

## Chapter 3

It was several hours before sunrise on the morning following the order to conduct their direction action attack on the solar amplifier. The entirety of SCU-11 had packed up the patrol base and did what they could to hide all traces of their presence in the area. Each of the members had cleaned up their own area and then made a scan of the surrounding grounds to insure they had done all they could to remain undetected.

Once completed, all of SCU-11 moved along their preplanned route toward their objective. There were eighteen highly trained and experienced operators from a mix of planetary origins, but they each moved away from their temporary base as silently as they had arrived a few day earlier. Each of the operators was carrying everything they needed on their back to conduct operations in the field for two standard weeks without a resupply.

The SCU operators knew that when deployed as a small team one of their keys to survival was to remain mobile and elusive. They trained to never remain in the same place long enough for the enemy to get a bearing on the units potential area of operation. This meant that typically a SCU unit would not operate from any given patrol base for more than three or four days. In the current scenario, SCU-11 would also have to contend with the added escalation of enemy activity that would surely follow after the attack on the solar amplifier was executed. Because of what they knew was coming, all precautions were now being taken by Master Jarek and the SCU-11 team leaders to insure their best chance of survival.

The team planned to depart along their planned route three hours before dawn in a tactical file. The tactical file was a formation used while moving where each operator was staggered along their path on the right and on the left with five meter spacing between each of them. Because of their countless number of hours training and with the aid of the thermal visors on their tactical helmets, they were able to make good time through the darkness of night. As a result, they were now running slightly ahead of schedule.

Black team was running point, meaning they were at the front of the formation leading the rest of the teams toward their new destination. Their primary responsibility as the point team was to make sure they were traveling in the correct direction and, more importantly, to detect and avoid enemy contact and ambushes. Running at point was a stressful position and it was routinely rotated between the four teams to allow fresh eyes to take over and lead.

The Blue team was currently pulling rear security, insuring that no enemy units approached the SCU from behind.

It only required another hour of traveling for SCU-11 to reach their staging area which was approximately 1500 meters to the southeast of their objective. It was still nearly two hours before sunrise and completely dark on a cloudless night. The lack of any sizeable moon around K-31 insured most nights were very dark with only the stars lighting the way. The lead elements in their formation quickly located a good area to stash their Lightweight Mobile Packs (LMPs), and the teams concealed them using standard thermal reflective camouflage netting. Master Jarek was pleased to see that things were progressing exceptionally smooth up to

this point.

Each of the team leaders then marked the location on their digital map boards so they would be able to easily return to the same spot and retrieve their equipment after the raid was complete. The planet K-31 was too remote and had such a small population of indigenous people that there was no global positioning satellites to provide planet bound real time positioning updates; but the Republic geomapping agency had performed a full planetary survey of K-31 about 10 standard years earlier. This survey provided them with some decent maps of the terrain that had been useful. These maps were a vast improvement compared to some of the other planets SCU-11 had frequented in recent combat operations.

Stashing and marking the location had only taken a few minutes and now the SCU operators were busy activating their stealth generators. Once each of them had activated and verified that their SGs were operational, they prepared to move toward their final objective. Each step of the way the tension began to build and the actions of the operators became more deliberate and the light hearted smiles and joking subsided as they each mentally prepared for the upcoming battle.

The specialized uniforms that the SCU operators utilized not only contained the stealth generators but also contained thermal masking material to help prevent thermal detection as well. The thermal masking also posed a problem for the team members themselves. While it helped mask their presence from enemy thermal sights, it also masked them from each other. In an effort to help counter this problem the uniforms had small Radio Frequency (RF)

transmitters at each major joint in their uniform. The RFs broadcast their location information for each member on their unique scrambled frequency.

The tactical helmets that the SCU operators wore then received the location of their fellow SCU-11 members and would in turn display them into the visor on their helmets. Because the RF points were only at the major body joints, the operators would show up as “stick figures” in each others visors. Each stick figure was also rendered in the color that matched their respective team. Green team members were displayed as green stick figures, and so on.

The Jedi commanders also had their own tiny RF emitters in their robes that allowed them to show up as yellow in the visors of the operators. Like their operators under their charge, the Jedi robes also contained thermal insulation to prevent detection by anti intrusion devices. These same specialized Jedi robes contained local Stealth Generators, though without the benefit of the additional power packs located on the SCU operators packs. Because of this, the SGs in the Jedi Robes were not nearly as effective as the operator's version of the technology.

Some of the more powerful Jedi Masters had been known to be able to use the Force to bend light around them to mask their visual presence. But this feat was achievable only by the most powerful Jedi Masters and it required continuous concentration and effort. Unfortunately, the luxury of being able to concentrate without interruption was something the Jedi attached to the elite SCU's were not typically afforded the luxury of doing. The SGs in the SCU Jedi robes would work almost as well as the Force, but without having to remain in near constant meditation. The

SCU Jedi did not wear helmets as they relied on the Force to determine the location of each member in their unit. The Force was also a reliable source of information on determining the condition and progress of the unit as a whole. It was this reliance of the Force that had started an ongoing joke about Mosok, the Padawan. Some of the team had joked that the Padawan may actually need one of their helmets at some point based off of his seemingly lack of Force control.

After all the preparations were completed for the next phase of their operation, Green Team moved out first. Green Team now assumed the point position for the formation and they were then followed by White Team, the Jedi companions, Blue Team and then finally Black. At this point, all smiles had vanished. It was all business.

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The Crimson color light that constituted the blade of Darth Cloran's lightsaber was reflecting a pinkish hue color off of the beaded sweat that clung to her face. She was breathing hard in the predawn darkness as she had just finished her latest series of training exercises known as 'velocities'. Each velocity would run through the different moves that made up each lightsaber style. The velocity that Dark Cloran had just completed was the last and most advanced of the form 4 velocities. There were seven traditional Forms of lightsaber combat in use throughout the Galaxy and most Force users typically chose to focus on one of those Forms.

Form 4, also known by its traditional name of Ataru,

was still the preferred form of lightsaber combat by the Sith because of its aggressive nature. Not only was it an aggressive form of combat, but it also encouraged excessive use of the Force to amplify the strikes, perries, slashes and other combat moves that the practitioner desired. Aturu was a natural fit for the dark side users as it worked best when amplified by unrestrained use of the Force. Darth Cloran had mastered the technique quickly and was known as a 'natural' with the lightsaber by her Sith Masters. As a young Form 4 'adept', she routinely defeated all but the most experienced Sith when dueling for practice.

Darth Cloran took a brief rest and then adopted a new stance, held it for a moment, and then began the first velocity of the Djem So version of Form 5. Form 5 was an even more aggressive form of combat and it constituted two separate versions. Darth Cloran viewed the Shien version as unworthy of a true duelist and she was a devote follower of the Djem So iteration. While the Aturu Form was great for channeling the raw power of the force into the lightsaber, it did sometimes have its limitations as well. It was only recently that she had dedicated herself to the study of the Djem So style of Form 5 with its aggressive wide and powerful strikes. Contrary to her natural tendencies, she even sometimes practiced the defensive aspects of the Form that would also benefit her when dueling another lightsaber wielding foe. Djem So required great physical strength and it had taken Cloran the better part of two standard months to get her body into shape to perform some of the most basic attacks. But she felt the rewards had been well worth the extra work as it was this style that had granted her victory in several of her recent encounters with

the Jedi.

Darth Cloran knew she was not yet a master of Djem So, but she also knew that mastery would come shortly. Many Sith, and even Jedi, utilized elements of multiple Forms, but to be considered a master of more than one complete Form was a unique accomplishment. Darth Cloran was determined that she would be numbered among those few that had achieved it.

While deployed into an active combat zone, like she was now, Darth Cloran did not have an opponent to duel with for practice. So practicing the velocities was a good way to continue improving her skills while away from a training center. All of the elements of a given Form are contained within its velocities and by mastering the velocities, a student could master the theoretical elements of the form and become adept at their utilization. Which was why even the most proficient masters continued the daily routine of performing their velocities in order to keep their skills sharp and always ready.

Darth Cloran had progressed halfway through the first series of Djen So velocities and was delivering an overhead strike combined with a force push that magnified the striking force of the blow. It was then that she felt a disturbance in her mind. The feeling from the Force was clear and there was no mistaking that danger was imminent.

Quickly Darth Cloran halted her exercises and calmed her breathing, trying to focus on the promptings of the Force as well as be aware of her surroundings. The nagging feeling was there, a constant hum alerting her to the danger, but she recognized that it was not the type of warning that prompted immediate defensive action. Danger

such as countering a blaster bolt would have caused an alarm requiring immediate action. But this was more of a premonition, something in the future, something elusive and unclear.

Realizing the danger was not immediately threatening her and it may not even be directed at her, she powered down her lightsaber and gathered her robe that had been placed nearby. After quickly throwing the robe over her shoulders she moved off quickly toward the large mobile relay station. She figured it was best to insure that everyone was on high alert and ready for what might be coming.

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F'lark calmed his breathing and concentrated on controlling his heart beat as much as possible while he waited for the 'initiate' command from his Jedi leaders. F'lark was a fur covered Bothan and had spent four standard years as an elite Bothan Commando before he volunteered and tried out for SCU.

He had learned the value of patience while serving as a Bothan Commando and he had then mastered it while operating as a designated marksman and sniper for SCU-11. He had been operating and perfecting his skills as a sniper for the past 18 standard months while a part of SCU-11, which had given him ample opportunity to utilize his skills. F'lark originally was with the Black Team and had recently moved over to the Green Team with Larun and the other operators he quickly came to respect. His body hair, some called it fur, was slicked and properly camouflaged to

blend into the terrain surrounding him. He went through these precautions even though his Stealth Generator insured that even his fur was not visible. F'lark took nothing for granted. These were just minor efforts to insure that he was properly camouflaged and hidden whether he had a Stealth Generator or not.

His childhood was spent in the forests of Bothan hunting and trapping and it had taught him the value of masking one's presence to all the senses. This involved not just hiding from visual sight, and it was his patience and attention to detail that had kept him alive through his time as a Bothan Commando and now as a member of SCU-11.

F'lark was currently laying prone next to a small rise just outside of the clearing where the previously located solar amplifier had been placed by the Sith. That amplifier had been setup and was now complete and appeared to be operational. The enemy platoon that was guarding it was setup with personal fighting positions dug into the ground up to about armpit depth.

There was a single defensive automated turret currently setup in the middle of the enemies parameter, but that was the only sign of any heavy weapons. The defending platoon was lightly armed, though they still had good protection from their dug in positions which could pose a problem to SCU-11.

Each of the four SCU snipers, officially known as Designated Marksman (DM), one from each Team, had a sector to cover and they each had covertly infiltrated into their own independent Final Firing Position, or FFP. Once each of them had reached their FFP they had marked their position on the SCU shared network map, which was

available to be called up in each of their combat helmets as needed.

All four of the snipers were spread fairly wide apart but yet close enough to provide supporting fire for each other if needed. This was not uncommon as the snipers routinely were separated from their respective teams on large scale joint team operations like this one. If needed they could even operate as their own individual four person sniper unit that could be tasked to their own operational mission. The flexibility of the SCUs was one of their strongest attributes and they were masters at adapting to whatever the mission required.

For now, F'lark and the other three snipers had indicated they were ready to engage via a pressure switch on the side of their long range precision plasma rifles. That pressure switch broadcast a signal using a secure radio frequency that indicated their target was sighted and they were prepared to fire on command.

The rifles themselves were specially built just for the SCU snipers by their own armorers back on Coruscant. These specialized rifles carried the designation of DMX-359(1). They were 1.6 meters long and unfortunately were fairly heavy. But these high quality rifles were capable of providing precision fire at over 3000 meters and they were equipped with the latest optical and thermal weapon sights. When others referred to the Sniper/Designated Marksmen of the SCU units, it was commonly mentioned that the enemy could run from them if they wanted, but they would only die tired.

It was currently 30 minutes before dawn and there was just a hint of light starting to show above the tree line to

the North. For an unknown reason about 20 minutes earlier, a broadcast had come over the enemy's communications that seemed to have put the entire perimeter on alert. It was unclear why the Sith alert had been sounded, but it was determined that it did not alter their plans and the operation would continue as originally outlined.

For his target, F'lark had selected the operator of the automated turret, he figured she was probably the second highest value target currently near the objective. Only the platoon leader was considered a higher value target than this heavy weapons operator and the Sith platoon leader was in the sector of the Black Team sniper. F'lark had no doubt that the Platoon Leader would be targeted in the first volley.

F'lark kept the crosshairs of the thermal sight planted firmly on the nose of his target and waited patiently with his pressure switch activated. The target was only 187 meters away. This was considered a very short range shot for the capability of both the sniper blaster and the operator using it.

F'lark was still intently concentrating when the signal started. Five small red dots flashed once on the inside top of his helmet visor and then all five red dots came back on and this time stayed illuminated. This was the signal to prepare to execute. At that point the five red dots began to turn off individually, one per second, which provided an optical countdown to execution.

F'lark ensured that he kept pressure on the pressure switch attached to his rifle. If any of the four snipers released pressure on their switch, it would cancel the countdown and they would have to start over. F'lark again concentrated on keeping the crosshairs on his target as the red dots began to

flash off one by one.

Four dots.

Three dots.

Two dots.

One dot.

In perfect unison, the plasma rifle fire from four different blasters fired at once. They together sounded as if it were a single shot. The purpose of the simu-shot was intended to further confuse the Sith soldiers. The four armor penetrating plasma bolts sailed through the early morning air and in unison four Sith soldiers fell to the ground with a thud. They were dead before they even heard the report of the blaster rifles.

The remaining twelve operators of SCU-11 were not just simple bystanders watching their companions deal out their deadly accurate sniper fire. Rather, they wanted in this fight and were ready to leap into action immediately following the coordinated sniper attack.

While the four snipers had been on the final leg of their covert insertion to their firing points, the rest of SCU-11 had also been moving. The remaining commandos and their two jedi leaders had continued forward, crawling up to within 15 meters of the east side of the enemy's perimeter. Each of the snipers in SCU-11 were experts at concealment, but the rest of the members were also more than capable of using their own highly honed skills of concealment. These skills combined with their stealth generators and thermal insulating uniforms were used in concert to keep the entirety of the team from being detected.

The four plasma bolts fired by the snipers were a planned distraction and signal which set in motion the next phase of the assault on the amplifier. When the snipers shots struck their targets, each of the four teams separated and completed the last phase of their insertion in a crouched run. The individual teams each headed off to their own preassigned destination and breach point.

The stealth generators were not nearly as effective while moving rapidly as the internal SG processors could not keep up with the rapidly changing surroundings. They also further lost their effectiveness when they were close to the prying eyes of the enemy. Even with those limitations, they still provided enough optical disbursement to confuse the eye and were effective at keeping them mostly hidden from sight in the predawn darkness.

The four teams were each about halfway to their designated assault points when the second volley of rounds from the SCU-11 snipers rang out, and another three sith troopers fell to the earth dead.

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With the death of each of the Sith soldiers, Darth Cloran heard the cry of pain through the Force. This had alerted her to the attack even before the first reports had come across her communication devices. As those reports continued to come in from the platoon guarding the newest established power amplifier, Darth Cloran was putting together a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) to provide rapid assistance to the amplifier outpost. She now knew where the danger she had been prompted about earlier was originating

from and this allowed her to be able to react appropriately to that alarm. She knew it was time to strike quickly with her QRF and strike hard before the enemy had a chance to claim victory.

It took a concerted effort, but Darth Cloran was able to quickly gather an additional two squads as part of the QRF and issued orders to her second in command as to what to do while she lead the QRF. She then quickly headed out toward the amplifier that was under attack at the front of her soldiers. While the sudden attack was unexpected, the reports that were coming in were indicating only small arms fire from a small number of enemy personnel and Darth Cloran figured that this indicated that there was not a large enemy force to contend with. The bad news though, was that the small arms fire was proving to be deadly accurate with a high number of casualties already mounting up.

She had also noted that the amount of reports had been steadily decreasing since the initial report of the attack had come in. Darth Cloran fully expected that the reason for this was due to her soldiers reacting as they had been trained to do and they were gaining the upper hand in the battle. She expected this to be a quick and easy cleanup once she arrived. She had started to run toward the amplifier location, but as she did so, she continued to feel additional death and pain from more of her men.

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The reason Darth Cloran was no longer receiving communication updates from her outpost was not because of the well trained response she had hoped. Rather it was

because the Black Team of SCU-11, lead by a twilek named Malulon, had set off a chorus of mk-300 ion pulse grenades that disrupted all non ion-insulated electronics in the area. After the second volley of deadly accurate fire from the Designated Marksmen, the individual teams reached their areas of responsibility around the Sith perimeter and prepared for the assault.

Just outside of that perimeter the Black Team took what cover they could find and they each let their blasters fall to their sides, held there by slings. They each pulled out their individual ion grenades and slid the activation switch to 'arm' with a three second delay and then held fast, ready to throw them on command. Malulon waited until each of the other team leader's 'ready' indicators appeared in his visor and then gave the signal to the rest of his team to get ready. In unison, and just as another volley of precision sniper fire arched into the Sith perimeter, they lobbed the grenades toward the electronic and communications equipment in the center of the defensive perimeter. Quickly they each ducked back down and took cover while grabbing their blasters. They then waited for the ion explosions from the grenades.

The SCU teams normally operated in complete concealment whenever possible, preferring to remain in the shadows and out of sight. But when the time came for combat, they believed in taking down the objective in as rapid of a manner as possible and with as much force as necessary.

After the three second delay, all three of the ion grenades detonated with an ear ringing explosion that did far more damage to electronics than it did to the living defenders. The Ion blasts temporarily took out all of the Sith

communications devices as well as the computer controlling the automated perimeter defense cannon. That cannon had just started returning fire randomly in the general direction of the SCU snipers. The detonation of the three Ion grenades also signaled the beginning of the direct assault phase of the attack.

Master Jarek and Padawan Mosok were currently attached with Green Team on the northern side of the Sith perimeter. When the detonating ion grenades signaled the start of the assault, they stood from their kneeling position along with the other members of Green Team and then sprinted the last five meters toward the nearest defensive hole occupied by Sith soldiers.

Vistom was regarded as perhaps the most lethal of all the SCU-11 operators while firing on the move, and his skills came in handy on the assault. As he approached the enemy parameter he quickly fired four blaster shots from his MX-11 plasma blaster into the nearest TDP, or Team Defensive Position. Two shots went into chest of each sith warrior occupying that TDP. The Sith soldiers were dead before their ears had even recovered from the ringing of the ion grenades.

While Vistom dealt with the TDP on the left with precision fire, Harek had a more direct approach to dealing with the TDP on the right, and his method proved just as effective. What his MX-20A repeating plasma cannon lacked in precision, it made up for in rapid fire. In the time it took Vistom to fire four precision rapid fire plasma bolts from his rifle, Harek had delivered ten. But Harek did not stop at just ten, he kept his finger on the trigger and laid down a constant stream of repeating blaster bolts into the TDP on

the right. While Harek was laying down the constant barrage of fire he continued to move quickly past the position. The two sith troopers in that TDP suffered the same fate as the ones on the left that had encounter Vistom.

The tactics that the SCU teams employed for direct action assaults involved rapidly moving through the objective with droid like efficiency and utilizing almost unnatural precision fire. Part of their tactics also dictated that they never stopped, maintaining the momentum all the way through the objective and out the other side.

The speed combined with their stealth capabilities made for mass confusion on the objective to the uninitiated. That confusion was then used to their advantage. Each SCU operator knew that if they stopped or got slowed down while in or on the objective, the tide would likely quickly change and go against them. Their small specialized unit was deadly on the move, but what they had in speed, they lacked in pure numbers and power. For most units, taking on an entrenched platoon of Sith troopers with only Twelve operators and four supporting marksman would be suicide. For an elite SCU, it was just standard operating procedure.

While the Green Team continued their methodical, but rapid, assault on their area of responsibility, the two Jedi sprinted through the new hole in the Sith defensive line created by Vistom and Harek. By this time the defenders had started to recover their senses from the initial shock and were beginning to return fire and to put up some resistance to the attackers. Unfortunately for the Sith, a large portion of the damage had already been done and nearly half of the Sith defenders lay dead in their TDPs. Up close and while moving rapidly, the stealth generators were struggling to

keep up and the full effectiveness had been lost. With the diminished capability of the SGs, the outlines of SCU operators could now more easily be made out by the enemy and they were trying to target the attackers. The thermal imaging devices could also now make out the small amounts of heat differences that were noticeable at close range and from areas that their uniforms could not conceal; but it was too late for the tide to be turned at this point in the battle.

The young Jedi Padawan Mosok was nervous, this was his first real experience in a combat situation and he tried to calm his fears and focus on what the Force was telling him. Both of the Jedi had refrained from igniting their lightsabers, which would have made it impossible to remain concealed if activated. It was also part of the training that Master Jarek had instilled into Mosok, “why give away your intentions by igniting your saber before the fight has begun?” But as the two Jedi broke into the interior of the Sith position and with blaster bolts flying nearby, Mosok determined that the fight had begun! He ignited his lightsaber and the blue blade came to life and extended out of its hilt with the associated hiss sound that everyone in the Galaxy recognized. Mosok’s beautiful blue lightsaber was perhaps the one true accomplishment that he could take pride in from his Jedi Training.

Normally a Padawan constructs his or her own lightsaber later in their training as they near the time that they are preparing to take their Jedi trials. Mosok was already older than the normal Padawan and the only Jedi skill he did not continuously struggle with was the use of the lightsaber. So in an effort to try and build on some positive results in Mosok’s training, Master Jarek decided to teach

him the techniques required to build a lightsaber earlier than normal. Surprisingly, Mosok was able to learn and accomplish the task without additional remedial training and even succeeded in building a usable light saber on only his third attempt.

Mosok's current lightsaber was the fourth one he had successfully built and the one he had taken some pride in. It was also something that Master Jarek had routinely given praise to Mosok about to his peers. The brilliant blue color of the blade was not only a deep ocean blue color, but it also cut very well and had even drawn positive comments from more than one Jedi Instructor at the temple. But now was the first time that blade would be put to the test in actual combat.

Mosok was struggling to remember his training and was struggling not to dwell on the fact that there was an extreme amount of blaster bolts flying around him. While he knew his training had taught him how to listen to the Force in times of peril and to allow it to alert him of imminent danger, it was still hard not to be distracted knowing that any one of those blaster bolts flying around his head could kill him.

Per the prearranged plan, Master Jarek sprinted directly toward the Solar Amplifier itself with Mosok following closely behind him. It was determined that while a shaped explosive charge on a timer would be the most effective means of destroying the amplifier, a lightsaber could do the same job but quicker and without requiring one of the demolitions experts to leave the fight and expose themselves to fire while setting the explosive charge.

Instead, Master Jarek approached and then thrust his own blue bladed lightsaber into the heart of the amplifier.

The amplifier was encased in an armor box to prevent an explosive rocket from easily disabling it, but it provided no resistance to an expertly crafted lightsaber. Immediately upon the lightsaber entering the amplifier, it caused a shower of sparks to emit from the control panel. The amplifier unit started to power down as its self preservation defaults detected numerous problems and tried in a futile effort to save itself.

Mosok turned his back to his Master and stood guard, doing his best to look like he knew what he was doing. A quick moment later he felt the first promptings of the Force and without thinking, he reacted to those quiet and simple promptings by moving his blade quickly to the right. The quick stroke blocked the first blaster bolt of the battle that was truly intended to kill him. Mosok realized this was no longer a training probe sending painful, but harmless, shocks but in fact a real combat zone. Mosok didn't have long to dwell on the thought of training probes as the Force was again prompting him. It showed in his mind the location of the next blaster bolt and Mosok again quickly reacted. It was followed by another prompting and then another and another. The bolts were originating from one of the TDP points on the east side of the Sith perimeter. Just as Mosok was trying to get a fix on the exact position of the shooter, two members of the black team placed perfectly thrown high explosive grenades into the dugout position. This was followed by two deep thumps from the explosions which silenced the shooter.

Master Jarek was in the process of the final destructive cuts with his saber to insure the amplifier was beyond repair when once again Mosok was prompted to

react and deflect more blaster bolts. This time they originated from two shooters who had just emerged from their TDP and began charging the two Jedi. Once the Sith had realized what the Jedi were up to, it became paramount to try and stop them and these two Sith soldiers were doing all that they could to do just that.

The amount of fire directed at the Jedi was intense with blaster bolt after blaster bolt being sent toward Mosok. The terror of the moment was about to overwhelm him, as he managed to just barely deflect each of the bolts as the two Sith troopers charged toward Mosok.

Mosok was moving wildly and without grace as he tried desperately to stay ahead of the onslaught of blaster bolts. He recognized fully that it was not just his own life, but that of his Master's, that he was desperately trying to save. He was sure the end was near as he was frantically trying to react to the flood of information the Force was pouring into his mind as well as what his eyes were seeing. The enemy had gotten to within five meters and were continuing to press the attack, firing as rapidly as they could, just as they had been trained to do against a Force user.

Suddenly the Sith trooper on the right stumbled and fell forward onto the ground lifeless. This caused his companion to look and see what had happened and when he looked, he saw the smoking blaster wound in the small of his friend's back. He then realized what had happened and he began to turn around frantically to locate the new threat. He made it around just in time to see the flash from the muzzle of the Green Team leader's MX-11 blaster as he too fell to the earth dead, next to his companion.

Larun nodded to Mosok and then joined the rest of

his team as they continued the assault. Master Jarek completed the dissection and destruction of the Amplifier and signaled for Mosok to follow him to the other side of the perimeter to check on the progress and signal their success.

As they began to move Mosok heard a commotion on the far end of the perimeter and turned to see that the rest of the Sith troopers had given up the fight and were now running for the treeline in a full retreat. A few more shots rang out from the SCU snipers located in the woods, but the amplifier was destroyed and the enemy was routed and their mission was completed. SCU-11 finished their assault through the Sith perimeter and out the other side and then peeled off toward their rally point deep in the woods. In the process, they let the enemy soldiers continue to flee away from the battle, it was not their mission to pursue the fleeing enemy. Instead, they slowly and quietly faded into the rising mist of the early morning fog.

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Darth Cloran had made good time with her assembled quick reaction force. They had managed to cover the 1.5 Kilometers between the relay station and the amplifier point in about 20 minutes, but she quickly realized it was not fast enough.

She made it to the edge of the clearing just as her soldiers began to flee from the onslaught of the attack. She quickly deployed her QRF into a lateral firing line and tried to ascertain exactly what was happening and where the enemy was. She was still unable to reach the platoon leader on her

communications device, or anyone else in the unit for that matter. Darth Cloran watched as her soldiers fled to the treeline about 50 meters to her right, but she had still yet to catch a glimpse of the enemy. She did notice a blue light coming from somewhere inside of the perimeter and she easily distinguished the unmistakable hum of at least one lightsaber. Suddenly she saw it... though she wasn't sure exactly what it was that she saw. She noticed what seemed to her to be a blur of movement. It was almost like she was seeing a mirage, and in the limited light of the early morning she was not sure she had actually seen anything at all. She waited calmly, holding her position as well as keeping the soldiers in her QRF on hold while she observed.

After not seeing what she was intently looking for, she reached out with the Force and immediately sensed the presence of two other force users nearby. It was the unmistakable light side of the Force emanating from them that gave them away as Jedi. She had suspected as much, but she also felt some other life forms nearby as well. But those traces were too small to pinpoint, so she kept watching, relying on her eyes to help discover them. She was able to catch a glimpse or two of the blue blades as the Jedi moved through the perimeter, but then the lightsabers were powered down and all traces of the enemy had vanished.

She and the QRF observed for another 15 minutes hoping to catch the enemy force in the open in order to ambush them. Finally after not seeing anything, Darth Cloran decide to venture into the clearing, again relying on the Force to insure the path was clear and the danger was gone. The morning light was slowly revealing just how

thorough the destruction had been. Over 60% of the defending soldiers were dead, another 20% were wounded and would need to be evacuated off planet, and not a single sign that even one of the enemy had been killed or even wounded.

Never had Darth Cloran witnessed such a precise and professional execution of an attack. If it were not for the presence of the Jedi she would not have thought the Republic military was not capable of such a masterful execution of an operation. But the Jedi would only operate with republic soldiers. Frustrated, Darth Cloran had to keep asking herself the question of just who was this enemy?

She slowly felt the dark hate build within her and she stormed away from the scene of devastation. Never had she been on the receiving end of such a one sided defeat. She was determined to discover the answer to this mystery and she was even more determined to find the Jedi who were responsible, and then she would teach them what destruction really was.