

Chapter 7

“Good Mosok... “

Master Jarek’s voice was calm and soothing as he talked his Padawan through the Force training exercise.

“...now clear your mind and focus on shielding your thoughts from detection.”

Master Jarek was kneeling in the traditional Jedi meditation posture with his eye’s closed, hands loosely resting on the top of his thighs. He was reaching out to try and detect and probe the thoughts of his Padawan. The tall and thin human face of the Jedi Master F’in Jarek showed the lines that came with both age and extensive experience. He was now 80 standard years old with wispy silver-grey hair, though it was still a full head of it. That silver hair was another indication that he was beyond his prime as a Jedi Knight and defender of the galaxy.

Master Jarek was a well respected Jedi Master who had been involved in many of the notable galactic events over the past fifty years. While he was not a member of the Jedi High Council, he had been a member of several lower councils and had a good working relationship with Grand Master Zym, the current head of the Jedi Order.

Master Jarek’s body flowed with the Force, but while he was stronger than ever with the Force, his body was failing him. He had long ago become comfortable and accepting with the thought of becoming one with the Force when the time came. He had lived a successful life, and most notably he had been instrumental in preserving freedom and justice in the Galaxy on more than one occasion. F’in could honestly say he had stayed on the path

of the light side his entire life, which not all of the current Jedi could claim. While he was not flashy or notably powerful among the ranks of the Jedi, he was true to the order and proud of his past service.

While he was kneeling next to his Padawan and running Mosok through his mind cloaking drills, the memories from nearly 15 years ago vividly came back to his mind. It was during a friendly visit to the home of Mosok's parents, the Ga'liant's, that he received one of the most clear and powerful premonitions of his life. Most Jedi have premonitions of some sort during their life, but not many have profoundly impactful ones such as this.

In Master Jarek's mind there appeared a clear vision of the future. It was of a grown and mature Mosok, obviously dressed in Jedi robes and with a lightsaber in his hand. He was kneeling over the dead body of Master Mishael Linstar. Back 15 years ago when Master Jarek had the vision, Master Mishael was a simple Master Jedi. But now he was a prominent member of the Jedi High Council and one of the most powerful Jedi in the Order.

For Master Jarek, the problem with the premonition was two fold. First, Mosok at that time was nearly three years old and had shown no aptitude to Force sensitivity and had not begun any Jedi training. Second, the vision was not clear of the circumstances of the death of Master Linstar. In fact, in the vision, the well liked and very powerful Master Linstar appeared to have the physical traits of a Jedi fallen to the Dark Side with pale skin and a sallow face. Premonitions were often difficult for a Jedi to interpret as the future was always changing. To have received one in regards to another Jedi of such high regard and without a

clear indication as to what it meant, was even more difficult and tricky to comprehend. The one thing that was clear to Master Jarek at that time, and was still so on this day, was that Mosok was to be trained as a Jedi.

It was soon after that fateful visit to Mosok's home, and the vision received, that Master Jarek requested that Mosok be admitted to the Jedi Academy and trained. As Jarek feared, Mosok did not pass the entry requirements. He did have some minor force sensitivity that had not been discovered before, but it was just not strong enough to be admitted to Jedi training. It was then that Master Jarek began his campaign to have Mosok admitted to the academy on a waiver.

If it had not been for the distinguished career of Master Jarek, the bypassing of the test results would not have been possible. It took weeks of pleading and talking to the various Jedi in positions of power at the Academy, but eventually Mosok was finally admitted to the academy and became a Youngling.

Master Jarek remembered the difficulty of presenting the case for Mosok without mentioning the premonition. He figured the unclarity of the premonition would only complicate the issue. To Master Jarek, the will of the Force was clear, Mosok was to be trained. Beyond that, the details were unclear and Jarek felt the exclusion of detail from the premonition in regards to Master Linstar was intentional by the Force and should be left separate from what was clear at that time. Jarek only hoped that further information was forthcoming through the Force, though the feeling he sensed of what might come, was dark and foreboding.

All through his early years, Mosok struggled through

his training and Master Jarek had to support and defend his decision to have him trained on many occasions. When it was possible, he would also devote additional one on one training with Mosok to try and help develop the young student into what might be a capable Jedi. Progress continued to be slow throughout his schooling, but at least it was progress and with some coaching and training Mosok had completed all the requirements. Though many times he just just barely made it.

The only thing that did come easy to Mosok was the construction of his own lightsaber and some of the basic tenets of lightsaber combat. The rest of the training was a struggle and constant challenge with many instances of frustration. But there were never times of doubt in Master Jarek's mind. The vision was still clear and the will of the Force could not be denied.

“Master?”

The voice of Mosok brought Master Jarek out of his memories and back into the realities of the present.

“Yes Mosok?”

Mosok meekly replied, “Nothing Master, I only sensed your probes had stopped and I was merely checking to see if everything was okay”.

“Yes Padawan, thank you for your concern, everything is fine.” Just then Master Jarek sensed other familiar thoughts at the northern parameter of the SCU formation.

“Come Mosok, Green Team has returned”

Master Jarek slowly rose to his feet and both he and Mosok gathered their things and proceeded to meet the returning team.

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About half of the SCU were gathered around the Green Team in the center of the camp to hear their report. A holographic projection of their Jedi commander Emi-gon had also been setup so she could participate in the debriefing as well. They were all listening intently to Larun, the leader of Green Team, and the others. They reported the success of their operations and were providing additional details and finer points of their findings as well.

“So F'lark...”, It was Jango, the good natured Designated Marksman and Sniper from White team, “you mean to tell me, the Sniper with the second highest confirmed kill count in the Republic Fleet had a Sith Lord in his sights at an impossibly close range, and you didn't pull the trigger?”

Jango was giving F'lark a hard time about not taking the shot that probably would have compromised their position, though potentially it could have killed the Sith Lord.

Master Jarek answered for the sniper F'lark

“No, F'lark made the right decision. The primary objective is the destruction of the relay station and it is far more important than a Sith Lord.”

“I know sir, but it would have been nice to have her out of our hair.” Jango said with a smile.

“Larun, go ahead and continue with your report” Master Jarek ended the friendly banter and signaled for Larun to continue.

“As I mentioned, we have the exact location of the relay station pinpointed on our maps and we have

discovered the presence of additional detection equipment which I would bet is an indicator that they are getting an idea about our Stealth Generators.”

That comment caused a stir among the SCU operators that were gathered around to hear the report. Larun ignored the murmur from the others and continued.

“We also have some additional intel we were able to overhear during our close encounter with the sith patrol and their commander. She was referred to as ‘Darth Cloran.”

Mosok glanced at his Master at the mention of the title ‘Darth’ and Master Jarek nodded a few times and quietly contemplated the information for a few moments in a deep thought. Emi-gon also jumped to action on a nearby terminal, typing in the information and searching the Jedi archives for any references to the name. Jarek finally replied to the others.

“Well, the Darth title confirms our suspicion that she is a Dark Lord of the Sith, and that name Cloran seems familiar to me as well.”

Emi-gon continued where Jarek left off.

“As it should. I just looked up the name Cloran in the defense database to see what information we might have on her. You are probably are not going to like this.”

Emi-gon continued to read to herself from the terminal monitor and then finally continued.

“It appears she is one of the shining stars of the Sith regime.” Then another pause while she read more and then in a subdued voice continued.

“Great sabers... she has seen a lot of action for one so young...” Finally she raised her voice a little as she neared the end of the report she was reading.

“Looks like it is the 163rd there on the planet with you. She has lead them with distinction in several campaigns, and ...”

Emi-gon trailed off on that last word.

“Go ahead and continue Master Vaus” Master Jarek calmly said, “I believe I remember where I heard her name before. Was it in the after action report of the death of Master Fanlar?”

“Yes Master Jarek, that is correct... and there is more. She is credited with single handedly killing at least fifteen other Jedi as well. Chances are there have been more as there are several probable kills credited to her as well.”

The murmurs started back up among those present and carried throughout the small group that was gathered. Mosok looked with concern at his Master.

There was no hesitation or contemplation as Master Jarek replied “Well then, it seems we need to put a quick stop to her terror right here on K-31.”

The group fell completely silent and every eye was on the old Master. Most could not believe the defiant attitude and confidence found in the voice of the over aged Jedi sitting before them. He continued.

“We will make plans immediately for the strike on the relay station. Sergeant Larun, you will fully brief the other team leaders and together the four team leaders will present your plan of attack to me in 45 minutes. The rest of you will begin preparations to break camp and move out once the final plans have been arranged.”

The SCU operators answered in a single chorus “Yes Sir!” and the flurry of activity began. Once all the men

had left, it was Emi-gon via the holoprojector, who continued the conversation with Master Jarek.

“Master Jarek, I will talk with the council again and make it clear we have a bigger concern on our hands here than can be handled by a single SCU.”

“No Master Vaus, the answer has already been given. We have exhausted our options with the council.”

Emi-gon’s voice began to rise with concern “Master Jarek, we cannot overlook the fact that you are facing an experienced commander and Jedi slayer, and I am not meaning to offend you when I say this, but you are not exactly in your prime”.

Master Jarek smiled as he replied “There was no offense taken, but the mission is the priority... and we may yet have some surprises left in us. Do what you can to get our CIV back on station. That is the most critical issue right now. In the meantime, we’ll move forward with our plans. That CIV is our lifeline, hopefully it’ll be back in orbit here when we complete our assault.”

“And if its not?” Emi-gon asked the question that Master Jarek did not have an answer for.

“Then I hope we are as good as we think we are at remaining invisible.” he replied with a smirk on his face.

“I’ll do what I can. Keep me posted Master Jarek, and may the Force be with you.” was Emi-gon’s meek response.

“And you as well.”

The holo projection of Emi-gon faded away and Mosok was left staring at his master. Master Jarek, sensing the emotions of his Padawan, took the opportunity to teach yet another valuable lesson to the young Jedi.

“Fear is the opposite of Hope, and a path to the Dark Side. Do not fear, Mosok, I foresee that this is not the end of the SCU nor of you”. A light and friendly smile spread across the wrinkled face of Master Jarek and Mosok could not help but feel at least a little more comfortable about the outcome of the upcoming operation.

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On the other side of the rudimentary SCU patrol base, there were other discussions taking place. Most were discussions of the new realization that they were facing a foe even more experienced and deadly than was first anticipated. None of those hushed discussions translated into fear. The members of SCU-11 regarded themselves as the best trained, most experienced and therefore deadliest combat troops in the galaxy, for the Republic or Sith. But the realization of the increased threat level did have a sobering effect on the mood of the men and women around camp and each of them were just a little bit more focused on performing their various tasks with increased vigilance and detail.

There were also some discussions about what their Commander, Master Jarek, had said and how he did not show any sign of fear, concern or deviation of course. These were the traits and signs of a true SCU operator. No member of SCU viewed any task as insurmountable, and no operation as impossible, even when facing odds that would instill fear into even the most experienced combat veteran. The show of courage by the old Jedi had a definite impact on the operators of SCU-11 and they were, as a whole,

genuinely pleased they had what seemed to be a worthy leader for their unique unit.

Yes, they still had their doubts about the old man's age and physical abilities. But up to this point he had not shown any signs of slowing them down and his calmness under fire during their initial raid was a positive sign the old man still had what it took to survive on the battlefield. His padawan had shown some signs of life and usefulness during that battle as well, though the jury was still out amongst the SCU teams on how well Mosok would turn out. But the old Master Jarek had indeed gained some respect from the most respected soldiers in the republic fleet.

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Far away from K-31 and in the confines of the Jedi Temple, Emi-gon was ill at ease with the turn of events on the remote planet. Regardless of what Master F'in Jarek claimed, Emi-gon was not convinced all would go well for the SCU-11 team. The future of Master Jarek was clouded and unclear and the fate of the entire SCU unit was in jeopardy. It was these fears and clouded feelings from the Force that had caused Emi-gon to ignore Master Jarek's instructions and to seek once again for assistance from the Outer Rim Combat Council. Unfortunately, she was once again denied her request due to higher priority taskings of critical Republic units and resources that included transportation craft.

Emi-gon knew she was frustrated and that this frustration was clouding her judgment, but the fear of losing not only two valuable Jedi but an entire SCU was more than

she could handle. None of the training that Jedi went through taught how to cope with the feeling of hopelessness. There was always a bright side to every black hole, or so they were taught in the Jedi Academy. Right now the inspiration of the Force was calling her to action. Something just did not feel right and while she could not put her mind on exactly what the details were, she could not just sit idly by and do nothing!

It were these thoughts of sitting idle while the soldiers in her charge went about completing a vital and important mission that caused her to get up and move. At first she just wanted to get out of her apartment as the walls seemed to be pressing in on her. After that, she could not discern why she caught the repulsor lift down to the speeder-taxi terminal near her building, or how she knew to ask the driver to take her to the freighter terminal. Emi-gon, a Jedi Master herself, did not consciously realize it may have been the Force prompting her and her actions. She was more accustomed to listening to the Force to direct combat actions or to answer to her beck and call when she needed to use the Force for her own purposes. This was a common shortcoming for combat veteran Jedi. It was caused by the requirements of survival dictating the adaptation of using the Force for only combat purposes and survival. This would lead to forgetting that the Force offered so much more.

Soon Emi-gon found herself staring at the many freighter ships docked at the spaceport and again, not really understanding why she was there. Much of the trip over to the freighter terminal was still a cloud in her mind. While she was conscious of what she was doing during the trip to the

spaceport, she did not know why she was doing it or what she would do at each step of the way. But here she was, looking at dozens of massive ships unloading and loading all types of different cargo.

Then she heard a voice, not a voice in her head, but an actual voice to the right of her. Turning to see who was talking and to whom, she saw a middle aged Human Cyborg. He was not much taller than herself and was talking with the local port authorities, apparently going over the paperwork for his cargo. There was a young green skinned Mirialan as well, standing slightly to the side and behind the Human Cyborg. The term cyborg was used to describe any life form that was enhanced by biotech properties. Oftentimes, like with this Human, the biotech was useful, such as his enhanced eyes, though other enhancements were also quite common.

The conversation was getting elevated and it appeared that there was some discrepancy in the paperwork for this young Captain's cargo, which again, was certainly not uncommon at Republic Spaceports.

Emi-gon looked quickly at the docked spaceship behind the captain and his companion and quickly decided what her immediate course of action would be. She walked briskly up to the Port Officer who was in the middle of quickly rattling off the missing information on the documents. During the entire conversation he was using a large amount of hand and arm movement to accentuate the various points.

Emi-gon interjected "Excuse me officer, is there a problem?"

The port officer snapped his head to the side to

quickly look at Emi-gon to see who had interrupted him. Recognizing she was a Jedi softened his stance and he smiled, assuming that the matter would be quickly resolved now. The Cyborg ship captain did not look quite as pleased as the port officer as he quickly glanced back at his green skinned companion and second in command. The short Human port officer began to explain.

“Yes Master Jedi, as a matter of fact. Captain Ocal here,” he used the common title of Captain that was used for all commanders of shipping vessels “has completely disregarded several important sections on these importation documents. Look, you can see the section for ‘Immunization Status of Product’ is completely left blank!”

Ocal quickly interjected “The only cargo I have is metal and raw material! They don’t NEED immunization!”

“That does not matter!” The officer yelled back “At the top of the sheets it says ‘All Fields Must be Filled in!’” The officer was staring at Ocal, doing his best to intimidate him.

Ocal raised his voice further in return “That is complete Bantha Fodder! Use your head and THINK about it!”

The officer continued without taking his eyes off of Ocal “and this is just the first of MANY discrepancies!”

Emi-gon had decided it was time to step in to resolve this quickly.

“Gentlemen, gentlemen. Please, calm yourselves and let’s resolve this matter. Port Officer, why don’t you let me handle this, I’ll insure that Captain Ocal fixes his documentation while his crew unloads his cargo.”

The young and overweight officer was quick to reply

“But I cannot allow him to unload without first authorizing and approving his paperwork!”

Emi-gon quickly put an end to the debate

“As a Master in the Jedi order, I have the authority to provide the required authorization of this paperwork via the war council authorization powers. I will insure that everything is as it needs to be. Now if you will please excuse us, we have important high security matters to discuss.”

With a wave of her hand, the shocked Port Officer was dismissed and quickly left to tend to duties elsewhere.

If Emi-gon thought that the Port Officer was shocked at this revelation and perceived maltreatment, it was nothing in comparison to the feeling of shock and alarm that Ocal was feeling. This shock was very evident by the look on his face. If Emi-gon noticed, she did not let it slow her down as she continued.

“Now Captain Ocal, let’s go somewhere where we can talk...”