

Chronicles of a Mandaboo

A fiction written by Appius "The Mandaboo" Wight"

'War never changes...'

This was not Taldryan's first war, nor was it expected to be their last, despite how frequent conflict came into the line of sight for every Taldryanite within the Clan.

"FOR THE EMPIRE"

"DEATH TO EWOKS!"

"GAAAAAH!"

Explosives danced across the battlefield like fireworks that had malfunctioned. Red streaks of plasma soared from one side to the other as the Imperial forces of Clans Scholae Palatinae and Taldryan met head-on. If there was one thing to commend, it was the loyalty of the soldiers on both sides. Even in the face of certain death, they carried on under the orders of their superiors, their leaders, their Emperor, their Head of State, their *Consuls*.

Raistline had just finished cutting into the next poor fool who thought rushing at him was a good strategy. The Imperial Legion were relentless with their assaults and tactics, and what made things worse was the fact they were fighting on home ground. In territory they were familiar with, whereas the Taldryanites were not. A small spherical device landed at Raistline's feet, drawing his eye for a brief moment. The device flashed red, causing the Augur's heart to skip a beat.

"SITHSPIT!" Raistline cried out.

Suddenly, a young woman wearing beskar Mandalorian armor tackled him out of the way of the impending explosion. As soon as they both hit the ground, the thermal detonator exploded, kicking up a mountain of dirt, some of which covered the two figures.

"Kriffing hell, Raist! Watch what the frakk you are doing!"

The young woman quickly returned to her feet and pulled Raistline back to a standing position, surprising the Thanatos Quaestor. Amidst

"Thank you, Tracinya," Raistline said. "I'm getting too old for this..."

"Have your mid-life crisis later!" a new voice yelled over the battle. A woman with long auburn hair commanded with an authority fit for Taldryan's armed forces. Crysenia Orainn,

the House Ektrosis Quaestor, aimed with her sidearm striker pistol and pressed the trigger. The shot missed, and the slug brought immediate attention to her from the enemy forces.

Crysenia's eyes widened, and it was like time seemed too slow as noise drowned out around her. Streaming bolts of plasma sailed towards the Ektrosis Quaestor through the darkness, but luckily, something, or rather, someone intervened.

Snap-Hiss!

A lightsaber blade, bold and green in colour, created a wall in front of her. The weapon itself was wielded by a young Twi'Lek boy, no older than seventeen who assumed his battle stance. The blaster bolts arrived, and were carefully deflected away by the Force User as he aimed to protect the Ektrosis Quaestor with all the power and concentration he had.

The Imperial Legion troopers advanced forwards like a shadow from the days of Order Sixty-Six, intending to gun down the Twi'Lek like he was some kind of Jedi scum.

Snap-Hiss!!!

They barely made it three steps before a set of twin emerald lightsabers began to cleave through them like a whirling storm. It should have been impossible for a man who was blind to move in the way that Shanree Argentin did, and yet, there it was, happening right before their very eyes as the very last thing that particular squadron would see before their demise.

"You did well, Zakhai," Shanree commented, throwing a small smile to both his apprentice and the Ektrosis Quaestor.

"Thank you, Master. I..." Zakhai began to speak, but was halted when two squadrons of 74-Z speeder bikes whizzed past the group.

"This just never ends!" Crysenia cried out.

"LOOK OUT!" Shanree shouted as he launched himself at Zakhai, barging into the young man and thankfully forcing him out of the way of one 74-Z that intended to run him down.

The speeder did a one-eighty turn, the front cannons intending to fire upon the cluster of Taldryanites gathered in one place. Suddenly, lightning hissed from the driver's blind spot, striking him in his back and sending the vehicle off-course. The 74-Z crashed into a duracrete wall before bursting into an impressively sized fireball that roared over the battlefield.

"Ha! Take that, frakker!" Tracinya jeered, her fingers still sparking with lightning between them.

"Where the kriff are our reinforcements!?" Raistline screamed amongst the carnage. By his side lay two more dead Imperials, though it was clear by the blood, sweat, and dirt that marred each Taldryanite and their armor that the longer this battle went on, the less chance they had of surviving.

"Appius and Teebu are on their way! We just need to hold on!" Crysenia answered, getting a scoff from the Thanatos Aedile.

"Frakk Appius and frakk the reinforcements, we don't need em!" Tracinya retorted.

Just then, another 74-Z speeder bike swarmed onto their position like the Force itself had heard the young Aedile's taunting. The cannons on the front aimed at Tracinya and opened fire. The high-powered blasters struck into Tracinya's beskar armor, the force of which knocked the Thanatos Aedile off of her feet.

"Tracinya!" Crysenia called out. They may have been of different Taldryan Houses, but they were still part of the same Clan. A loss to one of their leaders would be a crippling blow.

Thankfully, the speeder never got the chance to capitalise. A young woman with raven black hair and the tattoo of a snowflake under her right eye leapt at the speeder with reckless abandon as it was about to zoom past her, tackling its driver as both of them rolled to the ground with a hard thud. The speeder spun in the air, and just like its predecessor, exploded into a fireball worthy of being recorded and put onto the holonet. Once the young woman had regained her composure, she pounced like a sand-panther hungry for a meal. She removed the trooper's helmet and proceeded to pummel the poor man's head with all the strength she had in her body. Blood seeped out of wounds, and for those who watched, they could see the blind fury that developed in the woman's eyes. Punch after punch the wounds deepened, her knuckles becoming stained red and bruised. In moments, the trooper she had been senselessly beating upon had gone limp and motionless.

"Cryo!" Raistline shouted to the young woman, adopting a tight, defensive stance in front of the young woman to protect her from stray blaster bolts.

Tracinya, having returned to her feet, rushed to Cryo's side. The Mandalorian Sith pulled her fellow Aedile to her feet as all three Taldryanites began to regroup with the rest of the team.

"Thanks..." Tracinya said begrudgingly to Cryo.

"I'll frakking kill them all!" Cryo yelled. "That helmet was brand new!"

"At least things could be worse," Shanree suggested off-handedly.

"How could things possibly be worse?" Crysenia questioned.

Unfortunately, before the Augur could respond, the ground began to vibrate under their feet. It got stronger and stronger with each passing second. Then out of the shadows, it emerged. It was about nine metres in height, towering over everything else on the battlefield. Its front cannons targeted the Taldryan forces beneath it like it was an omen of death. It was a...

"CHICKEN WALKER!"

Those were the last two words the Taldryan officer screamed as the AT-ST unloaded its firepower on their location. There was nothing left except burnt ground covered by scattered limbs.

"You just *had* to say it, didn't you!?" The Ektrosis Quaestor scolded.

"You had to ask!" Shanree retorted.

The AT-ST unleashed volley after volley into the Taldryan forces. It rained death and destruction against those unfortunate enough to not get out of the way.

"Zakhai!" Shanree ordered as both he and his student leapt forward.

The Twi'Lek Knight stopped a few feet from the mechanical death machine and raised his hands towards it. Zakhai closed his eyes, focusing on the internal targeting system the AT-ST had, stopping it from precisely picking up on Shanree as he approached it.

With twin lightsabers in hand, the Miraluka cleaved through the scout transport's legs like they were made of something indescribably soft. The vehicle tumbled to the ground, broken and no longer a threat.

Yet, before they could celebrate, two more AT-ST's arrived and took its place, much to the Taldryanites chagrin.

However, at that exact moment, the sound of a horn drew the attention of the combatants towards a nearby hill. At the top stood the silhouettes of several individuals, the most noteworthy being the three Mandalorians and what appeared to be an Ewok in a Grand Admiral uniform holding a spear riding atop a small, spherical droid. The pint-sized being raised its right arm and wailed towards the heavens.

"YUB-NUB! YUB-JUB!"

A chorus erupted from behind them, chanting the very same phrases until a stampede of BB-8 riding Ewoks cascaded down the hill like a furry avalanche. They swarmed past the Taldryanites and straight into the Imperial Legion forces.

"You have got to be kriffing with me right now..." Tracinya mumbled under her breath.

The furry armada swarmed onto the battlefield, ignoring the Taldryan forces as they attacked members of Scholae Palatinae. Revenge and bloodlust were the driving force behind their attack as the sudden numbers began to overwhelm the AT-STs. The Ewoks, thanks to superior numbers, were able to tie a pair of ropes around both pairs of Scout Transport's legs. Once the vehicles began to move, they tripped over and crashed into one another on their way to the ground. They crashed with a thunderous quake, the sight of which forced the Imperial Legion forces into a quick retreat.

"Well, I'll be damned," Shanree commented as the Ewoks began to celebrate their sudden victory.

Suddenly, the three Mandalorians arrived beside them having soared through the air with their jetpacks. One wore armour that had clearly seen better days as it was marred with scratches and in desperate need of a paint job. The next was a woman in armour pristine and white, save for the two red stripes that extended from the left side of her helmet down to her ankle. The last wore crimson-coloured armour with the most striking feature being the lightning bolt upon his chest plate. This was Scholae Palatinae's highest priority target outside of the Ewoks themselves. He was the Clan Taldryan Consul, Appius Wight.

"Surprise!" Appius cheered triumphantly.

"Appius, when I said I wanted reinforcements, this is not what I had in mind!" Crysenia scolded. "Where is the army, the navy, our artillery!?"

"I told you this was a stupid idea," the rough-armoured Mandalorian spoke.

"Oh, come on, Darrio. It all worked out, didn't it?" The Consul responded.

"Yeah, if you count listening to the words of a fuzzbball that barely stands at knee height *worked out*. Then sure, whatever you say, *vod*," Darrio replied before getting a stiff kick in the back of his leg from the female Mandalorian. "The frakk did I do, Ankira?"

"Insulting my race, me, and your brother in one sentence. I think it was warranted. Thank you, Ankira," Teebu said as he arrived, rolling on his BB-8 unit with the spear still in his hands.

"They wanted to fight for their freedom against those who would oppress them. There's honour in that, more than there is with you, Darrio," Ankira answered.

"Regardless, we need a plan going forward. This was certainly a... surprise," Raistline said, glancing at all the Ewoks celebrating. "The Emperor is held up in the fortification near the Ewok farm. If we can rush it, we can..."

Suddenly, the Raistline went quiet, as did all the Taldryanites that had gathered. Mechanical whirring sounded through the darkness as another AT-ST made its arrival, unleashing a quick volley of blaster fire into the Ewok horde, destroying several of them.

"NO!" Teebu screamed in fury.

Responding to the sudden threat, Darrio took to the sky and aimed his wrist-mounted rocket at the walker. The explosive crashed into the durasteel, sending the AT-ST reeling and struggling to maintain balance. Ankira pulled out her dual WESTAR blasters and began taking shots at it from ground level. Meanwhile, Appius summoned the tendrils of the dark side and drove it to his fingertips. Lightning sparked and hissed as it enveloped the 'Chicken Walker', it finally losing its footing as it crashed beside its comrades.

"SHOW OFF!" Tracinya bellowed.

"There's more coming!" an Alarmed Cryo suddenly said.

Sure enough, there were, and they were not alone. Several AT-STs backed by Imperial Legion ground troops swarmed against the Taldryanites.

"Form a circle, defend each other!" Appius ordered, drawing his lightsabers. The Taldryanites did as commanded as they were quickly surrounded by the Scholae Palatinae armed forces. Though, they did not fire upon them, nor gun them down where they stood.

"What's going on? Why haven't they killed us yet?" Zakhai asked.

The answer came when one AT-ST stomped forward. It stood head and tail above the rest in mint condition. Then, the top hatch opened, revealing a lean, suspiciously youthful-looking Human male as the walker's pilot.

"Appius Wight! I've been looking forward to this. My name is Thran Occasus-Palpatine, and I have direct orders from the Emperor to bring you in."

"WHAT!?" another voice, feminine in nature, boomed from inside the AT-ST. A golden-hued Firrerreo woman appeared out of the hatch next to Thran, clearly visibly peeved by what was transpiring. "I thought we were just gonna push the big red button and kill the frakker! Since when did *you* give a kark about what Kamjin thinks?"

"I don't, Rayne," Thran answered. "But this is one of those rare occasions where he and I see eye to eye on something. The Taldryan Consul is better off coming with us alive, at least for now. To set an example, if you know what I mean."

"Like hell he's going with you!" Ankira bellowed in response. She pointed her WESTAR blasters at the pair of Palatinae members, which prompted the Imperial Legion to prepare their blasters.

"Tsk, tsk. I would think carefully before you decide to go trigger happy," Thran suggested as a coy smile formed on his face. He was like a sabacc player that held all the cards in his hands, supremely confident. "Take a look around, *Consul*. You are all surrounded with absolutely no hope of survival if you fight. There's a way out of it for everyone else, though. If you come quietly, then the rest of your little posse can go free. Fight back and... well..."

One of the AT-ST's shot at the ground near the grouped up Taldryanites, kicking up a mound of dirt and debris.

"I think that makes my point clear," Thran finished, the smile never leaving his face.

Silence dawned on the Taldryanites as they all turned to Appius. The proclaimed Mandaboo was lost in thought, his head hung low with his fingers grasped around his lightsabers.

Strength is life; for the strong have the right to rule.

Honour is life; for without honour, one may as well be dead.

Loyalty is life; for without one's Clan, one has no purpose.

Death is life; one should die as one lived.

The Mandalorian code echoed through Appius' mind, those very words were taught to him on Mandalore by the brother that stood beside him. A Consul's duty above all else was to look after their Clan and its members first and foremost above their own welfare and needs.

Loyalty is life; for without one's Clan, one has no purpose.

Appius glanced at the men and women that surrounded him, including a newly minted Summit member, his brother, and his spouse. His loyalty was to them, and their welfare meant the most to him.

Loyalty is life...

The emerald blades of Appius' Darksaber-inspired weapons retracted into the hilt, and the Mandalorian Force User carefully clipped them back on his waist.

"Ok, I agree," the Consul finally relented.

"Appius!" Ankira scolded.

"The hell!?" Tracinya added on.

Every living being, Ewok, Human, or otherwise turned to Appius.

"This is the only way I can think of to save you all," Appius reasoned.

"Forget being saved! We are Mandalorian! *Mando'ade!* We fight to the very end! There is no honour in this!" Ankira protested loudly, getting more and more worked up by the second.

"We are Mandalorian, Ankira. You, me, Darrio, and Tracinya. Everyone else is not. Is it fair to send them to their death because of our honour? Our pride?" Appius reasoned.

"We can fight with you!" Crysenia answered back. "This... doesn't seem right."

"You do realise they probably won't let us go for long," Teebu suddenly chimed in. "Once you are... gone... the war will likely resume."

"I'm aware of that, but at the very least I can buy you some time. The Clan will be in your hands, Teebu," Appius suddenly knelt to him, lifting up his helmet to reveal a soft smile and blue eyes. "They are good people, and they need a leader to guide them."

"They won't listen to me because..." Teebu said.

"Because you are an Ewok?" the Consul interjected, getting a hesitant nod from the furry being. "I get that, strangely. I'm a Mandalorian Force User and have faced my fair share of rolled eyes and criticism. Show them what you've shown me, and you'll win them over. I have faith in you, if I didn't, I wouldn't have made you my Proconsul."

Appius then rose to his feet and faced the House Thanatos Aedile. The young woman looked torn and lost by how she shifted from one foot to the other, like she wanted to slap him but hug him at the same time.

"Tracinya?" Appius asked.

"Frakk off... not like this... you can't be serious. It's just like my dad all over again," Tracinya mumbled.

"At least I'm not leaving without saying goodbye," the Consul stated softly. "I need you to do something for me. One last favour. I know you are mad at me for how I treated you after Aidos..."

"Shut up..." the Aedile said.

"No, not this time because I *need* this. It's Rausu. When he's older, he might have the Force like you and me. A Mandalorian Force User. He's going to need a teacher and I won't be around. Can you do that for me?"

Tracinya didn't answer with words, but with a nod.

"Thank you. Raistline, Crysenia, Cryo, Tracinya. Teebu will need your support going forward. Shanree, continue training Zakhai. That young man has a lot of potential," Appius praised.

"It will be done," Shanree replied.

Appius took a deep breath and took two steps forward, but was halted when something grabbed his arm.

"Don't..." Ankira begged. "You are making a mistake... Shi'Kar and Rausu..."

"Will be fine. They have you," Appius pressed his forehead to her visor. "I love you."

Ankira couldn't speak as Appius walked away to his destiny, placing his helmet back on his head.

"Finally done talking?" Thran inquired with a raised brow. "Good. Cuff him and take his weapons. Inform the Emperor his guest of honour will be with him shortly."

Then they left. Taldryan was left without its Consul, though Appius hoped above all else, he had done his duty.

-END-