

# S.O.S

A submission for the fiction ompetition: **Unsteady Ground: Prelude**

Written and submitted by Knight Appius Wight of Clan Vizsla

## Chapter 1

"So the mission is complete then?"

"Yes, master. The bounty has been terminated."

"Good. One less scumbag in the universe. I'll inform Roark and let him know. Return to Zsoldos at once, Appius. I have another assignment for you."

Suddenly, the holographic projection of a man with a missing notch in his right ear faded away into nothing. That man was Farrin Xies Tarentae. The former Shadow Academy headmaster himself and heir to Tarentum.

Appius pressed a couple of buttons in the cockpit of "The Sterion", his personalised M3-A Scyk Fighter before he sighed deeply to himself.

"Alright, Lawrence, let's get out of here."

They were about to enter hyperspace until Appius noticed something interfering with his ships communications. An encrypted transmission was trying to break through.

"Wait, hold on a second."

He tried to make heads or tails of the transmission as it cackled in the cockpit. Whatever this transmission was it sounded desperate and the only thing he could make out were three individual letters spoken in-between sentences.

S.O.S

"Lawrence, where did that come from?" Appius' tone deepened. Getting a message like that in the middle of space was a rare occurrence and ominous occurrence.

Lawrence beeped at the Sorcerer to confirm the location the message came from.

"The Caelus System? That's Taldryan territory isn't it?"

*"Yep, well done. Maybe you do learn after all."*

Appius ignored the droids sarcastic quip at him and placed his right hand under his chin, lowered his head slightly and closed his eyes.

Even during the recent war in the Lyra 3K-A system his interactions with the other clans of the Brotherhood was minor at best. It was generally frowned upon for members of other clans to enter other clan territories without permission. Hell, most of the time you could be killed for it.

He knew what was expected of him. Return to Zsoldos ASAP to receive his next assignment. But there was no guarantee that Clan Taldryan even received the distress call and as long as they were careful and quick they could be in and out hopefully before anyone noticed.

"Lawrence, set coordinates for the Caelus System. Let's go take a look." He said as he turned the ship around to the view of stars zooming past at lightspeed.

## **Chapter 2**

In many ways, Chyron was a lot like Coruscant. Most of the landmass consisted of skyscrapers and impressive towers. Showing the considerate wealth and business of the system itself. However, unlike Coruscant, Chyron was only a moon and thus smaller. Plus, development of the large skyscraper structures was more of a recent development and as such some small pockets of land still remained as swampland construction zones.

It was in one of these very construction zones that Appius found himself. The dirty horrid smell of the swampland mixed in with the soggy ground didn't mix well with his sense of smell and touch. Daylight was somewhat obscured by the remaining trees that covered up the muddy land, providing some shade in the otherwise bright light of the moon of Perune.

Nonetheless, it was here that Appius located the source of the S.O.S. a collective cell was organised, digging ditches and throwing empty carcasses and bodies into holes. The bodies themselves seemed to be mutilated. They were scarred from what seemed to be forced cybernetics upon their flesh and bones. Clearly they hadn't adjusted well and died as a result. A mixture of men, women and children of various races made up the makeshift grave and made the Sorcerer sick at the very sight.

Whoever sent that S.O.S was probably dead now. That mere thought began to build something within Appius, something hot that steeled his very being.

For the greater good he knew what he had to do. He didn't know why the Collective were here, all he knew was that they had to be stopped.

Vizsla's first Knight emerged from the shadow of the tree he was hiding behind and approached the small group of Collective soldiers. One woman and two men, all human. The ground squelched under Appius' boot and drew the attention of the collective soldiers ahead of him.

"Hey! Who are you!?" The woman shouted, her tone harsh and unforgiving.

She never received a response.

Instead, with his left hand, Appius called upon the power of the Living Force. It gripped round the woman like a giant rope as it pulled her towards him with a violent ferocity. With his right hand, Appius activated *Redeemer*. A single green lightsaber blade erupted out of the hilt and when she was within inches of him he sliced at her midsection. She fell to the ground in two pieces as blood trickled from her wound briefly before it cauterized.

After this brutality, the two remaining Collective soldiers called upon their training and drew their blasters. This would prove to be a fatal mistake, for Appius is a Sorcerer and as such was trained in how to better use his abilities at range.

The Sorcerer's body felt hot as he felt all the emotions of the moment empower him. He took those very feelings and drove them to the tips of his fingers as sparks of white and blue lanced out of the fingertips of his left hand.

One Collective soldier jumped out of the way, leaving his comrade to feel the full force of the burning electricity coursing through his body. It streaked for several seconds before he dropped to the ground, twitching uncontrollably for a moment before he stopped as a singed mess on the swamp floor.

The final soldier aimed his blaster at the Force user, his body trembled as he tried to make an accurate shot yet failed under the weight of his own nerves. He fired the first bolt which clipped Appius' cloak but otherwise left him unharmed.

He fired a second and whilst this one was more accurate, Appius deflected the bolt with the blade of *Redeemer*. The shot hit the ground and kicked up mud and debris.

He was about to fire a third until he felt a pressure on his throat, Appius had once again called upon the power of the Force as the soldier dropped his weapon to the ground and clutched both hands on his tightened airways. He gasped for breath as the Knight approached him.

His weapon may be called *Redeemer*, but there was nothing redeeming about the Collectives actions here on this day.

Once he was mere inches from the soldier he thrust his lightsaber through the man's heart as blood splattered out of the other side of his body. Appius glared daggers into the man's eyes, a mixture of shock, pain and fear resonated in the Collective soldiers retinas before Appius withdrew his blade and let the body drop to the ground in a clump.

Appius glanced over to a makeshift wooden building that had been set up in the construction zone and could sense the presence of more Collective personnel inside. This must have

been what they were using to conduct their experiments on these people. Right outside of the entrance laid several steel barrels that were filled with some form of strong smelling liquid.

'Fuel?' Appius mused to himself. They must have been planning to burn the bodies.

He decided he needed to send a message. So he sheathed his lightsaber back onto his belt and shot a streak of electricity out of both his hands towards the barrels. The heat generated by the sparks started a chain reaction of fire and explosions that set the place ablaze in a glorious display of red and orange.

"Looks like I'm done here..." The Knight muttered to himself under his breath. This would hopefully serve as a warning to the Collective.

He turned around to leave, but suddenly felt the presence of many others surrounding him. But they weren't Collective forces this time, they were Taldryan. All pointing a myriad of weaponry at the Sorcerer as he stood in front of the burning wreckage.

A slow clap caught his attention as he turned to see a Zeltrom woman with loose scarlet hair and perfect hourglass figure.

"Well done. You got to them before we did." She said as she smiled at Appius.

'So they got the S.O.S after all.' Vizsla's first Knight thought to himself.

"Though I have to wonder what a Vizsla member is doing in Taldryan territory. Hm?"

Appius' eyes opened slightly wider at the revelation that she knew where he was from, or rather, who he was associated with.

"Who are you?" Appius asked, his tone displayed the nerves forming within him like a lit beacon.

"My name is Seraine Ténama, Proconsul of Clan Taldryan. But you can call me Erinyes." Her smile suddenly stretched into a smirk.

"And you are coming with us."

**==END==**