mandalore's atmosphere. The split second "The Sterion" pierced through the thick atmosphere the cockpit of the ship shook with a violence that would empty weaker stomachs.

Thankfully, experience taught the former Jedi what to do. He held his breath and gripped the controls as hard as he could until the worst of the tremors faded. This only lasted a couple of minutes and soon enough the turbulence leveled out and gave the young Force user a much more steady sight of the desert ground below.

'Not long now...' He mused to himself as he breathed a sigh of relief.

That thought would prove to be more true than he realized as two Firespray-31-class patrol and attack crafts ascended upon him. They appeared to be newly made and glistened like diamonds in the mandalorian sunlight. They did nothing at first, like they were waiting for something. They kept their distance behind him, making sure to keep the unidentified Syck Fighter in their line of sight.

"Lawrence, be ready. We might need to jump out of here very quickly." Appius said with evident concern in his voice.

Suddenly, Appius felt the power of the living Force flow through his body as it alarmed him to the sudden danger. Moments later his ship was struck by a barrage of deadly laser fire and only remained in the air thanks to its mediocre shielding that was now on its last gasp of life.

"Called it!"

The console displayed Lawrence's comment perfectly to him but now was not the time for his sarcastic tendencies.

"Never mind that! Get us out of here, Lawrence!" Appius screamed as every hair stood on end on his body from the panic that resonated through him.

"Can't."

That was not the word Appius wanted to see or hear right now.

"Hyperdrive is damaged. Will need time to repair."

Suddenly, Appius was startled by the crackling of the comm unit flaring to life.

"Unidentified craft, you have entered Clan Clars owned territory, state your name and intention or we **will** open fire."

"You already have..." responded Lawrence with his usual quip of sarcasm. The Force Disciple had no choice but to do the only thing he could do in this situation.

Comply.

He wasn't an ace pilot and a dogfight in the air would more than likely end in his premature death.

"I'm here to see my family. My name..." He paused for a moment due to his hesitation, but summoned the courage to finish his sentence.

"My name is Appius Wight."

Silence overcame all three crafts as they continued to soar through the mandalorian sky which only made the situation worse for Appius. A few minutes passed but they felt like an eternity for the young Sorcerer. With each breath he took he tapped his fingers on the control lever to his ship. Ready to try and make an attempt at an escape should he need to.

"You have been given clearance to land, we will guide you in."

Those simple words sent a wave of relaxing energy through Vizsla's first Knight as the opposing patrol ships guided him towards the nearest Clan Clars landing platform. However, one thought did cross his mind.

When and why did his family become so hostile?

Chapter 2

Clan Clars Landing Zone

It'd been a very long time since Appius touched mandalorian soil. Over a decade in fact since he felt the rough texture of the sand from the desert in his toes as each grain threatened to itch at his feet.

When his eyes last gazed upon the skies of Mandalore he was fifteen years old. Inexperienced, naive and had yet to experience the harsh realities of the universe around him.

The last time he breathed mandalorian air was when his father died an unjust death in 25ABY. Appius was fairly sure it rained that day. The water that ran down his cheeks drowned out his tears as he ran away from the only home and family he ever knew.

But here he was. Back for the first time just days after the conclusion of the war in the Lyra 3K-A system. That conflict opened his view on the universe and as a result he felt compelled to return to do something that he should have done a long time ago.

Lots happened to Appius during the events in the Lyra 3k-A system. He was taken under the wing of Farrin Xies Tarantae, the former Shadow Academy Headmaster himself and was injured by a group of Collective Shikari Huntresses when they were ambushed during their first training session together. Appius now bears a scar from a plasma arrow that embedded itself into his left kidney and vaporized the organ.

He was part of the first wave of Vizsla forces that invaded Lyra Colony to secure the landing zones for Vizsla's elite members. He then observed from a distance as his Master and the Clan's hardest hitters did what they did best all for the sake of credits.

Finally, he was the very first within the ranks of Clan Vizsla itself to reach knighthood. An honour that was granted to him for his efforts during the war. It was a rank he now shared with his father.

His family was the reason he came back to Mandalore on this day. Though as he left the cockpit of The Sterion and stepped on the solid steel of the landing zone beneath his feet he quickly found himself surrounded by Clan Clars security personnel.

"Hands up. Don't move." One of the guards stated as he approached the Force User. Not wanting to cause any conflict, the Sorcerer complied and raised both his hands above his head. The guard pulled *Redeemer*, Appius' lightsaber, from his waist and attached it to his own belt as Appius scanned the features of the man carefully should he need to go looking for his lightsaber later.

"You two, stay here and watch the droid." The guard motioned to two others behind him. The personnel obeyed their orders like loyal dogs as they ran in front of his ship.

The little astromech beeped its concern towards Appius and caught the Sorcerer's attention.

"It's ok, Lawrence. Nothing bad will happen." He said with a smile, doing his best to reassure his mechanical companion.

"Walk."

He was pulled by his arm and made to step out of the landing zone and into a large cube structure. Inside the main chamber the metallic walls were painted a lighter shade of red and light pierced the room through the oversized windows. At either corner stood giant stone statues of former Clan Clars leaders that overlooked those that entered these majestic halls. Tapestries and rugs lay on the floor, completing the warm and majestic feeling the room presented to those who entered. A myriad of people entered and exited, servants and other clansmen and women of Clan Clars conducting their business.

Even after twelve years, Appius still recognised some of those faces very well and it may have been the resemblance he shared with his father, but some recognised him too judging by the murmurs and whispers as he walked past.

One person in particular stood out to him amongst all the others. A man in his mid thirties standing at tall six foot two with short blonde hair with blue eyes stood with his arms folded watching them approach. His red mandalorian armor blended him into the rest of the room, yet his athletic frame and twin WESTAR 35 blasters adorned at his side made quite an imposing figure.

"Brennius..." Appius muttered under his breath quietly.

"My god, it really *is* you isn't it, Appius?" Brennius replied as he dropped the stern expression he was enforcing to replace it with a much softer one. His arms unfolded and dropped to his side's as one of the security personnel approached him.

"He wasn't armed with much sir, just this." The guard said, handing over Appius' lightsaber to the clearly older man.

The red clad mandalorian inspected the weapon over closely before activating it. The green blade of *Redeemer* shot out of one end, gathering the attention of the rest of the room. Brennius deactivated the weapon afterwards and addressed his security.

"Uncuff him, he's no threat to us." Brennius ordered authoritatively and whilst the guards were on edge about the call, they followed their commands obediently.

"I knew you weren't dead. They found your father's body but not yours... something wasn't right." Brennius stated.

Appius felt the relief on his wrists wash over him in an instant. He was presented his lightsaber by Brendanus who held it out to him in an outstretched hand.

"Thanks." Said Appius as he placed *Redeemer* back on his belt.

A pause occurred between the two men as they looked each other over. 25ABY was the last time either man saw each other. Appius was fifteen and Brennius was twenty four years old at the time. Nearly Appius' current age now.

"We tried everything to find you, but after a while of nothing we just had to accept you were gone. With Sterion dead the attacks on our family got worse. We had to switch from vehicle manufacturing to weapons production to defend ourselves and whilst it worked for a time, the death toll kept going up and up. I'm all that's left of the Clan Clars bloodline now. Everyone else is dead. Or at least that's what I thought..."

The Clan Clars leader paused for a moment before he gave Appius' a hard glare that pierced into the Force users very soul.

"Why did you come back, Appius?" Brennius' tone deepened as he spoke. Causing concern to form within Appius as he suddenly felt the butterflies in his stomach begin to dance.

"I need help."

"Help!?" Brennius' reacted quickly.

"You disappear for twelve years, come back out of nowhere and just ask me for help like nothing ever happened. No, that's not how this is going to work. Your going to tell me what happened to you and why you didn't come back sooner."

With each word Brennius spoke his voice filled the room. Everyone was silent as they listened to the man speak.

"It's complicated." Appius said quietly as he found it hard to make eye contact with the man.

"Go on." Brennius insisted, his tone now slightly less intense. The Force user then took a deep breath and sighed.

"After my father died I spent so long on the run from the group that killed him I've honestly lost track of time. I didn't come back because I didn't want them to hurt anyone here again.

After a while I just decided that our family was better off without me." Appius replied and took a moment to catch his breath and collect himself.

"During my time away, I fell in love and got married to a woman I met on Dantooine."

Appius smiled for a moment before it faded just as fast as his eyes revealed a pain within them.

"They found me again and we got separated in the ensuing conflict. I was eventually rescued by Clan Vizsla and joined their ranks in the Brotherhood."

If pictures speak a thousand words then Brennius' expression would have told a very long story. Clearly, Vizsla's reputation spread even to Mandalore.

"But when I returned to Dantooine I found out she'd been evacuated off the planet. I haven't seen her since."

Appius looked at his fellow family member in the eyes as liquid began to fill his own, though he fought them back as best he could.

"I took part in the war in the Lyra System and saw things no mortal being should ever have to see. Men, women and children burning in the streets as their lives were snuffed out like the fires that engulfed them. I watched as buildings fell and buried those underneath, crushing them like ants as our enemy laughed at the carnage. There was senseless death everywhere and I was powerless to stop it. The war opened my eyes, Brennius', to the terrible truth of the universe and I..."

Appius took a moment to collect himself as he summoned the courage to finish what he was saying.

"I can't do it alone anymore. I tried, I really did. But I need help. Both to find my wife and to know that right here, right now I have someone I can go to. Please. Brother, I'm sorry I didn't come back sooner. But I'm here right now, asking for your help and hoping you can forgive me."

Brennius' head lowered towards the ground as he rubbed his temples with his left hand. The truth was that they were half brothers. They shared the same mother but different father's which was why Appius was Force sensitive and Brennius was not. Still, up until Appius left Mandalore the two of them were extremely close.

Suddenly, the pair were interrupted by a new guard that barged in through the crowds of people.

"Sir, we have a situation outside. Zabrak mercenaries have taken some of our own as prisoners. They are demanding to speak to you."

Brennius groaned exasperatedly at the news.

"This is the third time this week! Stay here and keep everyone safe. I'm going to pay them a visit." Brennius responded as he marched out towards the main entrance to the building.

Appius followed suite, not allowing his brother to walk into open conflict alone.

"I'm coming with you."

Brennius turned back to him. He was a prideful man but he was not about to refuse the help when it was offered.

"I hope you've not forgotten what your father taught you. We might need it right now."

Appius smiled subtly as the two of them walked side by side.

'Brennius, you have no idea.'

Chapter 3

Outside the Clan Clars main building.

As the pair reached the outdoors the immediate sunlight pained and blurred their vision just for a few moments before finally clearing to reveal a group of six zabrak mercenaries holding a line of prisoners. However, there was one particularly tall, pale skinned and tattoo'd zabrak leading them from behind. Two men, three women and a small child were held on their knees with blasters pressed against the back of their heads.

The sight made Appius' eyes harden and fists clench as his fingernails dug into his skin. He looked to his brother to gauge his reaction though Brennius remained oddly calm, his breathing remained steady and his hands laid subtly on his pair of blasters.

"Grol..." Brennius said addressing the group's leader.

"Brennius! The Clan Clars leader. A pleasure to see you as always. I'm here for what I asked for. The shipment of weapons for me and my gang here that I have repeatedly demanded for weeks and in return I won't slaughter all these people like little Jawa's." The leading zabrak, now identified as Grol, spoke jovially with a pleased smirk on his face from behind his men.

"And I told you to go frack yourself, Grol. Clan Clars doesn't bow to simple threats." Brennius said, his tone defiant and refusing to back down.

Whilst Appius admired his brothers bravado, he was concerned about the safety of the people on their knees in front of them and could sense the tension escalate between themselves and the gang of zabraks. He instinctively placed his hand on *Redeemer*.

This little movement caught Grol's attention as he noticed the Brotherhood issued robes the Force user wore that made him stand out like a sore thumb. Especially in mandalorian culture where users of the Force were few and far between.

"Is that a fracking Jedi!?" The mercenary leader said as his voice suddenly increased in volume and became higher pitched.

"Former." Appius replied, feeling the need to correct the zabrak. He increased his grip on *Redeemer* ever so slightly.

"What?" Grol replied with gritted teeth.

"let them go. Or this will not end well for you." The Sorcerer said, not willing to indulge the mercenary leader any further.

Grol was also apparently a man with a great amount of pride and refused to be threatened by some kind of Jedi scum. He raised his arm and prepared to give the order to fire, but before he even got the chance the Sorcerer grabbed his lightsaber, ignited it and threw it at the gang of mercenaries.

Usually, the laws of physics demand that gravity should take effect on objects without aerodynamic qualities and drop them to the ground. But instead, the saber arched in the air and guided by Appius' outstretched hand it acted like an airborne guillotine as one by one in quick succession the heads of the zabrak mercenaries dropped to the ground with a thud like they were lead weights.

Redeemer returned to his hand, the hilt fitting perfectly in his palm. Moments later the beheaded bodies dropped lifelessly to the soft mandalorian earth.

He didn't want to do that, he hated fighting and conflict, but in this moment he felt he had no other choice.

Grol's jaw went slack, his body shook and his eyes widened at the sudden slaughter of his gang. Sweat dropped down the man's face before he scrambled for the blaster at his side. He closed one eye and aimed the deadly weapon at the Force User.

He never pulled the trigger.

Brennius beat him on the draw. Appius' older brother drew his WESTAR 35's and fired a series of shots directed at the gang leaders heart. He dropped to the ground moments later, destined to be part of the group of corpses that littered the floor. The Clan Clars leader holstered his weapons and smiled warmly at his clanspeople.

"Your safe now. Get inside." His tone was gentle And without hesitation the citizens ran inside the building. Brennius then turned to his younger brother and smiled.

"Thank you."

Appius responded with a smile of his own. Even despite the bloody carnage he was glad to have helped.

"Your welcome."

Chapter 4

Clan Clars Landing Zone.

"Are you sure you don't want to stay?" The Clan Clars leader asked which caused the Sorcerer across from him to shake his head slowly.

"My place is with Clan Vizsla. With the Brotherhood. Besides, from what I saw earlier you have things under control here." Appius responded with a hearty tone that radiated warmth. He was about to climb the ladders provided to his ship until his shoulder was grabbed by Brennius.

"Wait. I have something that belongs to you."

The Clan Clars leader raised his arms and immediately two clansmen brought a small rectangular steel box to them. Brennius opened it and presented it to the Sorcerer in front of him.

Appius had to blink to make sure what he was seeing was real.

'It couldn't possibly be, could it?' He thought to himself.

He reached out and picked up a small metal cylindrical hilt. It was unique in design and slightly heavier than his own as was the purpose when it was built, yet it still fit comfortably in his hands. It could only be described as the weapon of a Jedi Knight. Or more specifically, his Father's lightsaber.

Appius could feel time stop around him. The last time he saw this very weapon was when it was in Sterion's own hands.

"How long have you had this?" He asked, surprised to know his brother even had it in his possession.

"When we found Sterion's body, this was next to him. I've kept hold of it, just in case you ever returned."

Appius activated the Blade and even after twelve years the blue blade still shone brilliantly in the mandalorian sunlight. The blade retracted back into the hilt and he attached it to his belt.

"Thank you."

Brennius smiled at him.

"No problem. And don't worry about your wife either. We will do what we can to find your her. She's family after all."

Appius embraced the older man in a hug as he wrapped his arms around him tightly, the gesture was returned in kind.

"Come on now, we can't have you looking so soft now, can we? Your in the Brotherhood now, Appius!"

They both laughed as Vizsla's first Knight began to climb the ladder provided to his ship.

"I'll see you again in another twelve years, Brennius!" He shouted from the cockpit as he laughed at his older brothers clearly visible concern.

"I'm only joking! You know where I am if you need me."

With that, the cockpit lid closed on him as he ascended into the skies above Mandalore, eventually reaching the starry blackness of Space.

"*To Zsoldos?*" Lawrence beeped to him.

"Yeah, to Zsoldos." Appius replied as he instinctively touched his father's lightsaber hilt. He didn't know what the future held for him, but he felt a lot better now knowing he at least had some family he could rely on, especially after the war.

Soon enough, all that was visible were stars fading past them as the entered hyperspace.

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