

Padawan Tran's Quarters
The Jedi Praxeum
Kiast

The scene was grisly. Everything in the girl's quarters spoke of the vibrant life of a teenage Jedi wannabe, right down to the still-simmering water in the kettle next to a cup of unsteeped herbal tea. The only thing that looked out of place was the charred corpse of Padawan Tran herself, reclined in a grease- and ash-stained chair opposite her holonet terminal, her jaw hanging open in a silent scream.

Spontaneous Human combustion was, the last time the Praxeum checked, still not a thing. Hence the investigation.

The victim was a history nerd with a thing for so-called scoundrels, the types of men who seemed superficially bad but secretly had hearts of gold. There were a couple of portraits of Poe Dameron, but the framed poster holding pride of place on the wall showed a disheveled Human male in a dark vest, brandishing a DL-44 and awkwardly—and unsuccessfully—trying to look uninspiring.

VeZ didn't see the appeal.

The Mirialan scanned the poster with the infolink in her helmet. She was way overdressed for this sort of thing, but she hadn't had a chance to change. Turel sent her over straight from sparring to help out in the investigation. Being a renowned sleuth had its perks, but the unfortunate downside was that, once word got out, someone always needed you to look into something.

The infolink found a hit for the poster and punted it to the heads-up display in her helmet. Sure enough, it was a Rebel Alliance recruitment poster. One of Janyor of Bith's rarest works, featuring a Captain Han Solo. Title: *The Rebellion Wants You—Yes, Even You*. Copies in good condition go on auction every now and then and fetch obscene sums.

"Man," VeZ muttered. "Padawan Tran was a real Han fan."

"Ma'am?" one of the two OEF attaches standing in the doorway said, obviously confused. Kiast's alleged finest were first on the scene after one of Tran's fellow padawans reported hearing a scream and smelling smoke.

"Never call me that again." VeZ sighed. "The poster. Probably not relevant."

She continued to sweep the room, scanning the rest of the Padawan's belongings. Aside from that one bit of fangirl extravagance—maybe a lucky find in a junk shop, Vez mused—nearly everything was either Praxeum-issued or cheap wares from one of the nearby Quorahi villages.

Finally she scanned the body.

“She’s dead, Jim,” Vez nodded sagely.

“Yes, uh, we established that part.”

Vez leaned over the smoldering remnants of Padawan Tran to check the holonet terminal. The girl was clearly doing something online at her time of death.

Vez took in the text on-screen and swore under her breath. “None of you thought to check this?” she asked, turning to glare at the OEF troopers from under her helmet.

The troopers glanced at each other, then back at her. Finally one of them spoke. “It’s just a discussion thread on Huttit, ma—er, Jedi Hirundo. We didn’t think it was relevant.”

“Ok, first off,” Vez said, raising a finger. “I’ll take ma’am over ‘Jedi Hirundo.’ Kriff, you people are awkward. Second,” another finger popped up, “This is h/SaltierThanM-113 and your stiff just posted a rousing defense of Space Fight VIII: The Last Trekkie as the best installment of the series.”

The two faces stared blankly at Vez. She sighed and continued. “The Last Trekkie is *intensely* controversial among Space Trek aficionados. The Tribble Awakens (that’s Space Fight VII) was a shameless nostalgia-fest and cash in, and then the director for TLT came in and pissed in every bowl of fanboy threepi-os he could find. The difference is jarring.

“Now beings of culture,” Vez continued, gesturing to herself, “consider the deconstruction of fan expectations a daring gamble that paid off critically, if not commercially. I’ll admit the middle drags on a bit, but the holomatography and use of color is *mwah*.” Vez said with a chef’s kiss.

“But your girl here took her *entirely correct* holofilm opinions to the wrong neighborhood. You see, almost all the Space Fight subhuttits druk on the new movies pretty relentlessly, I mean, it’s kriffin *tradition* at this point. But h/SaltierThanM-113? That’s for all beings who can’t shut up about how Tookasfilm is ruining their childhoods to the point that even the other nerds got tired of them and banished them to their own sub.”

The blank stares continued. Vez sighed. "Padawan Tran was flamed."

"You mean... the holonet did this?" one attache asked.

"How is that possible?" the other gasped.

Vez shrugged. "Your Padawan was destroyed with facts and logic."