

Centam stumbled over a rock and fell to the ground. For the past few days he had been running from large crystalline raptors, which were hunting him down to kill him. Not knowing just where he was headed, he only knew that he needed to get help.

He struggled to his feet, wincing as his sore muscles yelled at him. *Man, running really wears you out, doesn't it*, he thought to himself, then half smiled at the thought of talking to himself.

During this momentary distraction, the raptors had been closing in. One screeched loudly as it neared him, and Centam, fueled by panic, raced off, his aching legs temporarily forgotten.

He turned a corner and ducked into a small gap, holding his breath as the raptors sprinted past. Doubling over and panting, his tired lungs sucked in the dry, dusty air and he coughed, unable to suppress the urge.

The footsteps of the crystalline raptors stopped abruptly, and then began growing gradually louder.

*Great*, thought Centam, *now they know I'm here AND I've lost all my energy. This day just keeps getting better.*

He reached for his belt where he normally kept his lightsaber. His hand brushed against the leather and he froze.

The lightsaber was no longer hanging where it belonged, ready to be used.

Looking out into the darkness, he spotted the weapon lying on the floor, several feet away. Pulling it to him with the Force could reveal his location to the raptors, but leaving it there would keep him from having a blade if they found him anyway.

He weighed the two options in his mind, as the beasts got ever nearer, then finally decided on a course of action.

Reaching out with his mind, he simultaneously *pulled* the dark gray hilt to him and *pushed* a pile of rubble which rested around the corner from where he stood. The rocks clattered to the floor as the decorated cylinder flew to his hand.

Distracted by the commotion, the raptors didn't notice Centam clipping the lightsaber into its place on his belt and fading back into the shadows.

As they ran by to investigate, he managed to make a getaway and gained quite a bit of distance on the creatures. Then, through the doorway of a ruined house, Centam saw several corpses buried under debris. They were covered in large gashes and scrapes.

His vision flickered and the Force warned him just in time for him to duck under the swipe of a claw. The raptors had not been quite as fooled as he had thought, and now he was under attack.

Spinning around, he brought the lightsaber from his belt and ignited it, spearing the bright green blade through the monster's chest. The raptor roared and clawed at the plasma, causing it to slice off several of its fingers. Stumbling back in shock, it freed itself from the energy blade and fell to the ground.

But Centam had forgotten about the other.

Pain blossomed down his right arm as it raked its claws down his shoulder, and he screamed in agony, dropping the weapon and falling to his knees.

He rolled quickly to the side, groaning as it jarred his injured arm, and narrowly avoided a second swipe from the raptor. Again he stretched out with the Force, and lifted his lightsaber from the ground. Exerting himself through the pain, he *sliced* through the beast's left shoulder and right forearm.

As it retreated, the first raptor got up slowly and followed the other close behind, its wounded arm hanging limply at its side.

Using the Force to blunt the agony still shooting up his arm, Centam struggled back to base.