

Fanatical Publishing's

# Weekly Review

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## AND NOW, a word from the publisher:

Hello folks, Jochannon here; first let me say thank you for reading, and I hope you enjoy, and please feel free to share it with your friends, re-post it to your profile, spread it around; the more people who get to read it, the better!

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Do you have any questions or comments? If you do, I'd to hear them; write to me at the aforementioned e-mail address.

I'm bad at stopping these things, so I'll just say again: thank you for reading, and I hope you enjoy!

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# ORIGINAL LITERATURE

# LET'S PLAY DETECTIVE?

## CHAPTER 5

FaerieBox  
of <http://FaerieBox.deviantart.com>

It was soon after the breakfast. Some of us were still sleeping, or eating toasts and eggs, when sister and I were called to Grandpa's old office. We were the first ones, and now we could find ourselves sitting silently on two chairs, placed next to each other, on the same side of a wooden writing desk.

We had our hands on our laps, resting quiet over the soft fabric of our dresses. I had also a book under my fingers. And we were swinging our legs under the table, glancing cautiously to the inspector. Not because of shyness, of course, but because we wanted to find out how he was like.

The police inspector... He was on the other side of the writing desk, looking down at us. A slim man, with slim features. He had auburn-more-to-brown short hair, brown eyes, and a stupid paternal smile on his face. I think he was trying to be friendly.

"Well, girls." he said, without losing time "Sorry to call you so early in the morning. I'm the Inspector Sheppard, from the near police station. Did your parents tell you about your Grandpa?"

In fact, was Zia who had told us, this morning That they had reasons to suspect of homicide. Apparently, Grandfather *had* hit his head on some table. But Grandfather has never had any dizziness problems, he was so healthy and fine, so he may easily have been... you know, pushed.

We just nodded a 'yes' to the inspector. I don't think we seemed very frightened, only quiet, but he continued:

"So, I want to assure you" he paused, looking very seriously to us, giving emphasis "girls, that I didn't call you because you were suspect, nor anything like this.-"

"Of course not! We're completely innocent, mister inspector!" sister cried out with a cute, suddenly worried face and voice.

Nice. Just in the beginning and she'd already decided mock the inspector. Being there, you could see what I'm talking about. His tone, the way he said girls so often: he must think we were two adorable, scared children. Poor innocent guy.

The Inspector Sheppard grinned, patiently, though in a slightly forced way. Sister always knows the exact moment to talk. I mean, the rightest time to *interrupt* the person in the worst manner possible and drive he/she mad.

“Yes, I know you are.” Sheppard replied “But your Grandpa” he hesitated a little to say it “had this accident and... he died, so I need to ask you some questions.”

I suddenly understood. Accident. He didn't know we knew. Sister smiled feebly, trying to look assured. She hates being treated even slightly this way. We really look younger, but she's quite proud. Luckily, the inspector hadn't seen the sparkle of anger growing in her eyes since the beginning of this interrogation thing.

“So, that's why you're the first, then we can finish it very soon and you won't need to worry about it anymore later.” he was saying, handling a pile of clipped papers. “Are you nice with this, girls?”

“Yes.” we said, at the same time, like a perfectly planned duet. Only it's never planned.

The inspector cleaned his throat, hiding his surprise, and picking up a pen. But, slowly, he end up glancing at us, in that funny astonished way we were already used to.

“You're twins, aren't you? Sorry, of course you are. So, you were with one another yesterday, when your Grandpa... fell and hit his head?” he asked. Bad liar. Or unsure. He hesitated.

“Yes.” I answered.

“We're always together.” Alice added, cheerfully.

“Oh.” he muttered, raising slightly an eyebrow.

He started to ask us some questions, which my twin struggled to answer before I could, always poking her fingertips against each other and trying to look the most child-like she could. I pursed my lips, just bearing it for now. And trying to block her wherever I was able. Soon it was almost a battle.

How could she hope to don't be treated as a child this way? She was being useless, and making a fool of herself. And she was driving me mad.

“...and 'poorie' Annie was crying so much she couldn't talk” she was telling “...so Daddy and uncle exchanged a weird kind of glance and-“

“They just rushed her aside and went into the library, telling us to stay there.-“

“...but Daddy went out just after a second, and he was so sickly pale, like candle wax, and-“

I finally lost my temper and kicked her under the table. This – what she was doing – this was sickly.

Sister somehow managed to hide the grimace of pain, though the inspector wasn't really looking at us now. But she shut up for a second to swallow an 'ouch', anyway, and I quickly stepped in.

“...and he called our mother closer and asked her to call the doctor.” my voice was cold, barely avoiding the edge coldness shares with flaming anger. I sent my twin sister a look. *The* look.

We both had stopped to talk.

“And...?” the inspector waited, lost in his writing, apparently undisturbed either by me and by her behaviour.

We didn’t answer. Just turned our gazes from each other when he finally raised his head, unaware of our telepathic argument.

“That’s all?”

“I think it is.” I replied.

“It’s all you need to know, sir?”

Sister had given up some of the cute voice thing. You don’t know how relieved I felt. The inspector hadn’t asked us many questions. Maybe he didn’t think we could answer something important, or very right – thanks to her, I have to say.

“Yes.” he answered my twin’s question “That’s all, girls. You always complete each other’s words?”

“No. Just sometimes.” I replied.

“Ah. Well” he smiled again “Thank you for your help.”

I smiled back, politely.

“We’re glad to help, inspector.” I stood up, grabbing the small book that rested on my lap with one hand and pulling sister with me by the other one.

The inspector placed his hands on the writing desk, to support his weight as he also raised himself from the chair. He kept smiling, now more truly. You see true smiles in the eyes.

“I bet you’re the oldest, aren’t you?” he asked me.

“Yes, I am. Six or so minutes.”

He nodded, brown eyes sparkling. He seemed quite pleased with his own deduction abilities – and with testing them on us. Maybe the reason why he’d chosen to be an inspector.

“Ok, girls. You’re free. You can go play now. Just keep from going to the library, please.”

“Ok.”

“Why? There’s a crime scene in there?” sister asked innocently, before I could make her fully turn to go.

The smile on the inspector’s face froze. Looked a bit expressionless, and I may have been concerned for a moment, thinking if sister had killed him. He stared at her still with that strange grin, searching what to say.

“Yes.” he finally spoke “If you want to call this way. It’s the usual procedure.”

“Ah.” she appeared a bit sad to hear this. “Not a real crime scene. So, we’re going to *play*. Bye-bye, mister inspector.”

“Good-bye, girls.”

Alice half-sang some melody, turning around.

“Good-bye.” I said.

The inspector opened the door for us. It was then when he

glimpsed at the book in my hand. It wasn't really *my* book, because I don't read on the *breakfast* table, but, of course, sister will never carry her own things while I'm by her side to do it. Which was, as she'd explained before, always.

It was an Agatha Christie's book. 'The Four Big'. The inspector suddenly laughed, understanding everything – or some of it.

"Oh, so *that's* the matter with you, eh? Lovers of detective stories?"

I just smiled. Couldn't help it. But my twin chose to answer. Calmly, but her eyes shining dangerously. She'd dropped the mask. She'd got serious. Her visible personality changed as water to wine.

"Yeah." she said "We love them. Especially Agatha Christie's."

Now was she who was pushing me to go, with a firm touch on my back. As we moved out of the office, she just glanced over her shoulder.

"And, you know, mister inspector, don't need to pretend. We already know it was murder."

I just smiled and muttered a 'sorry' to the astonished inspector, hugging her book closer to my chest, while she pulled me away. She'd really caught him.

Maybe I should add: remember her so shiny eyes? In fact, they're bright green, as a cat's. As the Lady of Crime describes Poirot's eyes. And my sister had an ego as big as the little Belgian man's.

"I hadn't said to you?" she whispered to me when we were walking back to the room where we'd had breakfast. "Our inspectors are *always* incompetent."

I know, he shouldn't have treated us like children, nor should have visibly ignored much of what we said. We're young and we didn't see the murder, but we could be useful. Was arrogant of him. And wasn't smart.

But, now, I did get worried with the situation. Because of what sister might do. She's stubborn.

"Let's give him a second chance." I whispered back. "He's a police inspector. He must know his job. He'll find the guilty guy. Or woman."

She looked at me, disdainful. She certainly hadn't believed me.

"You know, my dear Carrie, you worry too much about making judgement mistakes, and about what the others will think of you. And, worst, you still care about my, *my* reputation! This Sheppard, he is incompetent. He thinks he can be a Sherlock Holmes, but he can't. And he doesn't know anything of psychology! I fooled him totally!"

"What we should hope is just that he doesn't mess things up too soon." she added, with a wicked half-smirk.



# BEFORE YOUR EYES

## CH<sub>4</sub>: OLD FRIENDS AND NEW LIFE

Kelsie Philips

“So it was you in my dream and at my school but why? And what is with this place? And just who are you really?” I asked Jet directly wanting at least something to be answered on this crazy day. “Well, oh wait hold on.” Jet lifted up a hand signaling for silence. I was not in the mood to be ignored but trusted Jet, this time much more so than when we were kids so I fell silent. I found the silence between us disturbing, there was much more to ask him and he had a lot of explaining to do.

I didn't have much time to think of that though as footsteps broke the silence. I tensed, wishing I had a weapon anything would do. I would settle for a rock at this point. I also knew that Jet obviously had better hearing than me sense I just now heard those footsteps. Jet looked at me, his blue eyes having confidence in them and a stern look graced his face, one I had never seen him have before. His look told me now was not the time to fight so I relaxed and leaned back against the wall once more as the footsteps got louder.

Looking to the ground I could see a shadow drawing near, it was without any doubt the shadow of the blond boy. I felt my muscles tense again and I was ready to fight even if Jet was calm. All of my eagerness to fight exploded as the blond boy appeared at the entrance to our hallway and looked at us. I was fast in getting ready for my strike, moving off the wall I crouched and made a fist. With an explosion of force I pivoted my body forward letting all my momentum go into a punch. Satisfaction came to me as my fist connected with the boy's face. “Whoa!” said Jet taking hold of my wrist soon after and looking at me. “Easy killer put that thing down, no need to punch a friend.” I didn't even have to look at Jet, his voice said this man was a friend.

I gave him a nod and he let go of my wrist so I could relax. Next we looked at the blond boy. His head was sideways, I connected with his right jaw after all, and his hand was rubbing his jaw. “Dang, you got one good right hook. Remind me to dodge next time will yah? Hey Feather Head, move back will ya give me some room.” The boy said looking at Jet. “Yeah yeah House Cat come on in. Elem, would you kindly move back some?” I nodded and moved back with Jet

following me. The boy came to join us and I looked him over not sure what to say. "Sorry, for not trusting you and for this. It's...been a long day."

The man nodded. "I can only imagine. I'm Ace by the way, you already seem to know Jet, gee Jet why is that?" I looked from Jet's face to Ace's they obviously knew each other just adding more questions. "I don't always follow your daddy's rules there tiger. What do you expect from me?" "To be more responsible like a Counsel messenger should be." Jet held up one hand making a talking motion mocking Ace who just sighed. "You kids are nuts you know that. Elem you're just a little too loud, Jet your just...Jet. I smell blood by the way. Why?" Ace crossed his arms looking at us like an older brother scolding us.

I lifted up my right hand, it was bleeding a little worse than before, more than a simple wound should have. I looked at it shocked, my palm was almost all red. "But I just did that with my nails, I don't understand, it shouldn't be this bad at all!" "We can explain that later, our friends are coming back." said Jet looking at Ace the seriousness in his voice again. "Don't worry, they should still trust me I can just say she a witch or siren or something. You two get to the cage room, I'll meet you soon." I wanted so many answers but now was not to time, so I asked to only relevant question. "Where is the cage room?" "I know the way, come on." said Jet and walked past me down the hallway.

I followed him and could here Ace leaving to talk to others. "She got away guys. We'll find that little spell binder, I won't fall into her powers again!" His voice was so angry, but I could tell the anger was directed at them not me, not Jet either. I had to admit I was kind of relieved for that, even though I just met Ace and I hardly knew Jet I know I could trust them both with my life, which was something I was sure any other of those people would take for whatever reason was beyond me. My mind back to the walk I followed Jet silently. Every now and then he looked back at me giving me a reassuring smile that actually helped ease my mind.

Soon we came to a door at the end of the hall looking the same as any of the doors beside us. Jet opened the door and we went into a new room, a big wide open room that was tall as the entire building and wide as could be. There were cages of all sizes around us, some big enough to hold a house, all of them were empty though. Jet looked back at me before moving on again back to a small set of cages and jumped on top of them climbing up to a cage that looked like it could hold several big cats. Like some of the cages in the room it was covered from the outside with blankets.

“Can you get up here on your own?” He asked kindly. “Well I was always one for swings over jungle gym but I think so.” I said climbing up beside him. He nodded with a grin and opened the door to the cage. We entered the stuffy dark and dusty cage, the straw on the bottom crunching under our feet. Jet moved to the center of the cage and turned on a small light. “We use this place a lot, Ace managed to make it early on in the circus’s life. I guess we got a lot of explaining to do but for now let me see your hand.” I nodded and held up my hand figuring he would have some kind of first aid kit under the straw but much to my surprise he took my hand in his and looked at the wound.

I did too still surprised of how much it bled and how it looked rather deep. “It’s not like I have claws.” I thought with a shake of my head. I felt Jet look at my face a moment before looking back to my hands. As I watched, a soft blue glow emerged from his hands that moved over mine. I gasped as the wounds started to heal, slowly closing up with soft pale skin that became as strong as the rest of my skin. “Got anything to wash the blood off?” I asked calmly. Jet looked at me perplexed one brow raised. “Really? I just heal your hand with a magic blue light and after all you’ve been through today you just ask for something to wash off the blood?” Jet laughed a little. I shrugged. “Hey my best friend is a mermaid, another friend reads tarot cards and I know everything in this circus is real. I’m used to this kind of stuff. Besides with what is going on today in this place of lies the magic blue light is the least shocking thing.”

Jet nodded. “Ah well makes sense, sorry for such a bad day but you knew something was coming right? The dream and all?” He said going to the table the light was on and pulling out a rag he tossed to me. “So you know about the dream?” I said as I washed off my hand, not really surprised at this point. “I sent the dream, as a reminder to hope you’d remember me and what I said. Today is the day we’re going to fly higher than them all.” “What we going to swing and kick these nut jobs in the face as we jump off?” I asked a hint of bitterness in my voice tired of everything I wanted to ask but the fact I didn’t have the chance yet.

“Easy there Fireball, no need to get an-well you have every right to get angry, just not at me. And no, not on swings, on these.” I watched with question as Jet rolled his shoulders and two long black rods extended from his back. The rods unfurled to be large feathered wings, each with four long, red, inconsistent streaks along them. The streaks were splattered an uneven, almost like blood stains. “Elem, let

me introduce myself formally, I'm Jet Anxo the messenger of the High Council and the Black Winged Angel. Here I am, at your service fireball." He said taking a bow. "Hum formal." I said closing my eyes and frowning. I opened my eyes and looked back at him. "So can I ask any questions yet?" Jet sighed. "There you go again you sound just as angry as when we first met. Look can you try and just trust people? You trust your friends right? What about me and Ace were friends?"

I nodded a little offended. "Hey I trust, identity and live by voice. Faces and facial expressions are lost on me as well as body language. The voice however tells all." "Go on." Jet said calmly. "People give away a lot in their voice; it doesn't even have to be talking it can just be noise. Anyway when talking people control their tone right?" Jet nodded and I went on. "They can sound happy at their saddest and anything like that. That doesn't matter with me I can hear the real emotion underneath, feel it. Not just emotion something more, real feeling almost what the person is thinking. Sometimes stuff they don't even know or understand they are thinking. And I know the voices of all my friends nod can pick them out in any crowd if they whisper. Like I told you then I won't forget our voice, or any voice of a friend." "And like I said then good, faces can hide a lot but voices don't."

\Silence overtook us as I thought and I could tell Jet was letting me think. I didn't like the silence though so I went on trying to explain myself. "I trust your voices, you should know I trust by voice, besides it's been a crazy day, I had an odd card reading, people are trying to kill my friend, and you're an angel. It's just too much." Jet nodded. "Yeah I keep forgetting your new at this, sorry. Anyway, I guess you can ask some stuff but it's best to wait til Ace is here to explain everything. I'll do my best alone though, shoot." "What's with all the nicknames?" I asked deciding to sit down in the straw and lean back against the cage. Jet sat down in front of me, his wings fluttering behind him. "Eh, it's normal with us Council members to give each other names based on our race, I call Ace House Cat cause-well you'll see. Next?" He asked. I paused, Jet was more than happy to deal with my questions, I could hear it witch helped me relax a little. "So how do you fold your wings like that, it looked painful."

Jet folded his hand behind his head. "Well that's a little hard to explain, Basically all the feathers recede to the main bone, kinda like disappearing but not really, and the bone just folds together like a book closing and I can pull it in to my back that way. Like all the way into my back. Poof! Gone! Bye bye." He said with a grin. I managed to laugh a little, this was the most confusing and scary day of my life and Jet had the most upbeat attitude. "I know it still sounds painful but it's

not it's kind of a self-defense mechanism us winged folk developed to walk in the human world, everything about us inside is a little different anyway." He paused and I thought of what could be different. My thoughts consisted of strange organs or maybe different bones.. "Nothing major, no organs or anything just like cells, some mussels, bones of course just wing bones though." Jet said pulling me from my thoughts.

"Wait hold on did you just read my mind?" "Ugh I did, I'm sorry see I normally just read the minds of the jerks around me to not get killed but when I'm with non-jerks like yourself I tend to forget and fall into old habits. Those guys out there, there jerks." I shook my head with a small smile on my face. "Quit it you, I'm trying to stay angry because it's kinda normal in times like this." He smirked and laughed. "Elem we both know you're not normal in the lest." I couldn't argue with that and was a little flustered, I wanted to defend myself, say how I needed to be angry right now to use my angry on the jerks but I didn't get the chance. The sound of a door opening rang out and we both looked at each other in silence. "Is it Ace?" I thought hoping Jet was reading my mind. I tensed up ready to fight if need be He looked at me and nodded. "Yep, but hey you can still punch him."

"I heard that Feather Head, hearing and sight like a cat remember?" Ace called out as we heard him get closer. Jet flopped onto his back. "Yeah yeah, just add tuna breath and we got the whole package. Come on already, you think a cat would climb a little faster." No sooner had Jet spoken then the door was opened by Ace who's eyes went to me first. "Your hand's better." It was a statement not a question but I could tell he was relieved. I nodded showing my healed hand. "And she took the healing like a trooper." said Jet fluttering his wings a little.

"Good maybe you'll take the rest like a trouper too." Ace said crossing his arms and leaning against the cage. His voice gave away his nervousness and fear yet some home. I looked form Jet to him, the too odd boys, one older one my age who I could tell cared for each other by the way they spoke. Jet was more like a rebel, more likely to get in trouble and mock Ace while Ace was level headed, acting calmly and being more of an older brother to Jet. I looked to Ace and nodded ready here whatever it is he had to say.

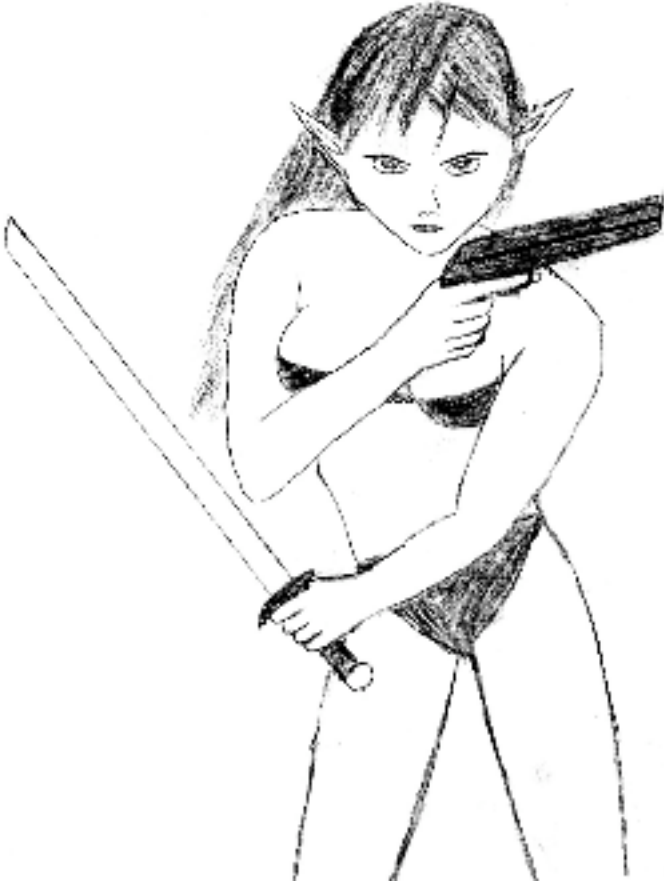
"Good, I'll go slow stop me if you have any questions, Jet fill in anything I miss." Jet and I nodded, Ace's voice was still nervous but it held a strength in it that calmed me a bit. "So you know about our world, I mean the world of other creatures how we are all real in the

circus. What you must have heard was our little talk, so let me explain that. This circus is not normal, they take in the acts, teach them, befriend them and then kill them. They sell them on a black market, but not the one everyone knows of, this is a paranormal black market held by humans and creatures like the ones here alike. Sadly this is one of many circuses.”

Jet nodded. “Yep, and Ace and I are here for the ones against the market, the Council. Ace has been with this place since he was five, roughly around the time you and I were born.” Ace nodded. “Yes, I came here as an orphan but really my Father is one of the major Council holders. But first let me introduce myself formally. I am Ace Horangi, next in line for the dark head of the council and son of the great tiger Fero Horangi.” No sooner had Ace spoke the words that expressed to me the pride he had in his father than did his body began to change.

Ace shifted, his hands became paws, his mouth and nose shifted on to of a muzzle and his body became much more muscular. Once the shifting was over, a large vicious looking tiger stood before me and Jet, he looked ready to pounce but then spoke, in the same calm voice I knew as Ace’s. “And you Elem, you are one of us, a member of the Council. Your mother left when you were young because she had to, to hide and protect you. You Elem Arach, you are the next in line for the light head of the Council and the daughter of the dragon, Midnight Firestorm Arach.”

# FAN FICTION



or: Leanna's Return

Your Fan Fiction is published here for free, but if you want to help keep it free, check out some other things I publish, like

A long time ago, in a galaxy far far away....

# STAR WARS

## THE CLONE WARS: BATTLEFIELD CRISTOPHSIS

### Chapter 3

Slade Eide-Ettaro

Crystal City, Planet Christophsis

Aira-ty crouched low in the shattered remnants of the building as she looked down at their targets. There were three of the heavy weapon platforms, all of them placed in a square that was guarded by mounted weapons and droids. She and Skywalker's apprentice were on a high rise with several of her clones, ready to drop down on the enemy below once the fighting started.

She tapped her comlink. "Skywalker, are you ready?"

"Yes." came the Jedi's voice.

"Good, then let's begin." she killed the link and looked around at her platoon. "Alright boys, get ready, it's about to get noisy."

Aira-ty noticed Skywalker's apprentice shifting nervously and reached over, patting the girl on the head.

"Don't worry love, you'll do fine."

The girl's purple skin tinged a darker shade as she nodded.

Aira-ty wondered why Skywalker wasn't taking better care of the girl, she was obviously willing to learn and eager to please, so that he would keep her up out of harms way seemed rather silly. Oh well, he wasn't mando'ade, perhaps he'd get the hang of being a teacher eventually. He had only been such for a few short hours after all.

Aira-ty's thoughts were broken by the sound of blasterfire as the squads under Skywalker opened up on their targets. A missile soared out from the clone firing line and slammed into the static turret closest to them. Aira-ty smiled as all the droids reacted as expected, moving to counter the sudden attack as the HWP's loomed large above them.

"Alright, they're distracted, go go go!" Aira-ty commanded.

She and the clones, along with the Jedi girl, jumped from the building, riding their jetpacks down to the ground. They touched down, Aira-ty looked up to see the Jedi dropping to the ground without a jetpack. She shook her head, insane Jedi. Drawing her blasters, she rushed forwards and started blasting the distracted droids in the back.

"Detpacks, go!" she shouted.

Several of her troopers broke off from the rest and ran towards



the weapon platforms. The first group reached their target and placed their charges. The second and third groups weren't as lucky, Aira-ty's heart clenched in pain as three of her troopers were cut down. They weren't her first casualties, she'd seen and caused death before, but this was different. This was Jango's legacy dying around her. She couldn't allow that.

Hanabi swatted aside a barrage of blaster bolts from a battle droid, twirling her saber and slicing through its hip joint, toppling the droid. She brought her blade back up, swatting aside another course of blasterfire before throwing her hand out, tossing a trio of droids into a tangled heap of metal limbs. There was a flash of red to her right and she turned to see Commander Nokta rushing forwards, her blaster blazing. What was she doing? She was by herself!

She rushed after the charging Mandalorian, deflecting blasterfire as she went and hoping that the Commander wouldn't get herself killed. Hanabi wanted to be a good leader, but she didn't want to learn that all on her own, especially if it meant someone had to die for her to prove herself! She rammed her saber into the photoceptors of a heavy battledroid, twisting its head off and pushing it aside with a thrust of the Force.

Turning, she had just enough time to jump out of the way of a fresh volley of bolts. They were going to get killed out here!

“What is she doing!?” General Skywalker shouted in alarm. “She's going to get her killed!”

“We can't get to them without exposing ourselves.” Rex cautioned.

The General snarled in annoyance. “I don't care, come on! We're going to help them!”

And just like that, he was up and over their cover and charging at the enemy line, blue saber flashing and swatting aside the incoming fire. Rex swore under his breath.

“I see what you mean.” came Jesp's voice over the private link.

Rex didn't reply, jumping up and running after Skywalker. “Platoons two and three, base of fire here! Everyone else come with me!”

The clones charged, and the expected result came all too soon, the entire first rank was cut down by the enemy before the momentum of the charge carried the day as the force of fire took its toll in the mad charge. They were going to be the ones in need of saving soon enough Rex mused bitterly.

Aira-ty watched the slaughter with growing panic, she couldn't stand to lose so many, not like this.

“Blow the charges!”  
“Ma'am we're too—“  
“Blow them now!”

The charges went off, and the HWP erupted, throwing all of them flat on their faces, droids, clones, and all.

Crystal City, Planet Christophsis

Ventress stopped her speeder bike and listened as the explosion echoed throughout the city. Was Loathsome conducting an attack?

“This is Ventress, report.”

A droid's mechanical voice answered her. “A weapons emplacement is under attack by the Republic.”

Ventress smiled. The Republic had come out of their hole? This might be fun.

“Give me the coordinates.”

“Affirmative.”

The emplacement wasn't far. She accelerated through the city streets, gaining speed as she sped towards the source of the explosion.

Crystal City, Planet Christophsis

“Anakin, Anakin are you there?”

Anakin shook his head, picking himself up and staggering to his feet. He grabbed his comlink and hit the activation.

“I'm here, Obi-Wan, I'm here.”

“What happened? We heard that from here.”

“Charges went off prematurely.” Anakin looked around.

“Droids are all smashed up, so are our troops. Two of the weapons platforms are still active.” the repulsor engines on both craft began to rumble, Anakin cursed. “They're moving, gotta go!”

“Anakin wait!” but Obi-Wan didn't get to finish as Anakin set aside the comlink and rushed forwards.

“General!”

Anakin turned to see that the platoons that had remained behind were still intact.

“Missiles!” Anakin shouted, pointing at the nearest of the weapons platforms.

Without question, a volley of missiles flew out of their tubes and slammed into the rear of the first platform. The engine block erupted and the platform sank back down onto the ground with a deafening thud that sent shockwaves through the ground. The second platform had turned by that point and Anakin watched in

mounting alarm as its blaster cannons opened fire on his troops. They all ducked down behind cover as the weapons blasted away at their position. Then Anakin saw something that stopped his heart. His apprentice was on her feet and running forwards. She raised her lightsaber and slashed at one of the oncoming blaster bolts. It threw her off her feet, but she was able to deviate its path.

Anakin rushed in to join her, covering the second firing arc of the weapons platform's defense blasters.

"You're insane." he shouted as he caught one of the bolts on his saber and deflected it upwards.

"Sorry Master." Hanabi replied, sounding honestly sorry. "I didn't want anyone else to get hurt!" she shrieked in alarm as she swatted away another bolt of her own. "Master, I don't think this was a good idea! My arm is getting tired!"

Anakin had to agree, he didn't know how many of the massive bolts he could deflect. As if to exemplify the point, another bolt almost wrenched his saber out of his hand.

Jesp got to his feet haltingly, where was everyone? He looked around and found out, most of the two platoons that had charged were lying on the ground. He fought back a surge of emotion as the sound of blasterfire drew his attention behind him. General Skywalker and Commander Iyoto were standing between the remains of the two companies that they'd started with and the remaining HWP. To his shock, they were actually blocking its blasterfire. He staggered forwards, still unsteady on his feet even as he reached down and pulled out a grenade.

He triggered his jetpack and rocketed upwards, landing atop the HWP's engine house. He dropped down to one knee, pulled the pin, and shoved it down an exhaust vent before jumping clear.

The grenade detonated and threw Jesp through the air, he landed with a crunch, rolling and coming to a kneeling position. He turned just in time to see the platform crash to the ground, black smoke rising from its engines.

"You're insane."

He turned to find Captain Rex standing besides him.

"Sorry." Jesp said sheepishly.

"Don't apologize, after that, we needed something insane to save us!"

Jesp nodded, smiling beneath his helmet at the other captain as he got to his feet.

"Casualties?"

"Too many." Rex growled.

Jesp simply nodded again, looking around at the white armored bodies of their fallen brethren. Many of them were moving, picking

themselves up and helping their brothers to their feet as well. Maybe it hadn't been nearly as bad as he'd feared.

“What in the name of the Force were you thinking!?”

Jesp jerked around to see General Skywalker storming towards Commander Nokta. His fears rekindled instantly.

Aira-ty stood her ground as Skywalker glowered at her. “I was trying to save our men from getting slaughtered.”

“First you put my Padawan in danger.” Skywalker snarled.

“When you were supposed to be keeping her safe, then you nearly get all of us killed by detonating charges when we're all standing right on top of them!”

Aira-ty stared back at him icily, not that he could see it behind her visor.

“Listen here Jedi, you want to keep your apprentice safe, keep her by you. Don't expect me to babysit, I have other priorities. I saved your troopers from your own reckless charge, we were doing just fine until that happened.”

“Says the woman who rushed into the middle of a company of droids!” he barked at her.

Aira-ty opened her mouth to reply but was forestalled by a chill voice that sent shivers down her spine.

“Oh look, the Jedi is bickering with his toy soldiers, how charming.”

They both turned to see a black robed figure standing a short distance away, her features were not discernable under the hood but Aira-ty didn't need to see her face to know the posture of a killer. Now what?

Ventress was irritated. She had apparently arrived too late to save the weapon platforms, but even worse, she had missed the combat. She'd wanted to enjoy herself, now though it looked like all the droids were destroyed, and the clones were busy picking themselves up. Oh well, she'd just have to put them back down.

She ignited her sabers, the twin red blades jutting out from the handle and hissing angrily as their charges crackled in the air.

Glancing at the Padawan, she chuckled. “You Jedi are so irresponsible, bringing little children out into a warzone, they might get hurt.”

The Knight, Skywalker, stepped between her and the girl. “I remember you.”

Ventress chuckled. “Good, then you'll understand why I want to kill you.” she raised her saber and pointed one of its blades at him. “You're going to die Jedi.”

Aboard the Republic Assault Ship Jelial, Crystal City, Planet Christophsis

Kahan stiffened suddenly, he recognized that presence, what was—

“Master Kahan?” Master Kenobi inquired.

“Quiet.” Kahan said. “The Sith is here.”

Kenobi's face fell. “There is a Sith here?”

“She was in orbit, it seems she's planetside now, and fighting Skywalker.”

“Anakin is in danger then.”

“If he hasn't improved since Geonosis, then yes.” Kahan looked at Kenobi. “Has he?”

“Against droids? Certainly. How good he is against a single Sith...I don't know.”

Kahan nodded. “I was afraid of that, contact him, tell him that I will deal with the Sith.”

“You? How? You're here.”

“I don't need to be there to defeat her.” Kahan smiled wryly. “In fact being there would probably be to my detriment, from here I can distract her sufficiently to give Skywalker and the rest a chance to escape.”

And with that, Kahan sank into a meditative state, reaching across the Force towards the burning embers of hatred, sorrow and fear that marked the Sith. She was hard to miss amidst the clones and Jedi, in fact she burned almost as brightly as Skywalker did within the Force. That Skywalker stood out as well was no surprise, he was supposed to be the Chosen One, as silly a notion as that might be.

Crystal City, Planet Christophsis

“Anakin, can you hear me?”

Anakin swore as he deflected another of Ventress' withering attacks, fighting to concentrate as he shouted back with his thoughts to Obi-Wan.

“A little busy here!”

“I know, Master Kahan is going to distract her. When he does, escape. Is Hanabi safe?”

“She and the clones are clear. It's just me now.”

“Alright, stay alive.”

Anakin gritted his teeth as his opponent struck again. Staying alive wasn't his goal, that he would survive was never in doubt. What he would do to this Sith was the real question. Then suddenly, she swung wide and staggered blindly off to one side.

Anakin blinked in bewilderment but Obi-Wan's voice cut

across his thoughts once more.

“Anakin, now's your chance.”

Ventress didn't feel it at first. No, the first real hint that something was wrong was when her vision blurred for a moment. She blinked, and realized that she could no longer see Skywalker. Where was he? For that matter, where was she? Everything was dark.

“For such a skilled swordswoman, your mind is awfully fragile.”

She spun and found an entirely different Jedi standing before her. He was staring at her with deep blue eyes. He raised his hand and brushed his long black hair out of his face.

“If you intend to fight Jedi, you might want to work on that.”

“Who are you?” she snapped, and then answered her own question as she recognized his presence. “You.” she snarled. “Get out of my head!”

“I think you mean get 'us' out of your head Sith.” he replied with a quiet smile. “And no, I'm afraid you're not in control here.”

“It's my mind!” she roared, taking a step towards him and pushing back at his presence.

He snorted, his smile remained untouched as she glared daggers at him.

“It is, but for the time being I'm making use of it.” his eyes met hers, boring into her skull. “You're remarkably powerful, but untrained. Like a steed that needs to be broken in with harness.”

“I am not some animal to be broken!” she shrieked, flying at him with an upraised fist.

He stepped aside and she sailed past him. She felt his boot connect with the small of her back and she toppled. She felt so weak and helpless. She hated him for it, she would kill him, she would. She swore it.

Anakin stared at Ventress in bewilderment. She was standing stock still, her eyes wide and staring and he swore she was crying. He looked at her dual sabers glowing red in her hands. This was his chance, he raised his saber.

“No.” Master Kahan's voice shot across his mind like a thunderclap.

“She's vulnerable!” Anakin protested. “I can kill her!”

“You will do no such thing.”

Anakin made to protest further but was cut short.

“If you take one more step towards her I will release her from my control and believe me, you do not want to be there when that happens. Fall back to base, now.”

Anakin bit his lip but didn't say anything further, turning his back on the Sith and stalking away into the city back towards the

Republic lines.

Aboard the Republic Assault Ship Jelial, Crystal City, Planet Christophsis

Kahan waited until Skywalker was well away from the Sith before finally releasing his grip on her.

"I will hunt you down and kill you!" she snarled as he faded from her mind.

"Of that I have no doubt, hopefully your mind will be better protected at that time." he replied easily. "If not then it will end the same way."

And with that he severed the connection, turning to Master Kenobi. "Skywalker wanted to kill the Sith while she was helpless."

"He has a temper." Obi-Wan replied. He didn't sound surprised, though he was apparently worried. "It's a flaw I was never able to extinguish."

Kahan nodded. "I will keep that in mind in the future." he wiped the sweat from his brow. "Master Kenobi, might I trouble you for something?"

Kenobi frowned. "What would that be?"

"I'd like a set of armor, preferably something with command circuitry installed."

"I think we can find something like that." Master Kenobi said. "Cody should have a few spare commander armors available."

Crystal City, Planet Christophsis

"So the strong points are all set up with interlocking lines of fire so they can each support the other." Lana said.

"That's right." Cody replied.

Lana beamed. "I did some reading on the trip here. I think I'm almost as good at war as you are Cody."

The clone commander shrugged. "Academics and combat experience are two different things. I'll believe you know what you're doing after you've proven yourself in a few firefights."

Lana stuck her tongue out. "That's not fair. I'm a Jedi, you're supposed to follow my orders."

"And I will, within reason." Cody said. "But an inexperienced commander isn't one I'll follow orders from blindly."

"Fine." huffed Lana. "I'll just have to show you that I know what I'm doing."

Cody said nothing to that as they walked inwards towards the heavy cannons covering the main avenues of approach to the Republic positions. It was these cannons that had enabled them to hold their

own despite the superior numbers of the Separatist forces. Even with the two additional legions and armor brought by General Kahan they were still far too heavily outnumbered to fight head to head against the Seps. It was a precarious situation, one in which Cody found himself at a disadvantage. He looked down at the Jedi Commander as she strolled besides him, seemingly carefree as she walked about with her hands up behind her head and looked around at the fortifications and weapons around them.

It had taken some getting used to, dealing with the fact that children like this were over him in the chain of command. It was something of a rude shock that he and his brother clones had realized that even the Jedi Generals who were supposed to lead them knew less about war than the average trooper in many cases. It was a saving grace that most if not all knew how to fight at the very least. Still, tactics and strategy had to be learned, and their silly desire to preserve life abolished. It wasn't that Cody devalued his life or the lives of his brothers, no, far from it. It was that he understood that their lives were inconsequential when compared to the greater good of the Republic. Sometimes he suspected that Generals Kenobi and Skywalker forgot that.

He paused, frowning as his helmet triggered an alert. He turned to look in the direction of the alert. What was that trooper doing? He wasn't authorized in the munitions dump.

"Sergeant!" Cody shouted.

The clone stiffened and turned to look at him. "Sir?"

"Just what do you think you're doing here?"

As an answer, the trooper raised his blaster and opened fire.

"Cody watch out!" shrieked Lana, she leapt in front of him, her saber igniting as she swatted away the incoming fire.

"Don't fire!" shouted Cody over the comlink to his escorts.

"You'll hit the ammo!"

The sergeant stopped for a moment, raising something up in his hand. "Down with the Republic!"

"Commander!" Cody shouted as he watched the sergeant's finger depress on the detonator.

He ran forwards and grabbed Lana, turning her away from the resultant blast which threw them both into the air. He heard her screaming but didn't let go, rolling with the girl tucked against his chest before they came to a stop.

"Commander Cody! Commander N'ahrr!" shouted a trooper as Cody lost consciousness.

Lana pushed Cody's body off of her as the troopers helped her to her feet. She looked at the flaming pile of wreckage that had been the munitions bunker and tried to steady her heart. She looked at



Cody and felt bile rise to her throat. He had a piece of shrapnel imbedded in his side, it had cut clean through his armor.

“M—medic!” she shouted needlessly. One of the troopers was already administering first aid.

She turned away from the sight of Cody's battered body to see the traitor Sergeant stumbling away from the site. Anger rose up inside of her then and she reached out with the Force, slamming him into the ground with a thought.

“Troopers!” she cried. “Get him!”

It didn't take but a moment for the members of the escort still to tackle and pin the trooper. Lana marched up to him and with a little help from two other clones got him to his feet. She wrenched his helmet off, glaring down at the face that stared back at her angrily.

“Why?” she asked.

The Sergeant said nothing, his eyes blazing with a hatred that staggered Lana. She turned away.

“Take him to—take him to the assault ship...tell Master Kenobi.” she managed.

Turning to the blazing inferno that had been the munitions bunker, she realized something. There had been others in there. She turned back to the Sergeant as he was led away. He'd killed his own side...without a second thought. Was this war?

# POETRY

# THE WORDS I COULD NEVER SAY

Amanda Applegate

of <http://thehityouneversawcoming.blogspot.com/>

I spiral downwards,  
I bend and I break,  
How much more of this shit can I take?  
The cussing the, the fighting, the fuck you get out,  
Never feeling trust,  
Always having that doubt.  
Knowing that one day it will end,  
But when will that come, since we can't even be friends?  
Everything goes good for a day or two,  
Then you open your fucking mouth when you know better to.  
I won't take it, I'm tired of this smart ass shit,  
I try and I try and fuck you is what I get?  
Fuck me? No, fuck you, you don't know me like you think you do.  
I try my damndest to rise above,  
I see a light hovering above,  
I reach for it, grasping, just wanting one touch,  
As soon as I get there you push me down with a thrust.  
Your words cut deep,  
They make wounds in me,  
Whether you see them or not,  
They used to be visible, but now they are not.  
As I lay here and suffer and hurt I plot,  
What will be my next move?  
Know you shall not.  
Do I even know myself anymore?  
I want to blow my fucking brains out and let them ooze on the floor.  
I feel madness and hurt and hate,  
Why do I let this shit happen?  
Why do I sit here and wait?  
Wait for things to get better,  
And to stay that way.  
They can and they would,  
But no, you can't let the past go away.  
Yesterday means nothing,  
Tomorrow might not come,  
So why don't you shut your fly as mouth and enjoy the good moments  
as they come?  
Or am I not worthy?

Is that the truth?  
You are here for no one but you?  
Or maybe you're here for the one you could never have,  
The one I hold deepest,  
The reason I don't let myself go completely mad.  
I live for one person,  
And no, it's not me,  
You think I'm selfish?  
If I was I'd be free.  
Out of this mess,  
Stop trying so hard,  
To be someone to which I could never hold a card.  
I do it for you,  
But it never seems enough,  
I'm sick of every single fucking day being so rough.  
Wondering if I'll have my past thrown in my face,  
Making me look like nothing but a disgrace.  
You're reading this thinking I'm just being a bitch,  
But you'll never know,  
My heart is held together with every tiny little stitch,  
The stitches that took years to grow,  
The ones you rip apart with the words that you throw.  
I just don't know if it's worth it,  
If I want to see the bottom of this spiral,  
Or to run away,  
And let my soul take me higher.  
Not drugs, not pills, which is what you assume,  
To let me soul be free,  
Running away from you.  
I don't write these words to hurt, or out of pure hate,  
I write what is in my heart,  
The words I can never say.

# WRITING POEMS

TheMeTheyDontSee

of <http://TheMeTheyDontSee.deviantart.com>

Writing poems I would not share.  
With this content how could I dare?  
Instead I show it to a stranger.  
Then I won't be in danger.  
A favorite, watch, or comment.  
People like to see me vent?  
I never thought my poems were good.  
I never thought that anyone would.  
So I'll keep writing for you.  
It's the only good that I do.