

# Not Quite Robinson Crusoe

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As Alexandyr came to and shook off the effects of the visions thrust upon him by the forces that controlled this island, he watched as the others from the vessel waded their way to shore and helped those who were too injured to help themselves. The lead ship of the forward group carried on and allowed support vessels to drop medical staff to aid the wounded. His emerald eyes scanned the horizon as others caught up to them, and he checked his gear, both sabers, blaster, and cloak, all checked albeit soaking wet.

“Some assault. We shore up, and we get assaulted. Aren’t we the superior technological force here?” The man griped as he took his cloak off and revealed his polished durasteel armour beneath it, the darker hues of the material contrasting to the bright sands and waters.

The sea-soaked fabric of his robes clung to the bodysuit and armour beneath it, and he sighed, defeated before he even began. The Consul’s ship had opened fire on the natives and driven them back from the shoreline, giving them this beachhead to establish themselves and recount their wounded. From here, the mission was supposed to be straightforward, hunt down the Caxquettes and wipe them out. In truth, nothing was ever so simple. Their fighting force had already sustained injuries because of their less-than-stellar landing, the element of surprise was lost to their opponents, and their adversaries were capable of utilising some decently potent Force abilities themselves. Their first steps went from establishing a concise strike to laying ground fortifications.

Materials, originally intended to create a deeper forward operating base, were unloaded, fortifications erected, and defences mounted. The soft landing zone afforded by the Consul’s quick recovery became their first operations base— and once the beachhead was better secured, Alexandyr elected to join the first group on their hunt. He felt idle and useless sitting on his hands in camp. Out there he could achieve the mission, he could hunt down the beasts they came here for, he could take the natives to task, he could feel useful.

A familiar nagging feeling tugged at the man as he settled his gear and trekked with the others in the direction the natives had fled. Something in this place wasn’t what they had bargained for. Someone or something here was actively pulling strings and led forces into an inevitable conflict.

Ten of them set out from the encampment as forward scouts, eyes trained for Caxquettes and locals as they traversed from beach into woodlands, and at first they were met with only silence and the occasional sounds of local wildlife in the woods, but nothing which dared approach them. As they drew nearer the village, however, they felt the eyes of someone or something upon them. Alexandyr’s hand instinctively kept near his lightsaber, ready to draw it with a pull. The woods grew denser as they neared the village with seemingly fewer and fewer wild clearings in the underbrush.

“Never seen a jungle get this dense the closer we get to ‘civilization’ before, have you? It’s downright strange, just unsettling.” One of the soldiers, a human named Khym, complained as he hoisted his rifle and shoved some of the underbrush out of his way with the barrel.

“Don’t do that, please, every time you say something like that, something bad happens, and honestly, I don’t feel like being the one who steps on an ‘undiscovered insect’ and finds out they cause hallucinations this time.” Another, Skits a Chiss Rifleman, shot back at him, the banter between them familiar, jovial, something earned with time and service.

“Wait, who stepped on a bug?” A third, a young Mirialan, asked as he stopped, just moments before a screaming Caxqette leapt through the trees and tackled him to the ground.

The beast rolled off of the soldier and yapped at the man, bouncing back and forth almost like a domestic dog. The soldiers and the other Jedi in the scout squadron raised their weapons on the creature, focusing it down as it turned and looked at them, still bouncing on its feet but not advancing on the man it had knocked down.

“Bugbug!” A young Selenian woman shouted as she burst through after the creature, wrapping herself around it and staring at the armored men who had drawn weapons at him.

Alexandyr’s eyes widened as he disabled his own lightsaber in that instant. Something here was different. He reached out towards his Mirialan compatriot and lifted him with The Force, before he took his hand in his own and helped to balance him, then turning to look at the young girl, before he rounded to his men and motioned for them to lower their weapons, even if not entirely just slightly.

“These things don’t ‘make friends’ do they? They just hunt, frak, and kill, yeh? So, what’s with the girl? And why didn’t ‘Bugbug’ eat Gherkin over here? Had him dead-to-rights.” Alexandyr pitched at the squad, while they paced, watching the girl and the Caxqette, but also focused on their own discussion.

“Gherkin, that’s a good one. I’m using it from now on.” Khym chuckled as he lowered his rifle and turned to the girl, who had started to pet the beast like a housecat. “I’m pretty sure the karkin’ thing’s her pet.”

“Skits, radio base and tell them we’ve made contact...” Alexandyr whispered as he looked over to Khym for verification. “Non-hostile, but we’ll need a Selenian translator.”