

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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If you want to contribute, I'd love to see your work, send it to me at the aforementioned e-mail address with: 'category(prose, fanfic, poetry), STORY TITLE, Author's Name' in the subject line.

You can include the text of your story in the body of the email, attached as an RTF, you can put in a link to your story on some webpage. Please include a cover letter about you, your work, or whatever; include any links you want, and cover art if you have any.

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 6

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

For a couple days, we just watched the police working. We weren't sent back to school and we would stay till this all was over, but even being there we couldn't catch very much of what the guys were doing. It seemed to go nowhere, though. And the weather was pretty gloomy that week, with rains and heavy clouds. Looked like a bad sign, same as the first view we'd had of the house, when it looked so spooky.

Sister agreed with me. We're expecting some bad news. And we couldn't help begin to worry about the assassin.

"Maybe is some thief who went in by the window and found Mr. John there. He didn't expect to find someone, then: *bam*." Zia said, in her nice foreign accent, while she made a chocolate cake. "Don't need to be someone from your family, misses."

We were pretty quiet, on two low wooden stools we had there in the kitchen. We knew she'd spoke this only trying to make us feel better.

"Yeah." Alice replied "But... doesn't look possible. I mean, there's nothing missing. A thief would've stolen something."

"Maybe he got scared."

"And ran away?" I asked, not sure.

Sister was right. Really was un-like to happen. Zia read it in my face.

"In my home, family is family." she scolded me, walking to us carrying a huge bowl, and shaking an almost as huge wooden spoon, in a reprehensive way "They're innocent even when they're guilty. Here, do you think it's tasty?"

I dipped a finger in the chocolate cream. It was wonderful. Zia is the best cook ever.

"Yes." I said "I could eat all this cake by myself."

She nodded. Alice was licking her finger too, with a doubtful expression.

"Innocent even when they're guilty? This doesn't sound right."

"Yes, I know. You can't help hating them, in the end. That's why I ran away."

"You runaway?!" we exclaimed, astonished.

"Yeah." she also tasted the cream, with a defying expression "I did. And you know, I feel just better than ever before."

She just realized what she'd said after the words left her mouth.

Was funny to watch, her astonished face: widened eyes and her hand rising in surprise to cover her own lips. She cried out, hurriedly:

“But don’t say this to Mrs. Peppers, for God’s sake! You don’t have any reason to run away, misses. You’ve all you want, like two pretty dolls!”

I shrugged, sad. Had to agree.

“I think we have. Grandpa was always so nice to us.”

“Oh, sweetheart.” Zia looked at me, suddenly with pity in her eyes “I made you get sad. Here, take some cake. They won’t figure out one or two missing pieces.”

She handed us both a huge piece of chocolate cake. I think we smiled like two kittens when you pet them. Then she gave us a glass of milk, too. It suits well, with chocolate.

We just loved Zia.

Later, on the afternoon, we were busy doing nothing. The sun had appeared, and it was so nice in the garden... Warm and bright. The greens seemed more green, and the flowers more colorful, after the rain.

Sister was slowly going back and forth on a swing made of rope and a small board. I stood at her back, holding the ropes and pushing her weakly, and we were talking.

“Hey, Carrie” sister was asking me “Do you think...-“

She suddenly stopped, dragging her sneakers into the ground. I almost fell over her.

“Alice! What you’re doing?!”

My twin didn’t answer. She was gazing fixedly at one of the first-floor windows of the house. I looked too, curious, but I couldn’t see anything. It was too far away and the glass reflected the things in the garden, hiding the inside.

What she could’ve glimpsed there? I was just about to ask, when she turned her eyes from the window and got up to her feet, taking my wrist, snatching me away from the swing.

“Just follow me, Carrie.” she ordered, with a no-questions tone, pulling me so quickly I could barely accompany her pace.

Uh-uh... She’d got mysterious.

I did as she told me, without saying a word. We crossed the garden, weaving between the trees and bushes, until we reached the big doors that opened to the garden. Sister led us in, and next we were standing outside of one small room, right under the frame of the door.

I looked around. We were on an L-shaped room that connected to some other ones and to the one with the doors to the garden. There were also some mirrors. So, we’d a surprisingly good view of everything close to us, and even farther.

Sister released my wrist. She was peering inside the small room. Kind of office, or place to keep random archives, maybe. Grandpa

used to work with something complex that left lots of archives. Never asked what.

“Watch the door.” Alice whispered to me, and abandoned me standing there.

She went inside the room. I glanced nervously around me. Good God, what she was planning now? I had a glimpse of the inspector, walking and talking to uncle Henry, but they passed without noticing us.

Sister hushed up a laughter. I heard her crying out quietly to herself:

“I don’t believe he did it!”

I cautiously turned to the door. She was kneeling on the floor, easing a black briefcase open.

“Sister?” I called “What you’re doing?”

She didn’t answer me. I got in and kneeled by her side. Now she was taking a hunch of papers out of the briefcase.

I suddenly realized what that was and what she was doing.

“Alice!” I exclaimed, horrified “That’s the inspector suitcase!”

“Sh. Be quiet, you.” she replied. “I know that.”

I stared at her, my green eyes widened from fear. And if the inspector came and found this out?!

“Shouldn’t leave your things alone, mister inspector.” sister was half-singing, sarcastically.

“Alice, what you think you’re doing?!” I took her arm, like to pull her away.

She even looked at me.

“Oh, you are so goodie, aren’t you?” she scorned me “Here, help me. I can’t find the papers of Grandpa’s case.”

I bent down to look at the paper sheets she was skimming through. I saw it right away, and held out with my forefinger.

“There. Grayson.”

She grabbed the papers and opened the file at random. Sister reads fast as a lightning, and I saw her face suddenly change when her eyes fell upon the paper-leaf. First marble-pale and stiff, then a rosy came up to her cheeks, a wild glint in her eyes.

“I don’t believe it!” sister said again, this time louder, like if she’d forgotten that we shouldn’t be doing what we were doing. “Look at this notes, Carrie! He thinks Zia is the murderer!”

“What?!”

I threw myself forward, also grabbing the papers, pulling them closer to me. My lips moved slightly, soundlessly making out the words.

I couldn’t believe what I was reading. Alice was right! Zia was the inspector’s main suspect!

I didn’t know, with computers and all, that inspectors made

this kind of notes. Looked eerie. And, more than that, I would never wonder that they carried it with them! I think that Inspector Sheppard was really from the old school – from Sherlock Holmes age, really. But my perplexed eyes soon started to shuffle the phrases, and I couldn't understand them anymore.

Alice helped, uttering the principal points aloud.

"Last one to see the victim alive. No alibi. Refuse to answer some questions." her face grew redder with anger "Oh, and he's insinuating some pretty ugly things! I wouldn't answer these questions if I was her, not at *all!* Zia is not like an old-man's money huntress!"

Sister was absolutely revolted. I also felt something like cold hatred flow from my heart through my veins.

And we could read it. In each sentence. As always in the books.

"Foreigner, foreigner, foreigner!" sister said, boiling "Oh, and underline that last one. That... xenophobic, sexist, stupid, disgusting man! He's a typical Agatha Christie's prejudicious English inspector! Carrie, look at this!" she shook the paper, glancing at me "She's not guilty!"

"Of course not!" I bit my lower lip, worried "God, and she's so independent and wilful. She must've said some things to him, and made it all worst."

Sister agreed, though she was shaking her head in the wrong way. What matter's that I understood it.

She opened her mouth to say something, but we heard footsteps. We exchanged a terrified glance, and quickly put all the papers back in a disorganized rush, next fleeing hastily from that room. Now I could see why Zia looked so short-tempered that day, after talking to the inspector. I was afraid that this would happen. It was awful.

We watched from inside a cupboard, as the Inspector Sheppard went away with his suitcase. He didn't seem to notice anything of our meddling there.

And he even knew how he had screwed up it all. It was written on his face. He thought he was right.

"Male beings" sister cursed, mumbling.

We looked at each another, kneeled and squeezed on a cupboard's floor, under a shelf.

"We have to do something." my twin said.

I was in accord. This had gone too far for wrong.

"But we can't simply say to the inspector that we were reading his notes and he's wrong!" I complained "So how...?"

"Weell... I know you won't like it, Carrie. But I know the answer."

I stared at her eyes. I slowly nodded, as comprehension entered my brain.

“We’ll have our own Investigation Time.”

“And we’ll solve it, because we’ll be following the rules of the masters.” she added, with a proud lofty nod.

“Poirot and Miss Marple. They’re the true masters, to you, I mean.” I said.

She raised her brows.

“The gray matter always wins, my dear.”

She was half-quoting her idol.

“Ok.” I replied. “Let’s do it. We have to help Zia.”

Our Investigation Time... We began that same night, with a basic list of suspects. But Grandpa’s lawyer hadn’t sent us Grandpa’s will yet, and we lacked a lot of information, so the only things we did were cross a stroke over our own names, Mom’s and Dad’s, and Zia’s.

“Um... I think we can take ourselves out of that list, can’t we, Alice?”

thinks “Yeah. I don’t think you could kill someone.” *crosses*

Mom just adored Grandpa – which means no motives - and we think she would barely be able to kill someone in *self-defense*. Then, murder? Never. Daddy couldn’t be the assassin either, because he simply didn’t care. He was like ‘out’ of the family. And he’d never got mad with Grandpa’s jokes.

And Zia, of course. In these few days we were there, we really liked her. When we like someone, this means a lot. We were there to help her. But, also, she couldn’t be the guilty one. Till we know, she’d no reasons to wanna be unemployed. Grandpa was nice to her, she even said this to us, and that she didn’t know where to go now. She was sad. And their relationship was purely professional and friendly. Grandpa just liked pretty young women, and Zia’s strong and funny, too.

About the others... Anne was physically unable of pushing an old man. She’s too thin. She can hardly lift her own fork when eating. And she couldn’t have acted like she did when discovered the body. No to Anne.

Maxwell was a jerk, but he and Grandpa were like twin souls – we don’t think he’d a motive.

Aunt Daisy... she’s so sober, could be a heartless killer?

Uncle Henry, we don’t know much about him. He can even have a dirty past, as a criminal.

And uncle Jack... He’s story. He could kill someone, maybe, in a moment of anger. Grandpa was always bullying him, which pissed him off. And he’s always without money, he also has the inheritance motive.

However, as I said, we still need the will contents. But we’d other cards in our pockets.

“We’ve to chat, and try to discover information. Poirot always

does that.” sister assured. “Let’s start it tomorrow!”

INTERVIEW WITH THE NUMBER ZERO

TheStrongGladiator

I am TheStrongGladiator i love write and draw, i have a Deviantart & Fur Affinity account. I'm from Brazil.

Today I have a very special guest, for some it just does it sometimes is considered a mathematical indeterminacy, for others it is simply shameful and when someone compares you to a person it is something shameful, but few of us mortals revere him and thanks to not even exist just the current number system but also all the current reality. Our machines like computers and other electronics would not exist if it is not present to say that the human being is allowed to make globalization.

Our guest is not just a person linked to the world of business and technology, is also a spiritual person. For the Mayans it was a good god, but could also be bad. Definitely a subject of bipolar personality that at times was one that generated life, made ??flowers grow from the soil, gave fertility to men and women, at other times could decimate entire populations, causing wars and pestilence. Our distinguished guest also been opposed by the Catholic Church in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and still causes controversy among all religions coming to be compared to Satan. Represented in different ways by many different cultures and point of discussion between the diverse sects, here today we bring to our stage the large number ZERO. One of the most dreaded numeric entities in history; it has always existed, but never existed. He is both alive and present in our lives, but at the same time is dead.

We will make today a great tribute to this figure that populate make up our minds and often doubting the existence of the supernatural, here we explain a brief biography of him telling his origin, great facts about its existence and also all the controversy surrounding it.

Receive on our stage the number Zero, please, enter.

Logan Wolfus: "Choose a chair that suits you and feels it is an honor to welcome you into our program broadcast by Deviantart and Fur Affinity."

Zero: "Thanks for the invitation is also a great honor here on your web

show, I love watching your interviews.”.

Logan Wolfus: "Are you comfortable where you are sitting, you need something to drink?".

Zero: "I'm very well, thanks for asking.".

Logan Wolfus: "If you had to make a brief description of you as you describe yourself?".

Zero: "I am the one who is at the same time is everywhere, but it is not anywhere. Some people confuse me with the infinite, but I'm not him and I am also equal him. The universe fits in my hand and I am also something without parallel existence. I am everything and nothing, alpha and omega, beginning and end, life and death, good and evil. I have no name, but you call me that. ".

Logan Wolfus: "So you're really someone powerful. Understand. Who created it? ".

Zero: "No one raised me, I have always existed and while I was never here.".

Logan Wolfus: "Many people compare you to an indeterminacy mathematics, you if think a mathematical indeterminacy?".

Zero: "I'm not a indeterminacy while I can be one. Depends largely on the situation in which people ask for my help. ".

Logan Wolfus: "You are odd or even?".

Zero: "Neither one nor the other.".

Logan Wolfus: "Their existence alone puts a lot of fear in people, but others do not even realize their existence or even do not believe in you. Have something to say about this comment? ".

Zero: "People classify me the way they understand well, every person on earth gives me a function for a task, sometimes I can complete it or not. There is part of me to judge the behavior of anyone. ".

Logan Wolfus: "You give us permission to do a little retrospective of his story?".

Zero: "Sure, I'm eager to tell my story to everyone, only my version of the coin.".

Logan Wolfus: "How about we start talking about their mathematical meaning, how you define mathematically?".

Zero: "Overall I am a number that is not represented in Roman numerals, I am the digit before the number 1 and all the other positive numbers, and the number -1 succeed and other negative numbers. Mathematicians usually define me as a cardinality of the empty set, the neutral element of adding and multiplication in the absorber. ".

Logan Wolfus: "It seems that from the point of view of some historians its origin is mainly due to three people: the Babylonians, Hindus and Mayans. Tell us a bit about it.".

Zero: "Yes there were these three people that actually have a greater concern in dealing with the idea of empty space. For example, in Europe my definition happened in the Middle Ages, after the

acceptance of Arabic numerals, which were released by the great Leonardo Fibonacci . Right around the time people were a bit stupefacted that thing to think and calculate things involving a value was missing a face hard in my life. Thanks to me everything we know today exists, people must learn to give more value to me."

Logan Wolfus: "You 're saying it's almost as important as the discovery of fire by primitive man or the domain of electricity started by Benjamin Franklin. Do not you think a little bit cocky?"

Zero: "Obviously not, if all these technologies exist is because I was present in all the calculations involved."

Logan Wolfus: "One more question in the mathematical field, some mathematicians say you're number that belongs to the set of natural numbers, real, integer, rational and complex, but that was not created to be a natural unit or even serve to count. What some people really mean by that?"

Zero: "Well as I was the last number to be created, my source was not initially represent the absence or indeterminacy, the original idea was to form one positional numerical system. In the old days when people used their abacuses usually left a blank space between a number and the other, some people generally did a circle, but I was often confused with the letter 'O' then solve the problem for me became oval. The goal has always been to give stability to the numerical system, please observe the binary system of computers that uses mathematical language involving numbers 0 and 1 . Emphasizing again that the Roman numerals were not created to represent calculations as there was among the Romans a way to represent the incognitos elements, the system was only used for conducting counts."

Logan Wolfus: "That's interesting, because you are a great mathematician can tell us more about you?"

Zero: "Ok, we will then remove some doubts. Firstly the rest of the division to me by any nonzero number is always equal to zero. Secondly any number that is on my left undergoes no change in value as being any value to my left is negligible, so when someone tells you that you are a 'zero left' are literally saying you are worthless. But when I'm right someone have the power to leverage any number less myself. Thirdly I'm not a indeterminacy, which actually generates indeterminacy is when someone raises as mathematical power of myself, all high numbers to me as mathematical power as a result gets the number 1, but if I raise myself mathematical power as there is no result, because I'm an empty set. And not always the whole number divided by the number 1 results in the previous factor, only me when divided by the number 1 does not generate income. Fourth, let's remind everyone what is even number and odd number. Even number is any integer number to be divided by 2 results in an integer, mathematically speaking the whole number is in the form $2n$, with n belonging to the

set of integers. Every odd number is a number that belongs to the set of integers which when divided by the number 2 results in a rational number that does not belong to the set of integers, writing would thus be algebraically: $2n + 1$ or $2n - 1$, with n belonging to whole numbers."

Synthesizing

Well as you have finished reading the interview above the figure zero only fulfills the mathematical rules when you're in a good mood, because when it does not happen does not help press it. I think you're thinking absurd I must give much importance to an oval ball that seems to be unimportant and meaningless. How many times when we go to a shop watched the number of zeros that there is a price of an outfit? The one that we really care about is with the amount of zeros that can come in the credit card account, if they appear to the right of any other number is a sign that you're spending too much.

When thinking about the scratch soon comes to mind the idea that he represents everything here that is null or non-existent. Not much is there to say about the origin and its meaning, the concept has never been studied very thoroughly by scientists. Maybe because zero is zero. The interesting thing is that this figure implies great dualistic dialectic, this number may represent the void as can represent everything, life and death, beginning and end. I know it is complicated for you the reader to put all these ideas in your mind, then imagine for the ancient people who were responsible for its creation before the Christian Era.

The timeline of India found some words and notions of emptiness for this folk, one of the phrases that caught my attention was the word "shunya" coming directly from Sanskrit. When you say to a person that she was "shunya" you would be saying that it was a person empty, lonely, without feelings, morbid or sterile. A "shunya" was more or less a person than antisocial not be friendship, an action taken that does not generate income or simply a lack of something (emotional). The notion of emptiness began to tour Europe from the eighth century AD, along with Arabic and Indian character to indicate zero or nonexistent. The word "shunya" gave rise to the word "shift", then evolving to latinized form known as "zephirum" then "zephyr", "zefro" and finally coming to zero.

Figura - Number 0

Already in the Americas the concept of zero came from the Mayans

first between the fourth and third centuries BC, the Mayan numbering system was composed in theory dots and dashes indicating the direction of each unit and ten. The Mayans had two notations to zero, the first notation was an ellipse reminding one eye closed and the second was symbolic notation referring to one of the Mayan calendars. For the Mayans the notion of emptiness was so significant that they had a god to zero: Zero, the god of death. Other groups like the Aztecs were also knowing zero.

You can even ask me "and the Greeks, which their opinion about emptiness?". In fact the Greeks had no opinion about it. Although they are geniuses in geometry, philosophy and metaphysics did not make sense for them to conceive an idea so unsightly. Imagine thinking that a vacuum can exist in the world as perfect and organized as ours, that for them there would be chaos. Even Aristotle defended the idea that eventually died.

The primitive society learned to calculate 5000 years ago with associations, for example, here in Brazil when teachers want to teach you to teach counting to reckon counting the fingers. To the old associations were made ??by associating the sheep to a pebble, one pebble to a sheep and so on. As this process was very extensive and laborious became necessary to create a graphical system.

The Babylonians of Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) in mid-2500 BC were the most successful in creating a system involving zero. They took the initial step to the number system that we use today known as "positional numbering system." It works like this, the value of the number depends on its position relative see number 333, the first number 3 equals 300, the second number equals 3 equals 30 and the third number 3 equals 3. Other cultures like the Greeks and Egyptians kept closing his eyes to zero.

Before the Babylonians designing zero, reckon it could be something that sometimes resulted in confusion. For example, when an account had as a result a number as the number 201, they used a space to indicate the absence of a figure was more or less like this "2_1", a space between a decimal point and another. If there were ever wondered how it figures that have zeros as 201 or 1001 would be represented they would suit the then 21 or 11, causing glaring errors.

Imagine how complicated it is to form the imaginary nonexistent, every people over the centuries began to face the existent in his way. The Chineses represented the non-existent with a character called "ling", means "that which is behind us or in the past.". It's pretty hard

every human being to deal with non-existent because such huge design abstractions is to deal with thousands of thoughts and paradoxes.

Reasoning the lines of the previous paragraph how do you think the religious dealt with the notion of absence or emptiness? The first thing they did was to relate it to the devil and an exhaust port to give what is now known as atheism, a way many people as scientists and people who have a different religion to deny the existence of the Almighty. In the Middle Ages anything could cause panic of hysteria and fear, when zero was introduced most people looked at him as the Antichrist.

Thanks to zero we have the technologies we possess as cell phones, mp3, computers and others. Without the existence of zero would be impractical geniuses like Newton, Leibniz and Einstein devise formulas that deal with integral and differential calculations. If you want to find out how much a car moved in rectilinear or curvilinear trajectory is necessary to take into account the extremely short time intervals (how many meters a car moves at "zero second"?) is as absurd as the math works anyway.

Thinking about zero even in our western society implies directly deal with non-existence, empty or even denying the existence of God. For many of us, accept the zero is to deny God, but the interesting thing is that many of us believe that God can also inhabit the void. Think of the current atomic theory to be movement between the particles is necessary to have an empty space even little. Have zero as abstract idea is to deal with the concept of eternal void.

Thinking about having zero is the idea of ?? "anything that generates everything, beginning and end, life and death" a relationship of duality philosophical, religious and scientific supports all types of paradigms that make a human being to question your own existence. The zero initiates life when you leave the house to somewhere you leave a zero when it reaches the goal and there's nothing left to complete. Zero is good and evil actions that originates without much explanation and end the same. No wonder that the Catholics of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were so afraid of him, think of the vacuum makes you dangerous build epithets about life, what is really right or wrong? Whether for good or for evil, our destiny is tied closely to zero because everything we think or do involves dealing with philosophical ideas that tend to consider the void. The zero dangerously influenced philosophy, metaphysics and religion, knocking all and any rival who wants to oppose him. One of the greatest dangers that humanity was

created the zero and still cause havoc in our heads.

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Maria Fernanda Vomero

BEFORE YOUR EYES

CHAPTER 5: PAST REVEILED AND PRESENT CLARIFIED

Kelsie Phillips

I could tell Ace's words were true and though it was the biggest shock of my life I nodded as calmly as I could and was silent for the moment. I wanted to ask so much but I knew there would be more to the story and wanted to know it all first. I nodded to the large tiger form of Ace to go on. "Good." I didn't notice before from the shock of watching him change into a tiger but his voice was so different. It was gruffer and every word had a hint of a growl to it, something I guess I expected a tiger to sound like. Despite that I could still easily pick up the emotion he had in every word.

"Let me start with the Council, our history. In our land there used to be three sections, light, dark and neutral. The dark races are carnivores, animals who feel the need to hunt and kill, along with races ready to fight. Ogres, demons, vampires, wraiths, shadows, necromancers, shape shifters, and true beasts, oversized creatures like me. The neutral are more or less the humanoid races, elves, mages, fairies, goblins, those who are not truly innocent but do not act in darkness.. As for the light races, the ones who are most in touch with the elements, dragons, elemental spirits, the grass eating animals, any pure form of nature such as spites who seek to harm none." I could tell Ace was confident in his words yet it was the first time he gave such a speech and wanted to impress me. He did but I had a question that I couldn't hold back.

"Aren't dragons carnivores?" "Good question Fireball, that's what most people think of right away. They would be right." Jet said in that upbeat voice of his. "But we cannot have an herbivore, a non-hunter leading opposite of a hunter. The tiger and dragon keep each other in balance and gives each side a powerful leader they can depend on no matter what. That and it gives them peace of mind that they won't start attacking one another. Dragons are indeed hunters but they are natural born guardians, they have a strong drive to protect and are perhaps more in touch with nature than any other creature."

I nodded, finding most of the words true. I did always want to step in and protect my friends no matter what. I even went out of the way to protect those I didn't know. That and protection would be a good thing, though something still didn't make sense to me. "So do the dragons eat those they protect?" I looked from Jet to Ace not

knowing who would answer. "Yes but there is more to this world than black and white. Dragons must eat, though they do not eat those in the council. The races represented in the council understand this, both with the dragons and the carnivorous races in the other side. The hunters understand the non-hunters want to live. The fight for life always goes on." Ace said more calmly than I thought one could have said when talking of life and death.

"That and that's not really what the Council is for." I looked to Jet who spoke just as calm and Ace if with more of a smile on his face than whatever emotion was on Ace's muzzle. "The council is to make sure an all-out war does not break out and to guide magical creatures in life. They make sure hunting is just hunting, running is just running, killing is just to survive and nothing else." Jet's smile faded but I could tell by his voice he believed in the gray workings of the Council, and it was true life was life. I wondered how much of a hunter I was sense I was a dragon but another question was more direct in my mind. "So how did the council begin?" Jet looked to Ace. "Go on, you're better with the story than I am." Jet sounded boarded and I snickered not much of a fan of history either. Ace cleared his thought getting out attention before he spoke.

"Long ago we were at war, the pure light and pure dark wanted to kill each other but something happened, they realized they were close to each other, twins in fact. The war ended as dis the separation of our land but with fear of war being born again a Council was started. The Tiger was the ruler of the Dark, the Dragon was the leader of the Light and the angels were the leaders of the neutral, to act as a messenger between us, and our helper. The other races are represented too of course, each has a spot on the council but most let the main of each land speak for them." It made scene to me and I could tell Ace believed in this Council just as much as Jet and even more he was proud of it. "So what does the council have to do with the circus. Are you, we, defending those this place is killing?" I asked getting a grasp on things.

"Close, just a little bit more than that. We have been trying to shut down this place for years." said Ace. "More specifically our parents have, we are just helping them out." Jet added, using his wings to push him from laying down to sitting up. "And recently, tragedy has struck. Many of the Council members have been caught. They are the strongest of the strong meaning the ringleader has some weapon or spell or something that we don't know of. Fero and Midnight have been taken as well; we need to get them back before they are all killed. If they and other Council members fall then the various races may turn against each other or worse they may descend upon this world seeking war."

"So it's bad for all of us then. Alright, we need to get them out,

all of them, not just the council members. We also need to shut this place down for good. Or at least make it a good will effort; find some humans that know and can have a circus like this should be, like all of the big acts think it is.” I said more in thought of how to act than any of the questions in my mind. Most of them had been answered now; honestly all but one of them, all I wanted to know now was how I was the daughter of a dragon.

“She came here long ago with your father, really old dragons like her can take human form for convince. It was more or less forbidden love, though many of the Council can take human form they are not allowed to interfere with the human world yet love is love. When he was young he could see into our world and he knew all about it, a rare and dangerous trait in humans that can harm our world more than hurt it. Your mother volunteered to come here and see if she couldn’t take away his powers or wipe his mind but things changed and she got attached to him. And one thing led to another. She kept all of this a secret until you were born. There was talk of your father joining the council but that was unheard of. Before a decision could be made she found out about this place and knew that if they thought you were human, if the world saw you as a human you would never be pursued by this place.”

“Your father knew this as well and he also knew the best way to keep you safe was to forget everything. He is human after all; his mind is easy to read for any race. So he volunteered to have his mind wiped, at least the stuff about our world, so you and Midnight could stay safe.” Jet said looking at me with sympathy, or a face I would assume was sympathy since it seemed to match the emotion in his voice. I nodded in thanks and sent him a smile but it quickly faded as Ace roared. Jumping I turned to face him worried.

“Jet, do not read others minds unless they let you in. We have disused this many times.” Ace sounded tired of telling things like that to Jet, it made me laugh just a bit. Jet flopped back on his back once more wins wigs spread out at his sides. “Yeah yeah sorry.” Jet said and I could tell he was used to Ace’s scolding. “I’m not the one you should be apologizing too.” He growled. “Sorry Elem.” Jet said waving his hand in a little circle. “It’s alright; you gave me the answer I needed.” I said standing up ready to get a move on now that I knew what needed to be done. “Come on let’s get out there and take this place down.”

Jet and Ace looked at me “Well...” said Jet a little unsure letting me know this was not the time to act, despite how badly I wanted too so I sat back down. “No, first we need to get you to awaken to your old powers. Now your only half dragon but that is more of an advantage than anything.” said Jet looking to Ace. “Yes, we half breeds have skills many lack. Right now you have the scenes of a

human but one you tap into your dragon side that will change. But the best part of being a half breed is not only can you morph from your human to your beast sides but you can morph to an in-between state.”

I nodded, I knew all of this stuff already, I knew a lot of the paranormal word thanks to Liz. “Yeah yeah I know like werewolves, weretigers, werewhatevers. Get back to telling me stuff I don’t know.” I said with a little bit of sarcasm. Ace sighed. “Ugh your just as impatient as him.” He looked at Jet who gave me a thumbs up. “Alright Fireball, good one. It will be fun to tease the Housecat together.” I laughed, but was silent as Ace growled and flashed his fangs. I knew he was my friend but that didn’t change the fact he was a tiger and my instinct told me to be wary. “Now is not the time to joke around.” I stood up now putting that wariness aside and letting my anger take full front, I was no one to be pushed around. “Who are you to tell me what to do? You just changed my world, told me things that I can never change and you expect me to not try to laugh about it? Do you know how much it helps to try and be happy in this situation?” Ace scoffed sounding like he understood but was annoyed. “Well you have the mood swings of a dragon that’s for sure.”

“I would call it fast adaptation.” said Jet making me nod. Ace growled trying to look upset but not fooling me. The tone of his growl was as good as a voice to me and I could tell he just wanted a little more control on things right now. He was worried about his family, friends and our rag tag band of three. I could relate, I was worried about Liz after all and now felt a duty to free all those in this circus. I felt bad for the guy, at least I knew where Liz was, he didn’t seem to know where the Council members were. I walked over to Ace and put my hand on his furry forehead both to cheer him up and calm the fear I felt looking at this form. “It’s alright, we’ll get them out. Just let me cope my way alright? So what do I need to do?” I didn’t know how well he could pick up my feelings so I tried to put both my empathy and willingness to help in my voice.

Ace was obviously surprised by my words and actions but Jet, who I’m guessing read my mind again didn’t seem to be at all. Ace soon nodded. “Alright....thank you Elem and I’m sorry. Right now you need to tap into your dragon powers. You do it all the time without realizing it, like reading voices for instance, a dragon can read another’s heart and you are doing that through your voice.” I stepped back from Ace as he spoke and nodded now and then. “And another example you can -oh turn around please. I’m going to shift and the clothes don’t go with me, at least not in this world where you can’t will clothes to be there as you change.”

I nodded and turned closing my eyes just in case wondering what skill he could use in human form. I heard Ace pull some stuff from under the hay, no doubt extra clothes and waited for him to give

the ok. "Alight turn." I did as instructed and as I turned Ace approached me and took hold of my right wrist in a grip firmer than I thought he would have. More angry than surprised I met his amber eyes. "The dragon is this weak? I can take hold of you this easy and drag you around?" Ace scoffed and threw me forward by the wrist. I stopped myself from colliding into the cage and turned to see Ace in front of me once again this time he seized both wrists.

I looked past him to see Jet who had a hand clenched in a fist and faced away from us. I would to have known what he was feeling but he was silent. "Come on dragon, fight me!" Ace ordered tightening his grip. That did it, I didn't care if I trusted him or Jet, I didn't care about the council, I was challenged I wanted to act. Moving my wrists down quickly I moved them apart in a fluid motion breaking his hold. Taking a step back I swung forward ready for a punch. Ace grabbed my wrist and smiled. "Well done." He said looking at my hand. Something in his voice made me look to and I gasped at what I saw, my hand was normal but in place of nails I had long claws extending from my hand. Ace let my wrist go and I observed the claws.

"Did you really have to do it that way?" Jet said as he turned to face Ace and I could tell Jet was annoyed, no angered at the method. Ace simply nodded and turned to me. He cleared his thought pulling my attention from my clawed hand to him. "I have no doubt you did this when you were angry. When you dug your nails into your hand I bet you changed into claws without realizing it, even for just a moment until the pain dulled your anger. You need to master this skill. I wish I could teach you but that will be left to Feather Head here. I got to get back to the thugs so nothing gets too suspicious. Good luck."

I could tell Ace didn't want to leave us both because he befriended me and despised the thugs here with every fiber of his being. I knew very well though he had to go back and nodded. "Thanks." I said simply putting all my true thanks into the word hoping he could hear it. His smile let me know he did. "I'll call you when we get her all scaly and fiery. See if you can't find where the Council members are in the meantime, I'm sure the Boss trusts you now anyway." Ace nodded and moved to the exit of the cage. "Catch you guys later. Good luck." He said leaving without turning back.

"Housecat there can be pretty stern but hey he's a good guy at heart." Jet told me as he stood and walked over to me. "I can tell. So how are we going to get me all 'scaly and fiery?'" I asked just dying to know. If I had a little power I could help to wipe this place off the planet and daughter of a Council member or not I was dying to do so. "You know I think you already did, you though the damage on your hand was from claws after all." I gave Jet an annoyed look, I wasn't too

fond of the whole mind reading thing. Jet knew what I meant and lifted his hands up defensively. “Like I said it just kind of happens, I’ll stay out of your mind for now. Anyway you were right, it must have been from claws.”

I bellied him and yet didn’t believe him at the same time. I squinted a moment, looking to the hay and shaking my head. “Ok how, if I didn’t even know then how could I have turned my hand into a dragon’s paw?” Jet shrugged. “Easy, you got angry, real angry. I wasn’t watching from afar or anything like that but I know you were outside of that room. Anyway, what they said made you so angry when you clenched your fist your hand turned into a dragon’s. We could just go and get you angry but what good is that? We need you to be able to do this whenever, like if you’re having a bad day at school and you want to shake things up.”

Jet amused me in so many ways, no matter what I said or did, or what situation he was in he was happy and a little sarcastic. “How do you keep that attitude of yours?” I asked with a tilt of my head. “Well...” Jet’s voice faded, and I could tell he didn’t want to talk about it. “We can save that for another day if you want. So, scales and stuff how do I do that?” Jet looked, grateful, before he turned back to his normal self. “Well first look deep within, find your inner beast, your inner wilderness and call it forth. Just look really deep in your soul, find something that has always been there. Kind of like a voice or a presence, get in touch with that and let it out!”

Trusting Jet I nodded and closed my eyes looking within. I pictured my body as a dark and empty shell with an orb inside. The orb was bright orange with a yellow glow around it, it was my way of looking into my soul. It was true there was a presence inside of it, but it was hard to describe. There was some kind of great force within me, a wilderness, a real self, something that was alive and separate yet a part of me in more ways I ever knew. It was almost like there was a guide, a guardian inside my own soul. In my mind I even saw a pair of bright yellow eyes in the soul orb, looking at me.

I exhaled slowly, getting in contact with it, feeling the soul beat like my own heart and act like my own mind. This was me, the real me that has always been there. Every time my body acted in a way I knew was instinct, every time I did something and didn’t know why, this was the cause. “Arise.” I thought to the life in my soul, “Join me, be the real me.” I could feel the force in my soul growl and I heard myself growl at the same time. It was not a growl of any normal creature, but one who was light at heart and though it could be a hunter it was a protector. Then I felt real life, my soul, the little orb filled the black void I saw my body as. I could feel a physical change as it did.

The feeling was so odd, it felt like it should be painful but it was not. My bones were the same but I felt something on my skin, no

felt something from my skin. From under my skin great scales emerged then fitted together over them, gathering together leaving no gaps to the skin underneath. I also felt something unfold from my back, bones emerging in a straight pattern and unfolding like fans as they did.

At the base of my spine I felt more bones emerge, first skin then scales. There was more than just a vertebrae too, bones emerged from the top as a sort of spine. The oddest thing though was my nails, from under the scales emerged solid cone shaped nails that branched off at the top making scythe shaped claws. Atop my head at the crown of my forehead emerged two horns, each with two points at the top. I even felt my teeth grow a little but not too much. I opened my eyes to take a look at my new dragonic self.

FAN FICTION



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STAR WARS

THE CLONE WARS: BATTLEFIELD CRISTOPHSIS

Chapter 4

Slade Eide-Ettaro

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

Lana stood with her back against the bulkhead of the medical bay, watching Cody's body float weightlessly in the bacta tank. He seemed like he was just sleeping...sleeping with a half dozen different tubes and wires hooked up to him. Worst of all was the patch on his side where the chunk of shrapnel had imbedded in his stomach. He'd gotten that because he'd protected her. She frowned and crossed her arms over own abdomen, feeling guilty over the minor cuts and bruises she had sustained.

"Are you alright Lana?"

She looked up to see Master Kenobi smiling down at her gently. Lana didn't say anything, she just wrapped her arms around her master's waist and buried her face against his armored chest. He seemed surprised and at a loss for a moment, but then he put a hand on her head and held her gently.

"Is this...is this what it's like all the time?" she asked nervously, her voice muffled by his clothing.

He nodded, running a hand through her hair soothingly. "I'm afraid it gets much worse than this."

Lana took a deep steadying breath and looked up at him with her face set in hard determination.

"I'll do it."

Master Kenobi smiled at her. "That's the spirit. You can get through all this, and once the war is over I will teach you how to be not only a warrior, but an arbiter of peace as well."

Lana let go of her Master and looked back at Cody. "Will he be alright?"

Master Kenobi nodded. "Yes, I'm sure he'll be fine. He's survived worse and come back...besides," he added wryly. "He wouldn't miss the chance to chastise you on putting yourself at risk."

Lana frowned. "But it wasn't my fault!"

Master Kenobi chuckled. "Tell that to him."

Kahan sat across from the bound prisoner, staring at him quietly as the

sullen trooper kept his gaze stoically fixed on the deck.

“Sergeant, this would really go much smoother if you simply told me what I want to know.”

“Burn in Hell Jedi.” the Sergeant grumbled.

Kahan chuckled. “My, a clone with manners, imagine that.” he leaned back in his chair. “Will you really not tell me anything?”

The Sergeant was silent and Kahan sighed resignedly.

“Very well, I didn't want to do this to you, I consider it something of a violation of privacy but you leave me with no choice.”

Suddenly, the Sergeant sat bolt upright, his eyes locked onto Kahan's with a fixture of horror on his face.

“Wh—what?” he blurted.

“I am sorry.” Kahan said gently. “But you are going to tell me what I need to know whether you want to or not.”

“N—no.” the clone whimpered, shutting his eyes.

Kahan pushed deeper into the Sergeant's head and began scouring his mind for the information he desired. He recognized the Sith he'd been jousting with all this time, but this went deeper than that. The Sergeant was bitter, angry at the Republic for using him and all his brothers like disposable fodder. Kahan could sympathize. It was a rather atrocious state of affairs but it was what it was, the Republic would do what it had to in order to survive.

A clone's mind fascinated Kahan. It was unlike any other entity he'd come across in his life to date. It was at once identical to and yet vastly different from all its brother clones. It was an example of what experience could do to shape a mind. Clones tended to be very similar at the most basic level but when they had been through a few fights and experienced life a little, even with their nearly identical brothers, individualism began to show up.

This Sergeant was no different. At his most basic level he was just like all the other clones but his experiences had shaped him and that shape was that of an embittered combat veteran who had grown to hate the government he had fought to preserve and so he had conspired to contact and then feed information to the enemy on Christophsis, even at the expense of his brothers.

Kahan finished his exploration, finding nothing truly of interest beyond the behavior of General Loathsome which he found rather amusing. He came out of the Sergeant's mind to find the trooper looking at him with a mixture of hatred and fear.

“Wh—what did you do to me?”

Kahan smiled slightly. “It doesn't feel good does it? Having another mind invade yours...it feels as if everything you are has been stripped away.” his smile was gentle. “If you had simply told me what I wanted to know I would not have had to violate you in such a way...but this is war.” Kahan stood up. “You know that.”

“What happens now?” the Sergeant asked bitterly. “Are you going to kill me?”

Kahan shrugged. “I don't see what good that would do personally. I am not inclined to do so but,” he paused and listened for a moment. “Others might have stronger opinions.”

The door opened and Aira-ty stormed in. “Where is he?” her eyes settled on the Sergeant without Kahan needing to say anything. “Did he tell you anything?”

Kahan shook his head, feeling the seething rage beneath Aira-ty's surface.

“No, nothing useful.”

She nodded and crossed the room. She drew her pistol in one smooth motion and shot the Sergeant in the center of his forehead before he had a chance to realize what was happening.

Kahan looked at her, unblinking in his gaze. “Was that truly necessary?”

Aira-ty turned a cold look towards him. “They are meant to be loyal to the Republic.”

Kahan could feel the wash of emotions beneath her harsh words but said nothing on it. It was not his place to intrude...at least not yet. If it effected her combat performance, then it would be his place to intrude, but not before then.

Aira-ty felt the judgment in the General's cool gaze and rose to meet the challenge.

“Don't look down on me sir.” she snapped.

She was flustered from the combat and seeing Jango's legacy shot down in front of her, and now this...this thing had betrayed all of that. She wouldn't stand for it. She refused to stand for it. She glared at the General for a moment more before she stormed past him and back into the corridor.

Jesp was standing there patiently. “Is everythi—“

“Not now.” she snapped. “Get some rest.”

She wasn't angry with Jesp...perhaps she wasn't even angry with General Kahan...maybe it was just herself she was angry with for being so reckless and...well...unstable...but...Jango's death was still so recent and seeing him die over and over again every time the clones were shot down by the droids. She clenched her eyes against the tears and retreated towards her shipboard quarters and the relative safety they offered.

Jesp watched Commander Nokta storm down the hallway. He wanted to help her, comfort her if he could, but he didn't want to impose on her when she obviously wanted to be alone. Non-clones were...difficult...especially Commander Nokta. He remembered when

they'd first met on Geonosis, she'd collapsed against him, pounding on his chest demanding that he 'give him back' whoever 'him' had been. Jesp hadn't understood then what she'd been asking for, and he still didn't understand now. He just understood that until meeting Aira-ty, he'd never experienced any emotions that strongly before. It was a strength he sought and wanted to support. That was why he was her captain. He would keep her alive.

“Captain, may I see you for a moment?”

The General's voice cut through Jesp's thoughts like a knife. He stiffened and turned on his heel, walking into the chamber and standing at attention.

“Sir?”

“At ease Captain, no need to be so stiff.”

Jesp relaxed, but only a little.

“How do you judge the Commander's temperament?”

Jesp frowned, what was this?

“She's a good leader sir...and she cares about those under her command.”

The General nodded. “That's what I thought...do you think she can continue to command under the kind of stress she's dealing with?”

“Yes sir.” Jesp answered unequivocally.

The General sighed. “Very well, in that case I have nothing more save to ask you a favor.”

“What is that sir?”

“Keep your eye on her, and make sure she doesn't over-extend herself. I'm concerned about her ability to perform when those around her are dying.”

Jesp wanted to shout at the General, defy his words but he didn't, as much as he wanted to defend Commander Nokta he did not and he hated himself. He felt disloyal for standing here and listening to the General question his Commander without one word of defiance.

“Thank you Captain. I know she's good, I simply wish to ensure that she is also alright.”

Jesp nodded stiffly. “Yes sir, was there anything else?”

The General shook his head. “No, dismissed.”

Turning on his heel and striding from the room, Jesp seethed with impotent indignation and rage on Commander Nokta's behalf. How dare the General question her?

Kahan smiled. That had been interesting. He wondered if Captain Jesp realized he was in love with Commander Nokta? Probably not. It was unfortunate since she obviously desired what Jesp wanted to share with her even if he himself did not fully realize he had the desire.

It was tragic, but this was war. He looked to the dead Sergeant sitting in the chair where he'd been shot. Yes, in war, tragedy abounded.

"General Kenobi, this is General Kahan, our saboteur has...expired."

Crystal City, Planet Christophsis

Hanabi looked around at the destroyed ammo dump. The debris scattered around the site was still burning and damage control teams were still putting out the fires and salvaging what ammunition they could for the big guns.

"This is going to be bad." Captain Rex grumbled, standing next to her with his arms crossed. "The guns were what was keeping the Seps back, now they can advance and we've got nothing to stop them."

"We have the walkers." Hanabi said hopefully.

"Not enough of them, and the rail guns can't track or fire fast enough to deal with their fighter tanks...not to mention they have numbers on their side." Rex said with resignation. "And they've got their spider droids as well." he sighed. "Our situation just went from bad to worse."

"Don't give up hope yet." Hanabi said. "We can still win, we just have to last until Master Yoda and the rest of the reinforcements arrive."

"That will be at least another half day." Rex said sullenly.

"That's a long time."

Hanabi frowned and looked away from the pessimistic Captain. He may very well be right...but he didn't have to be so dour about it, there was always hope...or at least she thought there was...there had to be right? Looking around at the decimated ammo dump though and the dead bodies still lying on the ground, she felt a little hopeless herself...but still, she couldn't give up. Not yet.

"Hanabi! Rex!"

She turned to see Master Skywalker coming towards them.

"Commander Nokta just shot our saboteur." he said somberly.

"Obi-Wan just told me."

Rex snorted slightly. "Good riddance."

"He was one of our brothers." Hanabi said fretfully.

Rex drew in a deep, somber breath. "He betrayed us."

"That's not important right now," Master Skywalker said.

"What is important is that we've just lost our main deterrent against attack so we need to get ready."

"Any idea when they're going to be hitting us General?"

Master Skywalker looked down at Hanabi and then back at

Rex before shrugging. "Nope, the good news is that Master Kahan's walkers are all in position."

Rex nodded. "At least they'll be able to stop some of the bigger enemies...sir, what about the Sith?"

"I'll deal with her if she shows herself." Master Skywalker said.

Hanabi frowned. "Master Skywalker, do you think we can make it?"

He looked at her for a moment in surprise before smiling and patting her on the head between her horns and ruffling her hair.

"Definitely, we can do this, don't worry so much kiddo."

Hanabi huffed. "Hey! I am not a kid!"

He laughed a little, looking around at the destruction somberly. "No, I guess you're not."

Separatist Command Post, Planet Christophsis

Ventress seethed as she paced back and forth in General Loathsome's office. Where was the blasted kerkoiden? They must strike now! While the Republic forces were recovering from the blow struck against their heavy weapons, not after they'd recovered! This delay was intolerable!

The doors opened finally and the General entered leisurely, causing Ventress to twitch slightly.

"General, order an attack this instant."

"I will do no such thing." General Loathsome replied. "We have no information on how badly the sabotage has effected them. We could be charging right into the jaws of their cannons and that would never do!"

Ventress recalled the Jedi's mocking words and her fists clenched as she loomed over the kerkoiden.

"You will launch an attack this very moment or I will report to Count Dooku that you are too cowardly to press the advantage."

"Are you really going to call me a coward?" the General growled, his eyes narrowing.

"Yes." snarled Ventress. "Coward."

The General puffed up like some kind of bird, Ventress imagined bursting him open with her saber but knew that she couldn't do that...much as she might want to. After all, Count Dooku had repeatedly pointed out to her how important capable officers were and Loathsome was supposed to be very capable, he'd certainly managed to bog down General Kenobi, that at least was something.

"Very well." Loathsome said darkly. "We will attack, I hope you are not wasting my forces."

"Good." Ventress sneered. "I will deal with the Jedi, they are mine." and one in particular that she had a very personal grudge

against and a score to settle.

She reached down, her hands resting on the handle of her saber. She would take great pleasure in killing him, slowly. She spun on her heel and strode from the General's office, leaving the details of the attack to him while she went to do what she did best. She licked her lips. She was going to enjoy this.

Government Center, Crystal City, Planet Christophsis

"The attacks are coming along three avenues." Master Kahan said as the holographic display showed them the government center and its surrounding environs. "All three forces are comprised of droids with supporting armor."

"And we're sure that this is the real thing and not just another probe?" Senator Organa asked nervously, rubbing his fingers together tensely.

"If this is a probe." Anakin muttered quietly. "Then we're about to be wiped out."

Besides him, Hanabi looked up fretfully but said nothing as the briefing went on.

"Our walkers are positioned along every major approach to the compound but they can only do so much against the number of tanks we're dealing with here." Obi-Wan said dubiously. "And even with the two legions that Master Kahan has brought with him we're going to be badly outgunned."

"What about the cannons? Don't they have any shots left?"

Obi-Wan looked towards Rex questioningly. "We have about thirty shots left."

"Per gun?" the Senator asked hopefully.

Rex shook his head. "No Senator, total."

The silence that hung in the air after that was deafening, Anakin wasn't going to let it last.

"We attack them."

Commander Nokta looked at him with a raised brow. "Attack them? How? We remove anything from our perimeter and they'll roll over us."

"A small force." Anakin said. "Just like we did with the weapon platforms."

"And what, would we be attacking?" she asked. Anakin could feel her interest growing.

"Their headquarters." Anakin said simply, turning to Master Kahan. "You found its location in the spy's mind right?"

Master Kahan nodded simply. "Yes, but you'd need to get past their forces first."

"You got an entire assault ship past a blockade." Anakin

pointed out.

"You'd be surprised how much easier that is." Master Kahan replied. "In that case I was simply blinding sensors by bending light around the hull of the ship."

"And you can't do that with people?"

"Not in the same way, that ship was going intentionally slow and I can't block the minds of droids." Master Kahan smiled wryly. "They don't have them."

"Could you shield a small group." Anakin pressed with mounting excitement. He looked around. "Say, myself, you, my apprentice and Commander Nokta; all of us moving very slowly?"

"Just the four of you?" Obi-Wan asked. "And what do you hope to accomplish?"

"Distract them of course, if we're hitting their headquarters then maybe they'll retreat long enough for reinforcements."

"It's a gamble." Senator Organa said. "A very dangerous gamble."

"But one that might work." Master Kahan said suddenly.

The Senator frowned. "General?"

"There is a Sith with them." he said. "A very angry Sith, and she wants my head." a smile spread across his features. "If I'm not here, she's not going to be with the attack forces."

"She'll be chasing you." the Senator said.

"Exactly." Master Kahan replied. "Which means that Master Kenobi can concentrate on the battle."

"That still doesn't alleviate the pressure on this facility though." Rex pointed out dourly. "They aren't going to just fall back because of a little raid on their headquarters."

"Do we have any other options?" Anakin asked, holding his hands up. "I say we do it."

There were no objections, Anakin grinned broadly at Obi-Wan who merely shook his head with a knowing smile.

Aira-ty swallowed nervously beneath her helmet. This was so eerie. She glanced to her left as they walked past another droid squad. Her hands flexed on the grip of her pistol as it rested at her hip.

"Don't." General Kahan said besides her. "If you start shooting I can't keep you hidden."

"I don't like hiding." she grumbled.

"I noticed." he replied serenely. "But consider this an order."

Aira-ty rolled her eyes. "Yes sir."

"Don't worry Commander." the General said with apparent mirth. "We're almost there, and then you can shoot everything that moves."

Aira-ty's gaze fixed on Skywalker's back for a moment.

“Everything?”

“Jedi excluded Commander.” he chastised.

She snorted. “Spoil sport.”

“I just know who is on my side.” he replied.

Aira-ty looked besides her at the General, he was wearing clone armor now with his robes over it much like General Kenobi did. It wasn't a bad look for him, he looked like some kind of ancient warrior with his long hair resting on his armored shoulders. He'd make a good mandalorian. She stopped for a moment and looked at him blankly. What was she thinking? She shook her head and continued on, watching tensely as a trio of STAPs flew overhead. Spit she just wanted to shoot something, sneaking around with the droids all around them was going to drive her insane!

They turned a final corner and found themselves standing before what had evidently been a hotel once. Now it was a mustering ground and headquarters. General Skywalker took the pack off his shoulders and opened it up to reveal several detpacks.

“Everyone ready?” he asked.

General Kahan nodded. “I will remain in the courtyard. The Sith will want me, the rest of you do whatever you have to.”

Aira-ty looked out towards the rest of the compound where the Separatists had setup their base of operations in the capital. It was rather expansive really, but they were only here for the command post here. Amusing that it was so lightly guarded. She drew her blasters and smiled grimly behind her helmet as she aimed at the droids guarding the entrance.

“Now can I shoot them?”

“By all means.” General Kahan replied with a winning smile.

Crystal City, Planet Christophsis

“General, our headquarters are under attack.”

General Loathsome glowered at the Sith besides him.

“First the cannons are still firing, and now this! We must withdraw.”

“No, it can't be a real attack, and we know that their cannons are out of ammunition stores, they'll fall silent soon.” the Sith snarled.

“I will deal with the attack at the command post, press your attack General.”

“Very well.” Loathsome snorted. “I will do so, see that you deal with these attackers.”

The Sith smiled viciously. “Oh I will if it's who I think it is.”

Without another word she spun her speeder around and blazed back the way the army had come.

General Loathsome scowled at her before turning back to the

frontline just in time to see another tank erupt in a fireball.

“Bah! This will never do!” he grumbled. “Break through!” he roared over the comlink.

Crystal City, Planet Christophsis

Rex ducked down behind cover as another shell struck the barricade. “General, that was our last shell.”

General Kenobi nodded. “Well then, I suppose we'll have to hope that those gunners can hold a rifle.”

Rex nodded. “Don't worry sir, they can hold the line with the rest of us.”

An AT-XT strode into position and launched a barrage of mortars at the oncoming row of droids. The explosions shattered the front rank of advancing mechs, a return shot from an AAT struck the walker's shields, forcing it back behind cover to allow it time to recover.

“I'm glad we have those things.” Rex growled.

“Yes indeed.” General Kenobi remarked as an AT-TE's mass driver opened fire and toppled an oncoming missile droid. “Hopefully they can keep this up.”

Rex nodded agreement. “Yes sir.” he stood and fired at a droid, dropping it with well placed blasterfire. Ducking back down he looked over at the General. “Do you think they've begun their attack?”

“Knowing Anakin, yes, I imagine it has.”

Rex smiled behind his helmet, yes, knowing the General they were already wrecking havoc.

Separatist Command Post, Planet Christophsis

“Uh, Master?” Hanabi asked as she placed her last detonation pack. “Do you think this is going to do any good?”

“According to Master Kahan, General Loathsome likes his luxury.” Master Skywalker said with a grin as he cut through a com console. “If we blow up his nice house, maybe he'll get mad.”

“And that's a good thing?” Hanabi asked as she set the detpack.

“Against Obi-Wan? You bet it is.” he replied as he cut a massive slash across an overlarge portrait of General Loathsome.

“Ready?”

Hanabi nodded. “Yes Master.”

“Alright, let's get this done.”

Kahan stood quietly at the entrance to General Loathsome's command post, watching the flashes against the night sky where the battle was

ongoing. He reached out with his mind and touched the engaged forces of the clones. The droids of course had no presence in the Force, but the clones did, even if it was a muted one because of their similarities. Amidst the flashes of battle written across their minds he found one mind alone and removed from the battle, filled with hatred and coming towards him.

“Here she comes.” he whispered.

“General.” Commander Nokta said. “Charges are in place.”

“Good, now you and the others should move on and see about blowing up something else with more strategic value.”

“We've already planted our detpacks.”

He smiled. “Commander, there's an entire Separatist headquarters here, that hotel is merely a fancy barracks...besides, I'm sure there's some extra munitions around here somewhere.”

Her helmet turned towards him, he could sense her confusion. “What about you?”

“I have a guest.” Kahan said simply.

“The Sith psychopath.” she stated flatly, raising her pistol. “I'm staying right here.”

He looked down at her. “I was under the impression you didn't like Jedi much.”

She shrugged. “You're not slaughtering clones so I like you, don't take it personally.”

Kahan snorted, drawing his double saber. “I will try to restrain my gratitude.” he keyed his comlink. “Knight Skywalker?”

“I'm here Master.”

“Blow the headquarters and then find something else to destroy, something important.”

“You don't have to ask me twice Master, consider it done.”

A moment later, the command post erupted in a blazing fireball. Kahan looked down the city street and spied what he was looking for. It helped that she was holding her own dual saber ignited and at the ready as she rocketed towards him on her speeder.

“Here she comes.” he said simply.

POETRY

EXPERIMENTAL PILL

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

Doctor says my depression's strange.
My medication's got to change.
He says he found a cure.
I wonder if he's really sure.
An experimental pill,
Will stop me being ill.
Medicine is brand new,
But what else can I do.
If my depression will go away,
What else can I say?

ARE YOU THERE?

David McKinstry

If anyone would like to look further into other works I have, check my DeviantArt account <http://fiyerotigelaar.deviantart.com/>

Are you out there?
Are there any of us left?
Those who believe in love above all things
The dreamers, the sincere idealists
The passionate believers in true love
Those that are endlessly hopeful
Where are you all?
I'm searching for and struggling to find you
Wherever you are
Whatever you are doing
Please, let us bring to the world
Once again, our ideals
Our morals and our hope
For the world needs them

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.