

## Chapter 24

It was not often that Emi-gon stood before the entire Grand Jedi Council. While she knew them all personally and had had conversations with each of them on a one on one basis over the years, standing before them all at once on a matter of official Jedi business, did unsettle her to some degree.

She had spent the first forty-five minutes of the council debriefing session defending her actions in regards to seeking out a civilian transport to aid her in rescuing the stranded SCU-11 soldiers on the mysterious planet K-31. That part of the council meeting actually went better than she had anticipated. There was only minimal resistance and token admonishment provided by the council members. There was some initial questioning of her motifs and concerns were expressed about her clarity on the matter. But in the end, they each had seen the desperation of the situation and the vote was unanimous among the council to not discipline the well liked Master Emi-gon Vaus.

The next twenty minutes of the debriefing were spent discussing the operation on the planet as a whole and whether the mission was a success or not. This item of business had gone as she imagined it would. The operation was viewed as a complete success. While SCU-11 had suffered an extremely high casualty rate, the operation had accomplished every objective that it was sent out to do. In addition, there was even one additional unexpected mission objective accomplished; the elimination of the Sith Lord Darth Cloran.

Always the skilled diplomat, Emi-gon determined that this was not the time nor place to argue with the council. She wanted to remind them that the casualties would have been much lower had they, through the Outer Rim Combat Council, authorized Emi-gon to organize the relief extraction force. The very one she had proposed to assemble several days earlier and had even outlined and planned out.

Emi-gon was not naive and she humbled herself and forced herself to recognize that when faced with difficult decisions, even the wise Grand Jedi Council cannot come up with a perfect and faultless answer to every problem that arises when running a galactic war.

Now the discussion of the mission was winding down and had just about finished up. Emi-gon began to feel her body tense up and a feeling of nervousness rise within her as she knew what the next item of discussion would be. She knew this would be the most difficult topic of this council meeting to resolve and come to a consensus on. She knew that discussing the fate of the Padawan Mosok Ga'liant would be controversial, she just hoped that the others on the council would be open to the promptings of the Force on the matter as she had been.

On the flight back from K-31, Emi-gon had taken the time to meditate extensively to help her cope with the loss of her former Master. She also was trying to accept her failure to save more of the heroes from SCU-11. But the thing that had disturbed her most was how to perceive what she witnessed from the young Padawan. During her extensive meditation, the Force had provided her with the necessary calm to handle the loss of Master Jarek and the SCU-11 operators, but what was more revealing was the

overwhelming feeling of calm that settled on her when contemplating the future of Mosok. It was clear what the proper path was.

Unfortunately, war, chaos and galactic turmoil can make it hard for the battle hardened council members to feel all the subtleties of the Force. It was this thought that brought Emi-gon back to the present topic that she knew the council was about to discuss.

“Now Master Vaus, let us move to the final item to be discussed in this debriefing.”

The one speaking was Grand Master Zym, a male Kel Dor who was the head of the Jedi Order. As was proper, he was leading the debriefing. His voice had a metallic sound as he spoke through his mask that all Kel Dor’s needed to wear in most Oxygen rich atmospheres. He continued.

“It says here in your report that you feel that the Padawan Mosok Ga’liant should be made a Jedi Knight. Is this still your feeling?”

Emi-gon knew that this argument was coming and had prepared for just such a line of questioning. She remained calm and answered in the traditional Jedi respectful manner.

“Yes Master Zym, Padawan Ga’liant demonstrated excellent command of the Force and performed admirably under difficult circumstances. Everything that the Jedi Trials test for.”

The Kel Dor Master continued his questioning.

“Master Vaus, we have all observed Master Jarek’s Padawan through the years and frankly, with all due respect to Master Jarek, most of us here were against bringing him

on as a pupil at the Academy from the beginning. If it was not for all that Master Jarek had done for the Republic over his distinguished career, the boy would not have been taught due to his lack of aptitude toward utilizing the force and in basic combat skills.

“So it came as a surprise to many of us to read your report and see what the Padawan was reported to have accomplished. We do not doubt that your report is truthful, but we only ask if perhaps what you witnessed was an act of luck or an accident?”

Emi-gon could barely hold her emotions in check, but with considerable effort she was able to manage it. She chided back in a calm voice.

“Master, the Jedi do not believe in luck...”

While it was not a direct verbal retaliation to the Grand Master, the basic reminder of Jedi beliefs did have a certain level of sting to it and Master Zym was about to respond but before he could, Emi-gon continued.

“...and as to the suggestion that it may have been an accident, I too may have initially thought that. But as the battle continued and we moved to help save the remaining soldiers of SCU-11, I was able to fight alongside the Padawan and something had changed in him by that point of the battle. He is still weak in terms of using the Force in other ways, and he is especially weak in the living Force. But Master Jarek saw something in him and was able to get the Padawan to understand a unique form of lightsaber combat that suits and compliments his limited Force skills in a way that I have seldom seen in the Jedi Order. He now fights and moves with grace and speed, as if he has become

one with just a small part of the Force. Something changed within him on this operation.”

There was a murmur among the members of the council as they whispered amongst themselves. With the smaller conversations going on around her, Emi-gon found herself standing before them in an awkward silence.

Finally after a few moments, Master Zym continued with his line of questioning which immediately silenced the others around him.

“And what do you make of the emotional outpouring that was witnessed by yourself and the others on board the ship after the operation was over? Emotional detachment is necessary within a Jedi to prevent falling to the Dark Side of the Force.”

Master Zym’s reply was meant as a stinging reply to Emi-gon’s earlier reminder about basic Jedi tenants, but it was ignored by her as she immediately offered up her response.

“Master, of the 18 men that began the operation, only eight of them made it out with their lives. Only two of those eight made it back without a major injury. The list of those that did not survive include a legendary Knight of the Republic who was also Mosok’s Master. The fact that the Padawan went through that ordeal, performed brilliantly, and was able to keep his emotions together enough to shed only a limited amount of tears is demonstration enough to me that he had enough control of his emotions to handle being a Jedi Knight. He experienced more on that one operation than many Jedi Masters have experienced through the entire war. Perhaps even more than some of the members on this council.”

Master Zym was quiet, as were most of the other masters in the Council as they were contemplating Emi-gon's revelations and what, if any, impact it had on the fate of the young Jedi Padawan. The Grand Master allowed the few brief discussions that broke out again among the pockets of the council to continue for a few moments longer as Emi-gon just stood there waiting for them to continue. Finally Master Zym addressed her once more.

"If we were to grant the Padawan Knighthood, what would you propose we do with him?"

Emi-gon had contemplated that question long and hard and already had her answer in mind.

"Master, he should be assigned command of a front line combat unit without any hesitation."

"Would that be wise to do so soon after his recent combat experience?"

Emi-gon understood the wisdom in the Grand Master's question.

"I think that perhaps after having seen what happened to Jedi Nept-Avia, it might be wise to get Mosok back into action as soon as possible."

A few of the heads on the Jedi Council members nodded up and down in agreement as they reflected on what had happened to the Jedi Nept-Avia. She had been given several weeks rest to recover from an especially hard mission that ended in the death of her Master. At the end of that break she had decided to abandon the Jedi Order rather than watch more Jedi die. They were able to transfer Nept-Avia to the archives branch where she has since performed admirably as an archivist. It was good that

Nept-Avia did not fall to the Dark Side, but they also lost a very promising Jedi.

Master Zym also seemed to understand the reference to the young Jedi and continued.

“Very well Master Vaus. The council is in agreement. We feel that Mosok has demonstrated the required skills of a Jedi to be made a Knight in the Jedi Order. You may perform the ceremony yourself if you wish.”

A broad smile spread across Emi-gon’s face at the revelation of the decision.

“Thank you master Zym, yes, I would be honored to perform the ceremony.”

Master Zym continued.

“As to the assigning of Jedi Mosok to an active combat unit, we will trust your judgement on this one as you and your former Master have earned our trust. Speak with logistics and operations and see where there is a suitable opening for the Jedi and notify him and this council of his new assignment.”

“Thank you again Master, I shall insure that it happens right away.”

Emi-gon was about to bow toward the council members and make her departure but then she noticed that Master Zym was not yet done addressing her.

“We will watch the young Jedi to see what his future holds, but as for you. We feel you have shown a great amount of initiative and creativity in organizing the rescue mission of SCU-11. Because of this ‘get it done’ attitude, we as a council have decided that there is a better place we can use your talent than with the administrative duties you currently hold with the Outer Rim Combat Council.”

This revelation had caught Emi-gon completely off guard and she was not sure what to think. One of the first thoughts that crossed her mind was that she was not sure if she was about to be punished for her escapade to K-31, or rewarded.

“But Master Zym”, she began to stammer “we have made some good progress in the Outer Rim territories, I would hate to give that up and abandon the council.”

Master Zym was casual in his reply

“Oh, we are quite confident that Master Dir and the others will be able to handle finding a suitable replacement. But I’m not sure there is anyone more qualified than you to fill the role we have in mind.”

For the next ten minutes Emi-gon could do little more than listen to the council as they explained what her new assignment and duties would entail.

. . .

Later that evening, Emi-gon found Mosok in the living quarters of Master Jarek. He was sitting in a chair at a small table in the study, gently going through the belongings of his former master. He was organizing the things that would be packed away and examined by the Jedi Order.

Mosok had left the entry door to the living quarters open and Emi-gon had entered into the residence and stood there for a few minutes watching the young Jedi who was deep in thought as he went about his task. After watching him and letting him continue in peace for a while, she gently knocked on the side of the passageway leading into the

study where Mosok was working. Mosok casually looked up at her and smiled as he stood.

“It is good to see you Master Vaus, how did the debriefing go?”

Emi-gon could not contain a large smile as she allowed it to spread across her face.

“Actually, that is why I am here Mosok. It is my honor to inform you that the Jedi Council has decided to make you a Jedi Knight within the order.”

Mosok was stunned and it took him a few seconds before he realized he was standing there with his mouth open. He was finally able to blurt out the only question on his mind.

“But what about the Jedi trials? Don’t I have to pass the trials?”

“Actually no, you do not. All Padawans have to have a trial to test his or her command of the Force and whether they fully understand what it means to be a Jedi. Often things happen during times of war that the council deems enough of a trial to be able to award knighthood without the formal trial process. The council has decided that this was the case with you Jedi Ga’liant.”

Mosok was still stunned at the announcement.

“I am not sure what to say... I mean, I wasn’t sure I would ever be ready to pass the trials.”

The innocence of the new Jedi was a refreshing jolt to Emi-gon, unfortunately, she thought, that innocence had been shattered by the horrific experience on K-31. She also knew it would not be the last terrifying experience for Jedi Mosok during this tragic war. She could only hope that he

would survive and perhaps somehow he would be able to preserve his innocence and purity. She continued.

“And furthermore, I was granted the privilege of performing your ceremony of knighthood myself, if you would permit it.”

Mosok nodded his head.

“I think Master Jarek would have liked that, and I would be honored if you would.”

Emi-gon saw Mosok furrow his brow as he thought of something.

“Master Vaus, after the ceremony, what will my new assignment be?” he asked.

“Ah, yes! I have more good news for you. The council has determined that you are to take control of Alpha company, second battalion, Thirty-Third space assault Infantry.”

Mosok looked down at his hands, saying quietly. “Wow... my own command? I never thought the day would come.”

Emi-gon continued “The 33rd is an excellent unit on the front lines. Based off of what I have seen, you will do well there and should advance quickly.”

Mosok raised his head and looked at Emi-gon. “Who will command SCU-11?”

Emi-gon nodded slightly and answered.

“A search will begin shortly for a new commander. Typically it can be a slow process as most Jedi do not want to step down to command the SCU units. But there will be a little bit of time as SCU-11 trains up their replacements anyway. So the timing should work out okay.”

Mosok looked back down at his feet and shifted from side to side as if there was something he wanted to say. Emi-gon noticed the behavior and could tell he was holding something back.

“What is it Mosok?” She inquired.

“Well, I was....”

He stopped, not sure whether to say what was on his mind.

“Go ahead and say it young Jedi.”

“Well, I just thought that if I was found suitable, perhaps I could take over command of SCU-11?”

The revelation was a surprise for Emi-gon. Most young and aspiring Jedi desired to lead larger units where they felt they made the biggest difference to the outcome of the war. The truly talented ones at leading were also picked from the more traditional military units where their skills were prominent and reported up to the Jedi Council through the normal channels. Working in the elite and clandestine shadow world of Special Operations was the quickest way to going nowhere as a Jedi leader. This was because their small contributions were seldom pedestals to make others aware of a Jedi’s abilities.

“Mosok, why would you want to do that? You have an amazing future in front of you, and I think Master Jarek foresaw it. This would be condemning yourself to a world of clandestine work with little ability to transfer out if you ever desired to move on to other capacities.”

Mosok was now standing straight with his head raised and looking Emi-gon in her eyes with his own piercing stare.

“Master Vaus, there are no finer men in the Galaxy than those that are found in SCU-11. I would prefer to die a lowly private next to the men of SCU-11 than to live as a general of the republic army. Please, if there is any way, help me make it happen!”

The intense gaze of the young Jedi told Emi-gon all she needed to know.

“Fine... it is done. You will report to SCU-11 in two days to assume command.”

The stunned look on Mosok’s face returned and was something Emi-gon would remember for years to come. He attempted to regain some composure and managed to ask.

“Um... ah.... don’t I need to explain and present my qualifications to the commander of the Republic Special Operations Command?”

Emi-gon smiled again, looked in Mosok’s eyes, winked and then said.

“You just did.”