



A BALEFUL UNEASE
A Star Wars Story

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Rite of Supremacy

1 - Prison Break

They had been outsmarted and outwitted from the outset. What had looked like a simple contract had turned into anything but. They had fallen straight into the trap. Ana Subak had orchestrated everything.

Lilina Mirin sat cross-legged in the small prison cell. She was a Jedi. Fear was not the Jedi way. She breathed deeply as she tried to clear her mind of all emotion to enter a meditative trance... but too much was on her mind.

It had all fallen to pieces when Masakado was disabled by an electromagnetic pulse. Separated from him, she had no idea how what his current condition was like. He was always weak within the Force, and for two years she had barely left his side.

She wondered what Zentru'la would be doing right now. Would he be planning a rescue mission? It would be precisely what Ana is anticipating. It was the wrong tactical move and Lilina understood that, she had learned from the General to never simply do what your opponent wants you to do. But would his loyalty to his team triumph his tactical mind, that ruthless calculus that made him 'The General'.

A prison guard walked past her cell. Lilina felt his presence in the Force. Some considered her blind for her lack of sight, but in truth, it was them that lacked *vision*. She felt the Retributionist pirate before a sighted person could. She could escape. They were not trained to resist attacks against the mind. A mind trick to get him to open the door would be all too simple. But then what would she do? They had her lightsaber. At least the prison cell was safe. They were held as bait to draw Zentru'la in. They were of no use to Ana dead. Their value as hostages would keep them alive.

She returned to her meditation, trying once more to centre herself. The force rippled softly through the fabric of nature. She tuned into its soft echoes. She started to finally fade into a meditative trance.

And then everything changed.

The ripples exploded into a raging vortex. Like a seismic quake had sent a calm sea into a rampaging tidal wave. It happened so suddenly. Lilina lost her synchronisation with the Force amidst the storm in its very nature. She awoke from her meditative trance with a start.

Something was wrong.

She didn't know what it was. All she knew was that she needed to get Masakado and leave, right now.

The prison guard walked back past on patrol. Lilina walked towards the cell door as she sensed his presence approaching. She took a deep breath, opening her mind to the Force once more. "It is imperative that you release me from this cell," she said softly, waving a hand towards the guard.

"It is imperative that I release you from this cell."

The guard unlocked the cell. Lilina allowed the Force to guide her. She was barely in control of her own actions. "You will take me to the cyborg prisoner."

"I will take you to the cyborg prisoner." She followed the trace of the guard within the Force as he guided her through the Retributionist camp. She felt Masakado in the Force as they became closer, his anger was like a fire in the force.

"Release him too."

The guard did as he was told. And then there was a blur of motion. Masakado moved in a flash. She felt his anger let loose as he broke the guard's neck with his bare hands.

"Good work Lilina," said Masakado in his usual gravelly voice.

Asking if he was ok seemed redundant. He could fight, but Lilina felt a weakness in his spirit, like the action had taken more effort than it normally should. This wasn't the time for a psych evaluation though. "It's good to see you're ok," was the only thing she could think of saying.

Masakado picked up the guard's weapon, a heavy repeater which to

Lilina seemed a lot like the one the General used. Masakado scowled at it as if the object was offensive to him and then put it back down. “I’d rather fight unarmed. Let’s get out of here.”

2 - An Unsteady Alliance

They exited the compound. There was screaming outside. A figure in crimson Mandalorian armour was sent flying through the air, crashing to the ground. But the sight of Ana Subak was not what caught Lilina’s attention. She felt it in the Force, a spectre of the Dark Side of the Force, a hulking mess of crystallised horror that might have once been a human, wielding a blood-red lightsaber. Lilina could feel the crystal within bleeding with the taint of the Dark Side. A vicious swing of a crystallised arm sent Ana flying once more. She got back to her feet and saw Masakado and Lilina. There was a dead body next to her.

She threw a short sword to Masakado, who caught it with precision. “Help me kill this thing!” It was not a request, it was an order from the enemy. They could easily have left her to die against the crystal abomination.

Masakado was clearly thinking along those lines, eyeing the blade as Ana backed away from the crystal ascendant. “Why would w-”

“Because you’re next once it’s done with me!”

There was no time for an argument as the creature pointed a crystallised arm towards Ana. An ear-piercing crackle heralded a release of Dark Side energy and a torrent of lightning burst forth. Lilina acted on instinct and the lightning crashed against an invisible barrier. She knew once she took a side, Masakado would follow her decision. The beast swung a lightsaber at Ana and the brute force of the blow shattered Lilina’s concentration, but her barrier had brought enough time for Masakado to move in swiftly behind the beast. He slashed Ana’s sword at what bits of its leg remained human, almost cleaving it in half.

As it fell to the ground, supporting itself on a crystal limb, Ana unleashed a barrage of powerful blaster fire at point-blank range, and didn't stop shooting until it stopped moving. There was an awkward silence. Thank you seemed impossible for the Mandalorian.

"What was that thing?" Masakado growled.

"Why don't you ask your Jedi?" Ana said scathingly. "This seems like her domain."

"It felt like a corruption of the Force itself," Lilina said pensively. She picked up the lightsaber it was holding. Evil emanated from it, trying to pull her towards the Dark Side, but she centred herself within the Light, resisting its draw. "They are the spawn of the Dark Side of the Force."

"They were *dark* side? I never would have guessed."

Lilina felt a surge of anger from Masakado at Ana's sarcastic comment. She could feel the bloodlust. *Don't do it. You're not strong enough.*

"I know you want to kill me," said Ana, her voice cold and high. "But those things are all over Tipool, you don't know this city and you wouldn't last a minute by yourselves."

"That being... they shouldn't be allowed to exist. It's my duty as a Jedi to put a stop to this." She could still feel the darkness within the lightsaber as she held it. She poured her energy into the weapon, becoming one with the crystal within, and the blood-red blade turned to a brilliant white.

"That guy..." Ana pointed to the dead body and it was then Lilina realised he was also wearing Mandalorian armour. "He was my foundling. I will have my vengeance against your General. But this is not the time. I am bound by creed to kill the one behind this. This is the way."

"And the Jedi code forbids me from turning a blind eye to this," said Lilina serenely.

"It seems our motives are aligned... for now," Masakado added menacingly.

“Where did they come from?”

“My scouts reported some strange woman landed in some decrepit old shuttle, right in the middle of the city. Then all hell broke loose.”

“As good a place as any to start,” said Masakado. “Stay in the shadows. Avoid sight.”

Given the navigation of Ana towards the centre of Tipool city and Masakado’s ability to direct the group out of sight of enemy eyes, they moved through Tipool towards the epicentre of the carnage. Lilina could sense Masakado’s unease over working with Ana as they avoided the sight of another crystallised monstrosity. He wanted nothing more than to stab her in the back. *I don’t trust her either. But I must learn more about the crystallised Sith. It’s my duty as a Jedi.*

She knew that Ana might well be hatching another scheme against them, but she sensed her loyalty to her creed and her desire to avenge her foundling was genuine.

3 - The Seer Emerges

“That ship up ahead,” said Ana’s cold and high voice as Lilina could sense the outline of a shuttle on a deserted street. “That’s the one my scouts reported on.”

Inside, the ship was unlike anything Lilina had ever seen. Large red crystals seemed to protrude from the walls, and she felt a sense of foreboding just stepping aboard. The floor was covered in blood. “We are alone. But I sense a great darkness on board. The traces of ancient Sith magic.”

“Yes yes yes, darkness, Sith, magic, we get it. The blood and the giant red crystals gave it away. But why is it empty?”

“Her forces must be occupied,” Masakado growled. “I’ll check the terminal.” His mechanical fingers tapped at the console with a staccato rhythm. As he began to battle against the security systems away at a

computer terminal.

“Magic like this leaves traces in the Force,” said Lilina. “I must meditate on this.”

She sat on the floor of the ship and tried to feel the echoes in the Force of what had happened on board. She felt visions of the creatures they fought earlier. She felt the presence of a Sith, extremely powerful in the Force. The words *Chains Unbound* repeated over and over. The lure of the Dark Side was strong. She could feel the power of the Seer, and her Crystal Ascendants.

Then she sensed something coming. It was a darkness unlike anything Lilina had ever known. It was coming closer and closer. Her mind snapped back into the ship. “A great darkness approaches.”

“Enough with the darkness,” Ana said in a bored tone. “Masakado just extracted their lab results on a datapad, why can’t you say something useful for once.”

She ignited the white lightsaber. “Impending doom. Draw your weapons. Now.”

Beside her, Ana held her repeating rifle at the ship entrance. Masakado stood ready for action, sword in hand.

“Who dares trespass on my ship?” The Seer’s red lightsaber bathed her in a crimson glow. Her face was covered in blood, her eyes hidden behind a blindfold and she wore a strange headdress with antlers protruding upwards.

“I am Ana Subak of Clan Wren. You killed my foundling. Time to die.” Ana opened fire but the Seer returned her blaster bolts with her lightsaber, returning them back at the group, where they were dispersed by a barrier from Lilina.

The Seer advanced towards them, her lightsaber ignited. Lilina felt an overwhelming sense of fear. The others did too, as they backed away from her further into the ship. “You cannot even begin to comprehend my power... with chains unbound.”

Masakado threw the sword at the Seer but she lazily swatted it aside without touching it and threw her own weapon in retaliation. Lilina stopped the lightsaber mid-air and attempted to pull it to her own hand but the Seer's power was overwhelming as she recalled the weapon to her hands.

"You are strong with the Force, Jedi. But you are shackled by your chains."

"Enough of this!" Ana suddenly charged towards The Seer. The Seer swung her lightsaber towards the advancing Mandalorian, but she covered herself with Beskar plate and barrelled into the Sith, pushing her to the floor with pure momentum and weight. Lilina recognised her approach as the same Zentru'la had used before. Just how long had she been tracking them?

As Ana wound up a punch at the Seer, she was thrown against the wall with devastating power. She landed on her feet and attempted to engage in grappling range once more but was lifted up into the air by the Seer. Lilina was just about to intervene, preparing to swing her white lightsaber at Ana but a powerful hand grabbed hold of her wrist.

"Leave them," said Masakado. "I have her notes. Time to go."

They left Ana and The Seer to their duel and sprinted out of the shuttle. The streets of Tipool looked like they had recently seen battle, with a haze of smoke limiting their vision.

A large figure moved through the smoke... a mountain of a man... clad in shining white armour.

"General?" said Lilina. "What are you doing here?"

Zentru'la locked and loaded his repeating cannon.

"Finishing this fight."