

Nar Shaddaa had a particularly vicious reputation as a filthy, scum-ridden moon encrusted in a decaying ecumenopolis. Whose inhabitants were lower than filth, engaging in debauched behaviour and criminal acts so vile as to turn the stomach of any Core-worlder. There was truth to the stereotype, of course: it should be impossible for the moon to be a bastion of morality when it orbited the "glorious jewel" that was Nal Hutta, but so long as one kept to the unspoken rules of the 'smuggler's moon'—and didn't attract any unwanted, or undue, attention—the population didn't usually take umbrage with you.

It was for this reason that Urie had stationed herself in one of the more... *decent*, apartment suites; spending a great deal of her funds on procuring resources that she'd require to set up shop – a panoply of laboratory equipment, various reinforcements to some of the rooms, fabricating a secure holding cell. Money for the inevitable protection racket that would, invariably, come around to her, and finally, for a handful of slaves.

Four, to be exact. A Rutian Twi'lek—by the name of H'ue—that had come especially cheap, thanks in part to having contracted a venereal disease. A boring infection that, after a week of study, the Arkanian had decided was tedious and decided to isolate and mutate into several different strains and observe the differing effects. The second and third were siblings. Monozygotic twins, female, belonging to that scarcely known near-Human race, the Atoans. And what an intriguing pair they had been too, standing at approximately sixteen years of age. That Trandoshan fool of a slave-trader had thought them ordinary humans, and given that Humanity was perennial, he'd acquiesced to her wrangling the price down to something far more agreeable for both parties. But it was an excellent opportunity to perform various vivisections, observe how certain chemicals interacted with their biology and, eventually, perform a dissection.

The last subject, and by far the most resilient, was a young boy. A *Human* boy, that displayed a margin of Force sensitivity. That had been expensive, for true. But it was fascinating to observe how the brain's plasticity interacted with his 'Force ability'. Urie had been entranced, and had likely pushed harder on the subject far harder than she ought, but the results—by rights—should have been impossible: in blasting his brain with electricity and annihilating select neurons, especially about the lateral amygdala, should have rendered the child a mindless husk without any sort of experiential memory – in essence, resetting him to zero. But quite the opposite occurred in fact! With no loss of memory recorded, the boy's resentment of Malfi only grew exponentially. Attempts to clone and isolate this "sensitivity", frustratingly, defied replication! She could feel that she was on the precipice of something fascinating here; especially without the restrictions that had prevented her from compelling that Miraluka volunteer to stay on in her care.

But her monomaniacal focus on the child, that Human boy, had distracted her from the other two. And one day, as she'd been out collecting biological samples—working in a tiny, run-down clinic that kept her fiscally afloat—returning to her base of operations only afforded her the sight of a burnt out floor. Either someone had tried to break in, or break out, it didn't matter, but the attempt had unhappily triggered the incendiary devices that she'd installed about the floor, scorching everything to ash. Blessedly, her data cache had not been destroyed in the inferno—having taken steps to prevent such a travesty—so she eagerly ferreted that away to herself. But with scarce enough money to commission a smuggler to take her off the infernal moon, let alone begin anew, she decided to take that peculiar man up on his offer of employment.

Marick, she thought his name was.