

**Alleged Jedi Warehouse**  
**The Verity District**  
**Coruscant**

“I guarantee you this is a trap.”

MiniDuke bleeped out a reply but kept its photoreceptor focused at the end of the alley, watching the pedestrian traffic on the main street. Although he looked like a simple, albeit unusual, astromech, the little droid packed enough firepower to take on a platoon of ambushers.

“I do *not* say that about everything,” Vez grunted. The Mirialan was crouched down behind the droid, using MiniDuke as cover as she tried to hotwire a door that hadn’t been opened in decades.

MiniDuke chirped back at her.

“What? Ok, first off, you barely know Elyon, and second, no woman with hair that good is that nice.”

The Duke continued to press its point.

“Aura? You mean the one who was literally a Sith assassin?”

The blastromech made a flatulent sound.

“This is why I don’t let you out unsupervised, little guy,” Vez sighed. “You’re just too trusting.”

“Seriously, though,” she continued. “This is supposed to be a Jedi warehouse that the Empire didn’t find? Look around, bud. We’re on kriffin’ *Coruscant*. We walked past the old ISB Academy on the way over here. You’re telling me you believe for a second that the Empire managed to hunt down almost every Jedi overnight but they couldn’t find a storage depot in their own front yard?”

With a final spark, the door opened and the funk of ages filled Vez’s nostrils. “Looks like this place hasn’t seen any love in a while,” she said.

MiniDuke bleeped.

“Yeah, well, whether that's a good sign or not remains to be seen. In my professional opinion as an occasional graverobber, if nobody's broken in before you, there's usually a farking good reason why not.” She stood up and brushed her hands off on her pants before packing her kit back up and leading the droid into the warehouse. “Just keep your receptors peeled is all I'm saying.”

At first glance the place was exactly as advertised: a decrepit warehouse with a half-century's worth of dust and vermin built up between the various shelves and containers. Crates were stacked nearly to the ceiling in some cases. A trickle of dingy sunlight leaked in from the handful of narrow transparisteel windows. No defenses to speak of, or at least none that were obvious.

Veze crept in, drawing her blaster as MiniDuke rolled along after her. “Picking up anything?” she asked.

The droid swiveled its dome back and forth in near silence.

“Figures,” Vez muttered. “I am definitely going to die.”

The iconography and design were all consistent with the late Republic Jedi Order, with odds and ends dating back to the High Republic. Buildings on Coruscant never really became uninhabited, at least not in the Verity District—and Vez was not amused by the name—so the Order must have bought the space and done something to keep squatters and thieves out. The area was wealthy and well-policed but this wasn't some backwater rimworld where nobody would notice free real estate for decades on end. The security protocol on the door was solid but nothing to comm home about.

As far as Vez could tell, the only real security in place was how farking *creepy* the place was.

The Duke started chirping at her again, apparently satisfied that the noise wasn't going to summon a droid-eating dragon or anything of the sort. *If you hate this idea so much, why did we take the job?*

The Padawan huffed. “Shocking as it may seem, I am wrong occasionally. If the holocron really is here, there's no way Xolarin is going to let me have quality time alone with the deep dark secrets of some dead Jedi. But if I'm the one who finds it, well, it sure is long trip back to Kiast.”

The architecture of the space was pretty simple: a long, narrow rectangle that stretched back about 75 meters by about ten meters across. Towards the back of the chamber was an

open lift up to the second level, which was just an open durasteel grate with more junk and a very basic safety railing. There were a handful of hovercarts and what looked like an antique load-lifter parked near the entrance.

There was no obvious holocron case, no lightsaber rack, no mint-condition Vector hanging from the ceiling or anything else that would have immediately justified the trip out here. Vez tried extending her senses, hoping to pick up the feeling of a kyber crystal or something, *anything* to avoid having to dig through hundreds of boxes of moth-eaten youngling robes, old furniture, and broken training remotes.

The door hissed shut behind her so abruptly that she panicked, nearly jumping out of her skin as she opened fire at the noise.

“Dank farrik...” she whispered, staring at the smoking wreckage of the door’s control panel as MiniDuke made some snippy remark about organic threat prioritization. Vez turned to tell the blastomech off, but stopped short as the Duke started spinning. The droid wailed and unnatural blue lightning arced back and forth over its chassis for several seconds until both fell still and silent.

The overhead lights flickered and went out.

“Oh, no, I am *not* about this ghost druk,” Vez hissed. She ignited her lightsaber, letting the low-powered training blade bathe the area around her in pale green light.

A figure was facing her. She recognized the expressionless mask of a Republic-era Temple Guard.

Vez swore and nearly dropped her lightsaber as she scrambled back. The masked figure advanced.

“Let me guess,” the Mirialan grunted. “I have to guess your favorite color and you’ll give me the holocron?”

“No,” the figure rumbled. Its voice was deep yet somehow hollow. “I serve to protect the treasures of the temple from the unworthy.”

“Well I’m probably unworthy, but I swear on my mother’s grave that I’m taking this to some real Jedi.”

“Your mother lives, Verity Hirundo,” the Guard said. Two amber blades erupted from either end of its lightsaber. “You will not.”