

# Hello's and Goodbye's

An entry for the fiction competition: **Combat Writing - Fighting Yourself**

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## Chapter 1

Ahch-To is not a place many venture too. Isolated, off the beaten path of most of the galaxy, only Clan Odan-Ur of the Brotherhood could claim to have specific interest in the planet considered to be the birthplace of the Jedi Order.

Despite this, what once stood as magnificent temples and structures were now relics of their former selves. Washed away by the endless oceans upon the surface, with erosion threatening to swallow what remains on the few scattered islands littered across the mostly ocean planet.

Famously, it was the hiding place of Luke Skywalker. Though these days it was hiding someone else...

"Are you absolutely sure about this, Appius? You got up and left so suddenly, people are worried about you."

An articulate voice rang out over the sounds of crashing waves into the side of the island. The man he was speaking too, stood above him in matte black Mandalorian armour on the hillside just a few feet away, in the shadow of one of the few huts and living quarters of a time gone by.

"I'm sure, Drax. This is something I need to do. I never asked to be followed, I need to do some soul searching and kindly ask you to respect that." Said Appius defiantly. Truthfully, he had hoped to avoid any confrontation such as this, but if anyone was going to be able to track him outside of Brotherhood domain, it was Drax Callian.

The Chiss man in question had placed a tracker on the ship the Force User stole, and he himself glanced at the ancient, fallen ruins that surrounded the both of them. His own black Iron navy uniform seemed barely able to absorb the bright sunlight.

"Soul searching... here?" He asked inquisitively.

Little did he understand how the Force worked within Appius, though he lay primarily within the light side of the Force, the dark side tore at him internally, repeatedly like a blunt weapon hammering at his core. He hoped something that remained, anything could help reaffirm his belief in the light.

"Yes. I'd appreciate it if you didn't tell anyone that you found me. I made my choice, I'll live with the consequences."

The Arcanist's words were mellow as he spoke. He was a former Battleteam Leader and Aedile in Clan Vizsla, the former Quaestor of House Ektrosis in Clan Taldryan, despite how brief that particular run in leadership was. Some considered him to have a bright future, and his departure created many questions.

For all of this, all the Scavenger could do was sigh deeply and scratch the back of his head.

"Is there nothing I can do to convince you?" He asked pitifully one last time, trying to convince him otherwise. But the Mandalorian's resolve was stronger than he gave it credit for.

"No. Even if I did, I caused so much damage for both Vizsla and Taldryan that I doubt I would be welcomed back easily." Appius shook his head. "No, this is my destiny now. Thank you for everything, Drax. I wish you and your wife the best of luck with your family, but I think you need to worry more about her and your child than about me."

The blue-skinned man felt his heart plummet, out of everyone he encountered in the Brotherhood up to this point, Appius was the one man he trusted over all else. He was to be the godfather to his child, the man who recruited him into the Brotherhood in the first place and gave him hope, even after he tried to kill the Force User in their initial meeting. Yet, to hear there was some internal turmoil occurring inside him that he wouldn't reveal hurt him more than the proud Chiss would admit.

He glanced towards Lawrence, the minted R2 astromech that often accompanied Appius on his adventures. It's shimmering shine caught his attention as the droid remained silent throughout their uncomfortable exchange.

"Fine, then I wish you all the best. Goodbye, Appius."

Seeing that he didn't have a hope in hell of convincing his friend to return, he retreated down the many steps back towards his ship. The only sounds he could hear was a soft whimper that resonated from Lawrence, the waves of the ocean, and the cries of local porgs as he walked past them. The smell of fresh air brought him slight comfort, which quickly evaporated when he felt a vibration at his hip. He quickly grabbed the offending device and flicked it on, revealing the image of the Grand Master of the Brotherhood in the palm of his hand.

"Grand Master Cantor..." said Drax as he swallowed the lump in his throat.

"Well? Have you made contact?" Responded the Grand Master in a monotone manner.

"I have... though he currently has no intention to return."

Drax studied the Sith's reaction to the news, he didn't give much away, just a slight twitch of the mouth as he contemplated his next action.

"A pity, he was one who had so much potential. He knows too much about the Brotherhood's inner workings. If he will not rejoin willingly then I have no choice but to order his termination, effective immediately."

The short Scavenger's red eyes shot open wide as his blood ran colder than the surface of his homeworld. Parts of his body went numb under the weight of what he knew was likely to come.

"Drax Callian, execute **Order Renegade**. Your target is Appius Wight. Kill him immediately."

Truthfully, Drax wanted nothing more than to defy the order. Yet, something at the back of his brain persuaded him otherwise, he struggled briefly to fight against it, but the temptation was too strong, and ultimately, the cybernetic planted into his brain won. Appius was a traitor now, and traitors needed to be punished. Whether he wanted to do it or not.

"It will be done, Grand Master."

## **Chapter 2**

Upon inspecting yet another one of the stone huts littered around the mountainous island, Appius once again found absolutely nothing. The Lanai that inhabited Ahch-To were completely hospitable to him, and up until now granted him free reign to search as he pleased. Unfortunately, it did nothing to ease the heaviness in his soul. The Mandalorian turned to his mechanical companion.

"Nothing... I'm beginning to think this was a waste of time."

In response, the R2 astromech beeped slow pitched tune, followed by a series of quick audible noises common to a droid in his series.

"No, there has to be something here. There has to be... I need there to be..."

Appius was about to continue his search and move on into the next stone hut, until he sensed a familiar presence arrive once more.

"Drax, I already said no. I'm getting really sick of this conversation."

Though as he turned to address his friend he was taken back by the sight of the Chiss holding out his left arm. What was more alarming was the MM9 Wrist Rocket attached to it.

Moments later the deadly projectile propelled itself towards the Force User at a speed he barely had any time to dodge. It skimmed past his side and crashed directly into the stone hut he was in moments prior. The resulting explosion was far too much for the small

structure as it sent rocks and pebbles flying out as debris before collapsing to the ground in a heap.

"Drax! What the hell!?" Yelled the Arcanist as dust-covered him. Lawrence beeped and panicked at his side as the Lanai present for this act scattered into whatever hiding places they could find.

He didn't get any response, and instead, the Scavenger unholstered the WESTAR 34 at his side and trained his eye directly at the Mandalorian's visor.

The former member of the Brotherhood quickly called upon the Force and summoned one of his lightsabers to his right hand. With a distinctive *snap-hiss*, a brilliant emerald blade ruptured out of the hilt and, with his mastery of the *Moderation Form* in hand, he casually deflected the blaster fire as it approached him.

Each bolt threatened to end his life if it hit. Luckily for Appius, Drax was far from one of the Brotherhood's best marksmen with a blaster and he knew it. Firing up his Imperial Super Commando Jetpack, he ascended twenty feet into the air. Drax attempted to shoot him down like he was a rogue bird, but a moving target was not one he was used to hitting.

Appius quickly landed behind me, and as the red-eyed Chiss spun to confront him, the Mandalorian called upon the Force once more as his second lightsaber flew into his left hand from his waist. Before Drax had a moment to shoot, his mechanical left arm was removed from his body by a *twin strike*. He shrieked out like a banshee in pain as he recoiled back and stared as the sparking limb, or rather, what was left of it.

Following through with his training, Appius thrust forward his right hand, and a torrent of powerful wind struck directly into Drax's chest. It sent him careening back, crashing painfully into one of the many stone huts that remained.

The Mandalorian Force User felt his pulse beating harder, he hadn't expected this at all, it didn't make any sense! He didn't sense any hostility from Drax as he was about to leave. So this sudden one-eighty shift had him uneasy.

He carefully approached the fallen Scavenger, he was still alive, breathing heavily and in obvious pain, but alive nonetheless. The former Quaestor sheathed his weapons and reached out with the Force, lifting Drax up and pinning him against the structure's wall.

"Drax, what the hell is going on? Why did you attack me? Did Vizsla put you up to this? Or was it Taldryan?"

He never received a direct response, but if looks could kill, then Appius would be six feet under the ground. Drax's face contorted into a sneer so vile and full of malice that it rattled the Arcanist's core.

"Frack... you... Appius!" Grunted Drax as he reached inside his uniform pocket with his one remaining hand to retrieve a grey, circular object. He pressed a button at the very top of the sphere, and a red light began to flash and beep ominously.

"Sithspit!" Yelled Appius, realising what the device was.

He realised his grip over the Chiss and instinctively called upon the Force to protect him. The inevitable explosion rattled the ground and structure. Creating a resounding *boom* that echoed across the island. It kicked up debris as Appius rocketed away. The sudden protection from the Force managed to save his life, it walled against the worse of the explosion though his armour was ruined by a myriad of rips and tears throughout. His visor took the worst of the damage, revealing one blue eye, the left side of it was completely destroyed.

The Arcanist was approached by Lawrence, his astromech droid who beeped concerned for its master.

"I'm fine, Lawrence. It looks worse than it is."

He slowly rose to his feet. Every part of his body screamed for him to remain still yet he fought through it, gritting his teeth as he did so. Upon inspecting the damage he could clearly see from the scattered remains of Drax that he was no longer among the living.

"By the Force..." the Niman master whispered to himself. He struggled to comprehend what just happened. The big question running through his mind was why?

He was a mixed bag of emotions. He'd just lost his friend. A person he thought he could rely on, a person he became godfather to his children for, and now he was dead because he tried to kill him. Part of him thought he got what he deserved, and the other was saddened and grieved for the loss. He clenched his fist and fought back the anger within him. Something flipped in him that made him want to kill the Mandalorian, even going so far as to blow himself up. It honestly rattled him.

"Let's get out of here..."

He slowly wobbled as the injuries burned his flesh. The Lanai began to repopulate the area upon his exit and began to clean up the damage the pair of combatants caused like the good caretakers of the ruins they were. Porgs littered the hillside, keeping a safe distance from him and Lawrence as they carefully stepped down the many stairs towards the beach where his ship still remained idle.

However, one thing he failed to notice was a Holoprojector which displayed the visual of the Grand Master of the Brotherhood, watching him as he disappeared into the distance with a slightly amused smirk on his face.

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