

Star Wars

A New Horizon

by Kelly Benson and Ryan Campen

Chap 1-3: 30 years after RTJ, the now grown Solo children are swept up into a dangerous Imperial uprising, meanwhile Luke's adopted daughter searches for her roots:

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Prologue

It was a decade after the defeat of the Empire over Endor. Luke Skywalker was in his living quarters at the Jedi Academy on Yavin IV. He was supposed to be studying reports on hyperdrives for a new ship he was designing. But he was daydreaming instead. He was lonely. He missed his sister and the kids, it had been months since he had been able to visit them. Han had kidded that he needed to find a family of his own. But with who? Luke wondered it wasn't as if there were many potential mates floating around. He also still wasn't sure if he should or not. Oh well, he thought. Suddenly, he felt a strange presence in the Force. He got up and opened his door. In front of the door was a bundle. He picked it up and unwrapped a bit of the blankets. Inside was a baby girl, with big green eyes and a little bit of brownish hair.

She looked up at him like she knew him already. He couldn't help opening up his heart to the child. For some crazy reason he wanted this child, he wanted to raise her, to train her in the Force, he could tell she was already strong in it.

"What should I call you little one?" he asked, a name popped into his head, "Ceara. I heard that name once I thought that it was pretty. That's what I'll name you."

The baby cooed up at him and his heart melted.

"But how am I going to take care of you? I have no idea how to take care of babies."

Luke decided to contact his sister. In a few minutes Leia Organa Solo's face appeared on the screen.

"Hi, Luke it's been a long time."

"Too long. I've missed you, Han, and the kids."

"We've missed you too. What's wrong?" she asked.

"Nothing, look," he held up Ceara, "Isn't she beautiful? I want to take her in."

"She is beautiful. Where did you find her?"

"She was left on my doorstep but I don't know anything about babies and I was wondering if you could help me."

"Well if you really want to take her in, I can find her a nurse. Winter is busy with Council matters but the woman I have to help with the children has a twin sister who I think would be good for the job."

"Thank you, Leia. This place will be very lonely for a child so I was thinking of sending her to Coruscant for a few years. Will that be alright?"

"That can be arranged. How long do you want her to stay on Coruscant?"

"At least five years but I will pay her frequent visits. In fact I'll try to be there so much she won't even miss me."

"Alright, we'll be waiting for you. I love you."

"I love you too."

When Ceara was five, Luke noticed that she was already very strong in the Force. So he decided to bring Ceara and her nurse Tambra to Yavin so that he could train her in the ways of the Jedi. (Somewhere in here you may want to put in that stuff about Ganneb and the new rebellion.)

Chapter 1

14 YEARS LATER

Two Star Destroyers circled a planet deep within the Galactic Core. Out of the smaller older Imperial Class Ship, a shuttle and several TIE Advanced Fighters exited the docking bay. They approached the other Destroyer, which was the new flagship of the Empire the Ultra Star Destroyer Palpatine. It was about twenty times the size of the smaller ship, and supposedly carried many more advances in technology than the twenty-year old ship. The shuttle entered the black abyss known as space. The TIEs continued on, several meters ahead of the shuttle. They continued on, heading for the large docking port ahead.

The radio crackled to life. "We have you on your tracking screens, please identify."

"Palpatine, this is Shuttle Tramos, we are dropping off high ranking Imperial officers," the pilot said, looking back at his superiors.

Over the static on the speaker, the controller said, "We will drop the field once we have confirmation of your code transmission. Please, begin sending visual confirmation, and auditory commands of the highest ranking officer on the shuttle."

The pilot looked back at the people once again. Since they changed Imperial procedures, they needed more confirmation due to the Rebellion. He nodded at them.

The older one got up, his hair had grayed with the stress of the years, and looked much older than his fifty-five years. He picked up the microphone, and nodded to the pilot, who hit a few buttons that sent over their transmissions.

Then, the older officer spoke into the microphone, "This is Admiral Seth Ferest, leader of the Empire, lower the shield. Authorization: Ferest Gamma Gamma Delta." The voice from over the comm gasped, he said, "Sir! We are dropping the field."

The shuttle and the TIEs entered the large bay. The TIEs flew down to the starfighter docking bay and the shuttle continued to ascend to the Royal Bay. The shuttle flew in, and docked at the port, the door opened, and the two officers stepped down from the hold. The current commander of the Palpatine stepped out of the lift, and met them half way, he saluted, the others saluted back.

The commander spoke, "I am Captain Garth Darkrider, Admiral Ferest, we are honored by your presence."

"Yes, yes," the Admiral said, "I have your new fleet commander here, Colonel Sal Dey, he has served for fifteen years as my second in command, and my own aide, he has also served aboard the last three flagships of the Empire, and now, he will command our fleet, of course, under my absence, while I continue on more pressing matters on my ship the Vader."

Darkrider looked at Dey, he was a tall, very handsome man, probably a few years older than he was, and he carried a case that probably contained his belongings.

"Sir," the Captain nodded to the Colonel.

"Captain," Dey said, "I've heard of your maneuver at the Battle of Ganneb, taking three Super Star Destroyers into the mountains, quite brilliant."

Darkrider smiled, "It was just knowing how to do the right thing, at the right time. I mean--"

"Yeah," Dey interrupted, "Of course it cost us two ships, and the battle. The commander had enough time to get sixty ships out of the port while you pulled the flagship out, real brilliant."

"Sir, that was four years ago," Darkrider said, "I've become a more seasoned commander since then."

"Well, we'll see, won't we," Dey said.

The Admiral spoke up, "If you two would excuse me, I need to get over to the Vader and head back to Byss, I'll join up with the fleet in the Harradas Sector, in ten days."

"Ten days," Dey said, he saluted, so did Darkrider, "Good luck, Admiral."

"You too," he said, "and, don't kill each other before I get back."

He returned to his shuttle, and it lifted off.

The Colonel turned to the Captain, "Look, if you make a fool out of me to the Admiral again, I swear, I'll kill you myself. You won't have to wait for my henchmen."

"Sir," Darkrider said. "I won't take your threats kindly. As a matter of fact I won't take them at all. So, either you drop the subject, or find a new second in command."

Dey smiled. "You've got a backbone. I like that, Darkrider. Maybe we'll get along after all."

"Don't count on it, sir," he said.

"Well," Dey said, "That's your opinion."

The Captain nodded, "Yes sir, would you like to know our standings?"

The Colonel nodded. The Captain, showed the way to the elevator. They walked over, and took it up to the main bridge.

The main bridge was fabulous in design, it consisted of three floors, floor one was the main briefing room, and the Ready Room was stationed there, it looked over the other two floors, only officers could go on that floor, unless they were security personnel. It had a table with ten seats, and a holoprojector which could be set up to fill the entire room. The second floor was main operations, it was a catwalk, with the main observation window, and a row of terminals along the back wall. It consisted of Communications, the Helm, and Tactical systems, as well as having the command chair for the CO of the fleet. The third floor was

minor operations, like support, shield generators, hyperdrive systems, and the Computer. It was under the main catwalk.

The two officers stepped out of the turbo on the second bridge floor, several officers were scurrying around making decisions, and giving orders. The two walked up the stairs to the overlook platform, and walked into the Colonel's Ready Room.

The Ready Room was a large luxurious room, with another holoscreen, and a desk, a couch, a window, and several other things, like holotapes of important events, and other such things. The two sat down, Dey behind the desk, and, Darkrider in the chair.

Darkrider turned the Colonel's computer terminal around, and hit a few buttons, a picture of a section of the Galaxy appeared on the holoscreen, and the room dimmed.

He said, "You have ten ships under your command, the Palpatine, the Tarkin, the Thrawn, the Avenger II, the Executer II, the Obliterator, the Destroyer, the Extractor, the Piett, and the Veers. You have an estimated six hundred TIEs, thirty legions of Stormtroopers."

"What about the fleet's current position?" Dey asked.

Darkrider sighed, he thought for a moment, "They're stationed along our border, we can reach them in less than a day."

"Do it," Dey said, "One more thing, do we have another Mega Class Destroyer in the fleet?"

Darkrider shook his head, "We had to salvage about eighty ships of all designs to even build this thing, I'm afraid that this will probably be the only one of it's kind. But, you have seven Super Star Destroyers, the Avenger II, and the Executer II are the only Imperial Class Ships in the fleet. Oh, and there are also twenty Corellian Corvettes in our legion."

"Fine," Dey said, "Get us out of here."

When Darkrider left, Dey took his case and opened it. He took out a cylinder, looked at it, held it upright, and lit it. A red beam of light emitted from the cylinder. It was a lightsaber. He took the beam down and threw the lightsaber in his case. Jedi in the Empire were outlawed, even if they were Dark Jedi. He had met Jeval, his first master, at the age of six, he had become a full Jedi Knight by ten, his parents were killed by the Emperor when he was twelve, then he had killed his master out of hatred and rage. So, he turned to the dark side. At fourteen, he had met with the Emperor and asked the Emperor to train him. So the Emperor agreed and the training went on in secret. The Emperor told him not to tell anyone that he'd trained him. He took that as the oath of a Dark Jedi. He had joined the Imperial Legion at the age of sixteen, he had become Captain by twenty, and Colonel by twenty-five. He knew one day he would become Admiral Dey. He had kept his Jedi skills a secret and then the Empire had banned Jedis. He hoped that one day, he would be able to

use his skills to face his enemy, Luke Skywalker in combat. He thought of it...

"Skywalker!!!" Dey yelled.

Skywalker came out of the shadows, Dey lit his saber, Luke said, "Dey, you can still change, do it for the Force!"

Dey took a swing at Skywalker, he ducked out of it's way, "No, it's too late, you and your family and friends will die! Fight!!!"

"I won't do that," Luke said.

"You will, then, face the threats of Dark Jedis past, Freedon Nadd, Ulic-Quel Droma, Darth Vader, the Emperor, Joruss C'boath!" Dey screamed.

He swung his saber through Skywalker, Luke's face turned red, he screamed, "The Dark Side has triumphed." And, he crumpled.

Dey pulled the saber from his bleeding body, and laughed, death was beautiful!

Dey snapped out of it, if he were to kill another Jedi, that would make his stay in the Dark Side forever.-- No! Who cares, he thought, I'm more powerful than any Jedi before me. Even my own master. I have to kill him, for the good of the Emperor. And, before he died, he vowed he would kill Skywalker.

The New Republic Starfleet approached a small shuttle, which had just jumped out of Hyperspace. The pilot of the shuttle hit a switch, and said, "Independence, this is the Lambda Class Shuttle Old Republic, do you read?"

Over the speaker, the comm officer of the Cruiser said, "Your coming in loud and clear, Old Republic, please send your combination code-clearance, so the Admiral doesn't have to fire on you."

The pilot smiled, he said, "Transmission commencing."

A few seconds later, the comm officer reported, "Shields are going down, the Admiral will be waiting in the docking lounge for the Chief of State."

The pilot looked back at his "cargo", and said, "Understood, we're entering your range now."

The shuttle entered the main docking bay, landed, the ramp lowered, and Han and Leia Organa Solo walked out. Han wore the uniform of a General, his hair had grayed, and he bore the uniform like a old war hog. Leia wore a formal uniform, and despite the fact that she had just turned fifty one still looked radiant. They walked down the track, all of the officers and crewmen saluted, and the two entered the lounge.

Wedge Antilles, Admiral, and leader of New Republic Military Forces, under Han's supervision, sat in the lounge, with two young officers. The officers were both twenty four and were clearly twins with the same light brown eyes and similar features although the young woman had lighter brown hair than her brother. Han and Leia entered, and the girl got up, and said, "Mom, Dad!"

"Jaina," Leia said, "It's good to see you! You too, Jacen."

Jacen got up, and walked over to Han, and said, "Dad, have you heard from Anakin?"

Han looked at Leia, and said, "Not lately, I really wonder where he is."

Wedge stood at attention, Leia smirked, "At ease, Admiral."

"Han, Leia," he said, as he shook Han's hand, "It's great to see you too, or should I say `Admiral`, and `Chief of State`."

"Han and Leia will do fine," Leia said.

Han hit her arm, "Speak for yourself!"

Wedge smiled, then, he grabbed Han by the arm, and they started walking down the hall.

Wedge said, "This ship is amazing! I'm so happy that you gave me command of this baby."

Han said, "She's still my ship, but, I'm lending her to you!"

They laughed and caught up on the latest news. Then, they were on the bridge and they went into Wedge's very spacious office.

"Well," Han said, "This is the office they gave you," he nudged Wedge, "They gave me a spa and my own indoor tarpool table."

"You're kidding me," Wedge said, "A tarpool table, so that's where the New Republic taxes are going."

Leia and Han sat down, and the twins stood behind them, Wedge sat down as well, the mood turned from rejoicing and remembrance, to hardship. Han's face turned cold, he started giving a report, "Republic Central has indicated that I need to take immediate command of the fleet, the old remnants of the Empire are emerging. Sensors in the core have indicated that several large vessels, none of them ours are coming out of hiding. Chances are, the first battle will be fought in this sector. Possibly, this very system, Home One will do three border fly-byes a day."

"What will be your command ship?" Wedge asked.

Han smiled, "I can't find the Falcon, Anakin has had it for the last six months, supposedly on a "diplomatic mission" but, he never reported in. So, the Independence is my baby now, Wedge."

Wedge smiled, "Then, sir, I volunteer as first officer."

Han looked at Wedge, "I was planning on putting you there. We will return Leia, along with all non-essential personnel back on the Medical Frigate. Until it's return, medical procedures will take place on the Mothma."

"OK," Wedge said, "I accept relieve of command."

Han looked back at Jacen, "Captain, you will carry out all of those procedures."

"Aye, sir," Jacen said, very surprised, and shocked at what his father had called him.

The meeting adjourned, and Han went to his quarters, Leia walked in the next moment, as Han was removing the collar that was choking him. Leia frowned at him, "Han, Jacen's name is not Captain."

"I know," Han said, "This is just hard on me, I accepted command of the Starfleet fifteen years ago, I was young back then, I was brash, what happened to me?"

Leia walked behind him, and sat on the bed, she rubbed his neck, he was extremely tense, "Well, you're not that scoundrel that I met thirty-three years ago. You've grown up, Han. You're nice men."

"Then, how come I treat my son like he's not as good as me?" Han asked, as he took off the tunic, underneath, was a uniform that he was more used to.

Leia stopped, "Ya know, I was wondering that, too. You need a vacation, when was the last one you took?"

Han thought, "Was it-- My god, eight years ago."

Leia asked, "Is it time for another one?"

"Yeah," Han said, "I'm going to become a scoundrel again."

Jacen walked along the deck, looking at a datapad that had all the information for the evac procedures. Han walked along side his son, Jacen stopped, he wasn't sure how to address him.

"Sir," he said.

"Save it for Wedge," Han laughed, "I'm not here as your CO, I'm here as your father, and I want to say I'm sorry."

Jacen looked at him, and smiled, "Thanks, that means a lot to me."

"I just wanted to tell you to take your mom's name off that list," Han looked at his son, whose mouth was gaping, "We're going on a vacation."

"Where?" Jacen asked.

"Endor," Han said, "We're going to visit some old friends. Then, off to Carust for three or four weeks, I haven't been away from my work for eight years, it's time for some changes. I'm becoming way too overbearing. And it just wouldn't do to have a commanding officer this tense, it interferes with the job. Wedge can handle things and you can always contact me if it's an emergency."

"Have a good time, Dad," Jacen said, they hugged, and Han went off to find his daughter and Jacen went the other way.

Jaina was sitting at her post, on the bridge, she was listening for comm signals on the Imperial Rebellion's side, she couldn't pick up any. Then, Wedge came out of his office, he went over to her post, and asked, "Anything?"

"No," Jaina said, "Either too much interference, or too little comm traffic on that side," she looked up at him, "I'm hoping for the latter."

Wedge smiled, and tapped her on the back, "Keep tracking," then, he went over to where Jacen was standing, Wedge asked, "Are you picking up any hyperspace signatures?"

"No," Jacen said, "But, if we've redesigned our hyperspace signatures, chances are, so have they."

"True," Wedge said, "But, we should scan for old and new hyperspace frequencies, so do it."

"Look, Admiral," Jacen said, "It's nearly impossible to scan in hyperspace, since it doesn't exist in real time or in real on that thing."

Zeek went into his cash box, and pulled out the two hundred credits, then some more, "Here's your two hundred, and another hundred more," then he pulled the chain off his neck, it had a keycard on it, "These are the keys to the Express, docking bay thirty-three."

"OK," the Bounty Hunter said, he put his blaster away, "I just hope for your sake that this thing still works."

He walked out the door, and Anakin asked, "Do you want to go to Imperial City with me?"

Zeek said, "My life's here," he said, Anakin turned around, but then Zeek thought, "My ship was my life, I was wrong, nothing can replace the Express, I'll come with you."

Anakin smiled, "Grab your stuff, Chewie's waiting."

Anakin and Zeek walked into the Docking Bay where the Falcon was waiting, Zeek stopped, and looked at her, "I remember that day when your father and I started this baby up, it was amazing, the roar of the engines, the lights, she doesn't look all that different."

He continued up to the ramp and entered the ship, Anakin raced to the front of the ship, while Zeek slowly made his way. Then, Chewie came running out of the front of the ship, and hugged Zeek, he growled in happiness, then Zeek smiled, "Ol' Buddy, how ya doin`?"

Chewie growled, and Zeek said, "That's good, Zeek's been wonderin' when you'd come back and see me again!"

Anakin walked back into the rec room, with a frown on his face, sat down, and cursed.

Zeek sat down next to him, "What's up kid?"

Anakin replied, "My brother has been lost in battle."

Chapter 3

The Imperial Rebellion had fallen to only twenty of the innermost systems, as well as a few outlying systems for surveillance. A cloaked Frigate would remain in those systems. The entire Imperial Fleet consisted of Dey's fleet, the Vader, three other Star Destroyers, a dozen Corellian Corvettes per task force, and a hundred thousand TIE Fighters. That was small, considering that the Empire once ruled a million systems, had three thousand Star Destroyers, hundreds of Corvettes per task force, and over a billion TIE Fighters. They had to face the fact that if things didn't change the Empire would fall once and for all.

The Palpatine and its other seven ships dropped out of Hyperspace in the Harradas System, there the Vader, and a few Escort Frigates, were also in the system. Dey sat on the bridge, and looked at his viewscreen.

Darkrider said, "Sir, may I suggest that after this meeting, we go to drydock for major repairs?"

"You can do that," Dey frowned.

"Two ships isn't that bad!" he said, "we can pick--"

Dey grabbed him by the collar, "This battle will be won, I've never lost a ship before in my life! And, I never will again, I'm a Commander, and I'm a good one! I'm angry at you, and your stupid ship, we need better weapons!" He let him go, and Darkrider fixed his collar.

"Sir," he said, "There were reports that the Eclipse was able to hold a super laser, one so powerful it could destroy an entire planet, maybe, an entire system. If we get it approved with the Admiral, we can initiate it on the Palpatine."

"Look," Dey said, "We have to clear it with Ferrest first, he'd never try another Death Star type thing, remember what happened, exhaust ports, unfinished parts of the ship, you'll have to make it have absolutely no weak spots, meaning we'll have to put the shield towers inside the ship! That's a tactical error if I've ever seen one. I'm not as stupid as Tarkin, ya know," he made his best Tarkin voice, "'What evacuate, during our moment of triumph? I believe you overestimate their chances.' I'm not gonna let that happen to my ship."

"Sir, you're right, we need better defenses, let's ask Admiral Ferrest for permission, and we'll try it."

"Fine," he said, "I'll be in my ready room, contact me when the Admiral gets here."

"Aye sir," he said.

Dey sat at his desk. Suddenly he got a really bad headache. He held his head trying to make it stop. Then he heard a voice in his head.

"Beware, Beware, beware, she will destroy you."

"Who what?" Dey asked.

"Just beware and what ever you do don't leave the Empire."

Dey grabbed the desk as the room went dark.

An hour later the entire command crew of the Palpatine stood in the docking bay, guards took every corner of the bay. Several Junior Officers, and enlisted personnel stood on the level overlooking the area. Dey and Darkrider exited the turbolift as the shuttle landed. Then, Dey said, "Attention, Admiral on the deck." All of the officers and enlisted stood at attention. The ramp lowered, and the Admiral stepped out. He smiled, and said, "So, both of you are still alive. Good. At ease, everyone."

The crew stood at ease, and the three command level officers went off into the turbolift.

They arrived on the bridge, and they went into the Colonel's ready room. They sat down, and Ferrest said, "What's this I hear about you wanting to add more defenses to the Palpatine?"

The two looked shocked, Ferrest smiled, "I've got spies all over the place, you should realize that. How do you think I've thwarted seven assassination attempts?"

"Anyway," Dey said, "We've heard reports about the Imperial Drydocks at Harradas having weapons such as a Death Star Laser. We'd like to impose that weapon into our systems now, besides we need major repairs after the battle."

"I've seen the damage reports," Ferest said, "I agree, we'll also impose better shield generators that can take more hits before going out, and maybe more concussion missile launchers."

"All right," Dey said, "We've lost two Star Destroyers, and all the others have major shield damage, or minor hull damage. It'll take a week or so to get the full repairs complete, then we'll be able to include the Vader in our fleet, on completion, I'll relinquish command to you."

"Sure," Ferest shook Dey's hand, "I guess that's all for now, good luck, I'll see you on Harradas Three."

The nine Star Destroyers arrived at Harradas III. Dey stood on the bridge, and looked out at the docking pylons. He hit the comm switch on his chair, and said, "This is the Ultra Star Destroyer Palpatine, requesting permission for eight docking bays for complete repairs, and upgrades to the flagship, authorization: Dey alpha two nine six."

The voice over the comm replied, "Permission to dock granted, Colonel, prepare to give your slave codes, so we can pull you in."

"Understood," he said.

He nodded to his tactical officer who began sending the signals, he said, "Transmission complete."

The ships skid into orbit, and approached the massive pylons that made up one of the last Imperial Drydock in the fleet. The Palpatine was huge enough that it fit an entire pylon, where the others fit four or five.

The Colonel went off the ship, and several officers saluted, he saluted back, he ran to the station commander, an old friend of his, Commander Freeman, "Dar," he said.

"Sal," Freeman replied, "or, should I say Colonel Dey."

"Whatever, Dar," he said, they started walking.

"So," Freeman smiled, "Damages on your s

Prologue

It was a decade after the defeat of the Empire over Endor. Luke Skywalker was in his living quarters at the Jedi Academy on Yavin IV. He was supposed to be studying reports on hyperdrives for a new ship he was designing. But he was daydreaming instead. He was lonely. He missed his sister and the kids, it had been months since he had been able to visit them. Han had kidded that he needed to find a family of his own. But with who? Luke wondered it wasn't as if there were many potential mates floating around. He also still wasn't sure if he should or not. Oh well, he thought. Suddenly, he felt a strange presence in the Force. He got up and opened his door. In front of the door was a bundle. He picked it up and unwrapped a bit of the blankets. Inside was a baby girl, with big green eyes and a little bit of brownish hair.

She looked up at him like she knew him already. He couldn't help opening up his heart to the child. For some crazy reason he wanted this child, he wanted to raise her, to train her in the Force, he could tell she was already strong in it.

"What should I call you little one?" he asked, a name popped into his head, "Ceara. I heard that name once I thought that it was pretty. That's what I'll name you."

The baby cooed up at him and his heart melted.

"But how am I going to take care of you? I have no idea how to take care of babies."

Luke decided to contact his sister. In a few minutes Leia Organa Solo's face appeared on the screen.

"Hi, Luke it's been a long time."

"Too long. I've missed you, Han, and the kids."

"We've missed you too. What's wrong?" she asked.

"Nothing, look," he held up Ceara, "Isn't she beautiful? I want to take her in."

"She is beautiful. Where did you find her?"

"She was left on my doorstep but I don't know anything about babies and I was wondering if you could help me."

"Well if you really want to take her in, I can find her a nurse. Winter is busy with Council matters but the woman I have to help with the children has a twin sister who I think would be good for the job."

"Thank you, Leia. This place will be very lonely for a child so I was thinking of sending her to Coruscant for a few years. Will that be alright?"

"That can be arranged. How long do you want her to stay on Coruscant?"

"At least five years but I will pay her frequent visits. In fact I'll try to be there so much she won't even miss me."

"Alright, we'll be waiting for you. I love you."

"I love you too."

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Over the static on the speaker, the controller said, "We will drop the field once we have confirmation of your code transmission. Please, begin sending visual confirmation, and auditory commands of the highest ranking officer on the shuttle."

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"Captain," Dey said, "I've heard of your maneuver at the Battle of Ganneb, taking three Super Star Destroyers into the mountains, quite brilliant."

Darkrider smiled, "It was just knowing how to do the right thing, at the right time. I mean--"

"Yeah," Dey interrupted, "Of course it cost us two ships, and the battle. The commander had enough time to get sixty ships out of the port while you pulled the flagship out, real brilliant."

"Sir, that was four years ago," Darkrider said, "I've become a more seasoned commander since then."

"Well, we'll see, won't we," Dey said.

The Admiral spoke up, "If you two would excuse me, I need to get over to the Vader and head back to Byss, I'll join up with the fleet in the Harradas Sector, in ten days."

"Ten days," Dey said, he saluted, so did Darkrider, "Good luck, Admiral."

"You too," he said, "and, don't kill each other before I get back."

He returned to his shuttle, and it lifted off.

The Colonel turned to the Captain, "Look, if you make a fool out of me to the Admiral again, I swear, I'll kill you myself. You won't have to wait for my henchmen."

"Sir," Darkrider said. "I won't take your threats kindly. As a matter of fact I won't take them at all. So, either you drop the subject, or find a new second in command."

Dey smiled. "You've got a backbone. I like that, Darkrider. Maybe we'll get along after all."

"Don't count on it, sir," he said.

"Well," Dey said, "That's your opinion."

The Captain nodded, "Yes sir, would you like to know our standings?"

The Colonel nodded. The Captain, showed the way to the elevator. They walked over, and took it up to the main bridge.

The main bridge was fabulous in design, it consisted of three floors, floor one was the main briefing room, and the Ready Room was stationed there, it looked over the other two floors, only officers could go on that floor, unless they were security personnel. It had a table with ten seats, and a holoprojector which could be set up to fill the entire room. The second floor was main operations, it was a catwalk, with the main observation window, and a row of terminals along the back wall. It consisted of Communications, the Helm, and Tactical systems, as well as having the command chair for the CO of the fleet. The third floor was minor operations, like support, shield generators, hyperdrive systems, and the Computer. It was under the main catwalk.

The two officers stepped out of the turbo on the second bridge floor, several officers were scurrying around making decisions, and giving orders. The two walked up the stairs to the overlook platform, and walked into the Colonel's Ready Room.

The Ready Room was a large luxurious room, with another holoscreen, and a desk, a couch, a window, and several other things, like holotapes of important events, and other such things. The two sat down, Dey behind the desk, and, Darkrider in the chair.

Darkrider turned the Colonel's computer terminal around, and hit a few buttons, a picture of a section of the Galaxy appeared on the holoscreen, and the room dimmed.

He said, "You have ten ships under your command, the Palpatine, the Tarkin, the Thrawn, the Avenger II, the Executer II, the Obliterator, the Destroyer, the Extractor, the Piett, and the Veers. You have an estimated six hundred TIEs, thirty legions of Stormtroopers."

"What about the fleet's current position?" Dey asked.

Darkrider sighed, he thought for a moment, "They're stationed along our border, we can reach them in less than a day."

"Do it," Dey said, "One more thing, do we have another Mega Class Destroyer in the fleet?"

Darkrider shook his head, "We had to salvage about eighty ships of all designs to even build this thing, I'm afraid that this will probably be the only one of it's kind. But, you have seven Super Star Destroyers, the Avenger II, and the Executer II are the only Imperial Class Ships in the fleet. Oh, and there are also twenty Corellian Corvettes in our legion."

"Fine," Dey said, "Get us out of here."

When Darkrider left, Dey took his case and opened it. He took out a cylinder, looked at it, held it upright, and lit it. A red beam of light emitted from the cylinder. It was a lightsaber. He took the beam down and threw the lightsaber in his case. Jedi in the Empire were outlawed, even if they were Dark Jedi. He had met Jeval, his first master, at the age of six, he had become a full Jedi Knight by ten, his parents were killed by the Emperor when he was twelve, then he had killed his master out of hatred and rage. So, he turned to the dark side. At fourteen, he had met with the Emperor and asked the Emperor to train him. So the Emperor agreed and the training went on in secret. The Emperor told him not to tell anyone that he'd trained him. He took that as the oath of a Dark Jedi. He had joined the Imperial Legion at the age of sixteen, he had become Captain by twenty, and Colonel by twenty-five. He knew one day he would become Admiral Dey. He had kept his Jedi skills a secret and then the Empire had banned Jedis. He hoped that one day, he would be able to use his skills to face his enemy, Luke Skywalker in combat. He thought of it...

"Skywalker!!!" Dey yelled.

Skywalker came out of the shadows, Dey lit his saber, Luke said, "Dey, you can still change, do it for the Force!"

Dey took a swing at Skywalker, he ducked out of it's way, "No, it's too late, you and your family and friends will die! Fight!!!"

"I won't do that," Luke said.

"You will, then, face the threats of Dark Jedis past, Freedon Nadd, Ulic-Quel Droma, Darth Vader, the Emperor, Joruss C'boath!" Dey screamed.

He swung his saber through Skywalker, Luke's face turned red, he screamed, "The Dark Side has triumphed." And, he crumpled.

Dey pulled the saber from his bleeding body, and laughed, death was beautiful!

Dey snapped out of it, if he were to kill another Jedi, that would make his stay in the Dark Side forever.-- No! Who cares, he thought, I'm more powerful than any Jedi before me. Even my own master. I have to kill him, for the good of the Emperor. And, before he died, he vowed he would kill Skywalker.

The New Republic Starfleet approached a small shuttle, which had just jumped out of Hyperspace. The pilot of the shuttle hit a switch, and said, "Independence, this is the Lambda Class Shuttle Old Republic, do you read?"

Over the speaker, the comm officer of the Cruiser said, "Your coming in loud and clear, Old Republic, please send your combination code-clearance, so the Admiral doesn't have to fire on you."

The pilot smiled, he said, "Transmission commencing."

A few seconds later, the comm officer reported, "Shields are going down, the Admiral will be waiting in the docking lounge for the Chief of State."

The pilot looked back at his "cargo", and said, "Understood, we're entering your range now."

The shuttle entered the main docking bay, landed, the ramp lowered, and Han and Leia Organa Solo walked out. Han wore the uniform of a General, his hair had grayed, and he bore the uniform like a old war hog. Leia wore a formal uniform, and despite the fact that she had just turned fifty one still looked radiant. They walked down the track, all of the officers and crewmen saluted, and the two entered the lounge.

Wedge Antilles, Admiral, and leader of New Republic Military Forces, under Han's supervision, sat in the lounge, with two young officers. The officers were both twenty four and were clearly twins with the same light brown eyes and similar features although the young woman had lighter brown hair than her brother. Han and Leia entered, and the girl got up, and said, "Mom, Dad!"

"Jaina," Leia said, "It's good to see you! You too, Jacen."

Jacen got up, and walked over to Han, and said, "Dad, have you heard from Anakin?"

Han looked at Leia, and said, "Not lately, I really wonder where he is."

Wedge stood a attention, Leia smirked, "At ease, Admiral."

"Han, Leia," he said, as he shook Han's hand, "It's great to see you too, or should I say `Admiral`, and `Chief of State`."

"Han and Leia will do fine," Leia said.

Han hit her arm, "Speak for yourself!"

Wedge smiled, then, he grabbed Han by the arm, and they started walking down the hall.

Wedge said, "This ship is amazing! I'm so happy that you gave me command of this baby."

Han said, "She's still my ship, but, I'm lending her to you!"

They laughed and caught up on the latest news. Then, they were on the bridge and they went into Wedge's very spacious office.

"Well," Han said, "This is the office they gave you," he nudged Wedge, "They gave me a spa and my own indoor tarpool table."

"You're kidding me," Wedge said, "A tarpool table, so that's where the New Republic taxes are going."

Leia and Han sat down, and the twins stood behind them, Wedge sat down as well, the mood turned from rejoicing and remembrance, to hardship. Han's face turned cold, he started giving a report, "Republic Central has indicated that I need to take immediate command of the fleet, the old remnants of the Empire are emerging. Sensors in the core have indicated that several large vessels, none of them ours are coming out of hiding. Chances are, the first battle will be fought in this sector. Possibly, this very system, Home One will do three border fly-byes a day."

"What will be your command ship?" Wedge asked.

Han smiled, "I can't find the Falcon, Anakin has had it for the last six months, supposedly on a "diplomatic mission" but, he never reported in. So, the Independence is my baby now, Wedge."

Wedge smiled, "Then, sir, I volunteer as first officer."

Han looked at Wedge, "I was planning on putting you there. We will return Leia, along with all non-essential personnel back on the Medical Frigate. Until it's return, medical procedures will take place on the Mothma."

"OK," Wedge said, "I accept relieve of command."

Han looked back at Jacen, "Captain, you will carry out all of those procedures."

"Aye, sir," Jacen said, very surprised, and shocked at what his father had called him.

The meeting adjourned, and Han went to his quarters, Leia walked in the next moment, as Han was removing the collar that was choking him. Leia frowned at him, "Han, Jacen's name is not Captain."

"I know," Han said, "This is just hard on me, I accepted command of the Starfleet fifteen years ago, I was young back then, I was brash, what happened to me?"

Leia walked behind him, and sat on the bed, she rubbed his neck, he was extremely tense, "Well, you're not that scoundrel that I met thirty-three years ago. You've grown up, Han. You're nice men."

"Then, how come I treat my son like he's not as good as me?" Han asked, as he took off the tunic, underneath, was a uniform that he was more used to.

Leia stopped, "Ya know, I was wondering that, too. You need a vacation, when was the last one you took?"

Han thought, "Was it-- My god, eight years ago."

Leia asked, "Is it time for another one?"

"Yeah," Han said, "I'm going to become a scoundrel again."

Jacen walked along the deck, looking at a datapad that had all the information for the evac procedures. Han walked along side his son, Jacen stopped, he wasn't sure how to address him.

"Sir," he said.

"Save it for Wedge," Han laughed, "I'm not here as your CO, I'm here as your father, and I want to say I'm sorry."

Jacen looked at him, and smiled, "Thanks, that means a lot to me."

"I just wanted to tell you to take your mom's name off that list," Han looked at his son, whose mouth was gaping, "We're going on a vacation."

"Where?" Jacen asked.

"Endor," Han said, "We're going to visit some old friends. Then, off to Carust for three or four weeks, I haven't been away from my work for eight years, it's time for some changes. I'm becoming way too overbearing. And it just wouldn't do to have a commanding officer this tense, it interferes with the job. Wedge can handle things and you can always contact me if it's an emergency."

"Have a good time, Dad," Jacen said, they hugged, and Han went off to find his daughter and Jacen went the other way.

Jaina was sitting at her post, on the bridge, she was listening for comm signals on the Imperial Rebellion's side, she couldn't pick up any. Then, Wedge came out of his office, he went over to her post, and asked, "Anything?"

"No," Jaina said, "Either too much interference, or too little comm traffic on that side," she looked up at him, "I'm hoping for the latter."

Wedge smiled, and tapped her on the back, "Keep tracking," then, he went over to where Jacen was standing, Wedge asked, "Are you picking up any hyperspace signatures?"

"No," Jacen said, "But, if we've redesigned our hyperspace signatures, chances are, so have they."

"True," Wedge said, "But, we should scan for old and new hyperspace frequencies, so do it."

"Look, Admiral," Jacen said, "It's nearly impossible to scan in hyperspace, since it doesn't exist in real time or in real space, coming from the starfighter division, you should know that."

"I do," Wedge said, "Just be ready."

Jacen walked over to Jaina's post, he sat next to her, and asked, "How are you doing?"

"Good," Jaina said, "And you?"

"Fine," Jacen said, "I'm going to have to go prep for flight, if one or more Star Destroyers do pop out around here. So, take care of the Admiral while I'm gone."

"OK," Jaina said, and Jacen walked back to his post.

The giant temples of the Massasi rose out of the trees of the fourth moon of Yavin. In the temple which once held the Rebel Fortress, Luke Skywalker meditated, it was here, where he met Wedge Antilles, it was here, where he returned after the destruction of the first Death Star, it was here, where he was almost killed by Kyp Duron, and Exar Kun, it was here that he started the the famous Jedi Academy. But, now that the Jedi numbered in the thousands, he decided to cut back on his work at the Academy and had opened a retreat for himself and other Jedi. A young, extremely attractive woman with green eyes and hair the color of copper, came out of a doorway, and walked over to Luke.

She asked, "Are you okay?"

Luke replied, "Yeah," he sighed, "I'm all right." He looked at her, and noticed something was definitely wrong, "What's on your mind?"

She sat down next to him, she asked, "Luke, who is my real father?"

"I don't know," Luke said, "Why are you asking me this?"

She stood up, and walked around a little, "I need to know, I've decided to leave the retreat."

Luke stood up, "Why? Aren't you happy here?"

She walked over to him, and put his hand on his cheek, "Luke, I've been thinking about this for a long time. I've realized that there was more to life than just this," she said, "I don't even know who I am any more. I need to do more than just hang out here and teach. I want to see things and go places."

She paused for a moment, she looked up at the huge ceiling, "I want to go on a search for my identity."

Luke turned around, he sighed, and looked back at her, "I knew this day would come. I should never have tried to keep you here. I just wanted you to have a normal childhood one that I never had and one that Leia's kids didn't have either. But you're too much like me. When I was your age, I wanted to leave Tatooine like all of my friends did but my uncle made me stay on the farm. I can't force you to stay and I won't."

She looked at him, "Thank you."

"Where are you going to go first?" Luke asked.

She looked up, "I was thinking of visiting the Solo twins, see what they're up to."

"Not a bad idea," he said, "I just heard that Han's finally taking a vacation."

"He needs one," she said, "I better get going, I've got to get the Kenobi up in the air, before the Independence moves again," they paused, looking at each other for a long time, finally, she hugged Luke, "Thank you, Father, you've taken such good care of me all of these years," she started crying, "it's going to be hard to leave."

"I'm going to miss you. It'll be very lonely here without you." Luke started crying too.

"I'm not leaving forever. You'll always be my father no matter what."

"I love you Ceara. Good bye and may the Force be with you."

"I love you too, Father. The Force will always be with us."

She kissed his cheek and they hugged again and Ceara Skywalker walked out of the temple.

Ceara stood in the command center of the Kenobi, then, Luke came aboard, followed by R2-D2. "Are you about ready?" Luke asked.

"Yeah," Ceara said, "I'm just making final launch countdown systems checks," she looked at Artoo, "Hi, Artoo."

He cheeped in greeting, then, Luke said, "I figured you might be lonely, so, I've decided to give him to you."

Ceara smiled, "Thanks, I could use the company. Why don't you get on board Artoo."

The little droid bleeped and rolled on board.

"There's one more thing," Luke said, he pulled out a small crushed box, and handed it to Ceara.

"The Holocron," she said, "Thank you."

Luke smiled, "It doesn't work anymore, but, I thought you could use it, to remember me by."

"We'll always be together, its that special bond we share. But thank you again."

"You're welcome," Luke said, "It's all I could do for the nineteen years you've given me."

They hugged again, and, Luke disembarked. Then, Ceara sat in the command chair, and looked over at Artoo, "Artoo, fire up the converters." He beeped in reply, and the ship began to lift off.

Luke looked at the ship, until it became a distant speck in the sky. He felt so empty. It was like the best part of him was on that ship. It would be very lonely here without Ceara. He had the students and the retreatants but Ceara had filled his life with sunshine and now it was dark. Ceara and he had a special bond one that had been in place since she was an infant. Another person special to him was going away. Uncle Owen, Aunt Beru, Ben, Yoda, his father, Leia, Han, and the children weren't gone but they were far away, Mara Jade, now even Ceara was gone. He wiped the tears away from his eyes and went back into the temple. Ceara looked at Artoo, "Take the helm, Artoo, it's time to meditate."

Artoo bleeped, and Ceara walked away into the next chamber. She took out the Holocron and set it down in front of her. She touched it, and a spark blew from her to the Holocron. She looked at it in awe. She touched it again, if she thought about it, she could make some form of energy flow through her hands. She had a bit of revelation, she closed her eyes, and lifted her hands. She thought extremely deeply about the Holocron, finally, she felt a burst of energy race from her hands to the Holocron. She and the Holocron became one, the energy was uplifting, she felt it deep in her soul. It was the best sensation she had ever had in her life, she had never imagined anything like it, she felt the memories of all the great Jedi pass through her body. Then, she stopped, and looked at the Holocron, it was in perfect condition. She picked up the Holocron, and the image of Boda Baas appeared above her.

He said, "I am Boda Baas, you are the re-creator, only three other Jedi were able to rebuild the memories, and the life of the Holocron."

"What-- what are you?" she asked.

"I am the one, the most powerful Jedi, until now," his voice echoed.

"You know everything?"

"The Jedi Prophets who programmed me, gave me many riddles that were able to be solved by the Jedi that the riddles were meant for."

"Is there one about my family?" Ceara asked, hopefully.

"There are several prophecies of a Jade of the Sky," he said.

"Jade?" Ceara asked, "My name's Ceara Jade?"

"Yes," he echoed, "The Jade of the Sky would rule the new Jedi, with the solo twins and their skywalking relatives, one would come to claim her throne, but, only one would be standing, the Jedi so strong, would come to her aid, and the loner Jedi would be that one who would save her."

"Solo twins?" Ceara said, "Jacen and Jaina! Skywalking relatives, Luke and Aunt Leia? But, who is this loner Jedi, and the one who would come to claim the throne?"

"The ones are in your past, Jade of the Sky," he said, "You will know, when you see them..." his voice trailed off into the darkness.

Ceara walked up to the command center, she looked at Artoo, and said, "Plug into the translator circuit, I need to know something."

He beeped, and, plugged in, then he `said', "What can I do for you Mistress Ceara?"

"Do you know anyone from your past, named Jade?" she asked.

Artoo thought for a moment, and said, "There is one record on file with the name Jade, would you like to view it?"

Ceara nodded, and said, "Go ahead."

On the master viewscreen, a picture of Mara Jade appeared on the screen, Artoo said, "This is Mara Jade, current age, approximately 51... Unknown birthday, height- five-eight, weight, one-thirty. Current location: Unknown. Last known location: on board the Wild Karrde. Employer: Talon Karrde. Past information: Unknown. End of file."

"Hmmm," she said, "Open a channel to the Wild Karrde."

Artoo hit the right switches, and said, "Channel open. They are responding."

Karrde's face appeared on the screen, she had never met Karrde before, and was surprised at his looks, he said, "This is Talon Karrde, of the Wild Karrde, how may I help you," he looked at her, "Or, how may you help me?"

"Funny," she said, "My name is Ceara Ja-- Skywalker. I'm looking for Mara Jade."

"Skywalker, eh," he said, "I knew a Skywalker at a time, about nineteen years ago. His name was Lu--"

"I don't care about what you think of my father," Ceara said, "Now, I'm looking for Mara Jade."

"If she was with me anymore," he said, as he looked at his computer, "I guess I could help you, but, she left, and she didn't leave a forwarding address, and that had to be ten years ago."

"Thank you anyway, Mr. Karrde," she said.

"Anytime, Miss Skywalker," he said, as he was about to cut the comm, "Oh, tell your father hello for me. And, if you ever do find Miss Jade, tell her she still owes me two hundred credits from that game of sabacc."

She nodded in reply, "Ceara out."

"Well, Artoo," she looked at the little droid, "We're not going to find her today." He beeped in reply.

On the Millennium Falcon, Chewbacca was sitting in the command chair, he seemed to be agitated. A laser blast hit the ship, nearly knocking Chewbacca out of his seat. C-3P0 was sitting behind him, rambling on as always. "Chewbacca, how on earth can you be breaking the Admiral's plan?"

Chewbacca growled in disgust, as he threw a paw back in Threepio's face.

Threepio replied, "Then, tell the master to stop this, and take us back to Coruscant! This is ridiculous!"

Then, a young man came up to the cockpit, as the ship shook from a laser blast, he looked at Chewbacca, as he sat down, "Ready the converters, we're going to have to go into the cluster."

"But, sir," Threepio said, "The cluster could erupt at any second, especially with laser blasts flying back and forth!"

"Tell the bounty hunters that!" he said, as he maneuvered the ship out of the way of a laser blast, "Chewie, set for entry," he looked back

at the droid, "Threepio, tell me, do you believe we can make a jump into hyperspace in that mess?"

"The probabilities are seven hundred and twenty-two to one," he said with a bit of fright in his voice.

"All right, that sounds like pretty good odds," he said, " I guess all that time gambling did pay off. To bad I cheated a bounty hunter, especially one who used to work for Jabba."

He made the ship circle the core of the cluster, finally, the bounty hunter's ship entered the cluster, and fired three laser blasts at him, each one erupting before it made it to the Falcon. The bounty hunter decided to try something different: torpedoes.

The torpedo that he launched began a circle around the core, it came close to the Falcon. Chewie saw it on the screen, he talked to the pilot, and the young man yelled back, "Hyperspace in three seconds..."

As the torpedo began to home in, the Falcon went off into hyperspace, and it erupted into a ball of flame, and the cluster blew off, and the bounty hunter's ship, and the cluster was destroyed.

He walked away from the chair, ran a hand through his black hair, and looked forward, "Chewie, bring us out of Hyperspace, and plot a course for Greenworld."

Chewie roared, and he did the deed, Threepio looked at the boy, and said, "Greenworld? There are droid-eating monsters on that planet!"

He looked at Threepio, "Well, then stay in the Falcon, or get off now!"

"Who do you think you are?" Threepio asked.

He looked over at the droid, his blue eyes flashing, "You know exactly who I am, and if you keep up this attitude, I'll give you a memory flush, is that all right with you, Goldenrod?"/ Threepio looked grim, "Yes, Master Anakin, it won't happen again."

Anakin walked off into the back of the room, all of the sudden he felt an overpowering force, an urge... He couldn't describe it, he fell to the ground, he got a headache, but, he never had one like this, he tried to stop it. He finally did, he slowly got up, and thought what about he was about to do. And, he snapped to it.

Chapter Two

The Independence had entered it's second day on the search, they had passed the same sectors about thirteen times, and still nothing. Wedge sat on the bridge, looking out the window, he still saw no sign of the fleet. He was extremely nervous, he didn't enjoy this desk job, he enjoyed being in the seat of a starfighter. But, he wasn't used to the new K-Wings, or the older V and E-Wings, although the ships that he did

fly were still in service. But they were redesigned, and upgraded, X wings were entering phase 3 of their operational life, and the Y-Wings, Phase 5. His wife, Kal would not let him get behind the controls of those again

But, that way he was edgy, and occasionally went to therapy sessions, he acted a lot like Han in some ways, but, he tried not to show it. But, look at what he was in command of, thirty starships, half of which carried more than half a million people, and over five thousand were crew. He was in charge of so many people... so many lives that could be destroyed if a stray photon torpedo, or concussion missile hit the ship. But, the civilians were evacuated, and that helped.

He looked over at Jacen, he thought how young he was, and what rank did he have? Captain. He was a Captain, at an age when Wedge was only a Flight Officer, it seemed so long ago, and it was. He remembered the time when he first sat in a starfighter, it was so unbelievable, what an experience... Wedge sat behind the controls of the Y-Wing, he looked at the panel, over and over again, then, he looked at his shoulder... Flight Officer... he was a Flight Officer, after going through the complete training session. He was going on his first mission in about an hour, and it seemed so exciting. General Briggs called him the most impressive pilot that he'd seen come through in a long time. Then, an alarm went off: it was the five minute battle plan report, he jumped out of his fighter, and grabbed his flightsuit, he put it on quickly, and ran for the briefing room.

He arrived and General Dodonna stood before them, "I'm sorry to say this, but, General Briggs' shuttle has been destroyed, there were no survivors. But, we must live on, and win this one for him. The Frigate has been attacked, we need to get to it immediately," he touched a panel, and the screen went on, on it, was the frigate, and a Star Destroyer attacking it, it had launched seven TIE Bombers, and the Frigate was getting a beating, "You can see that we're probably not going to win this one, but, we can try, and believe me, we will prevail, now --"

...His daydream was interrupted by the voice of Jacen Solo, "Sir, sir!" He saw his face come into view.

"What is it?" he asked.

He frowned, "I just wanted to say that we intercepted a Imperial subspace signal, we're going to trouble sir, fifteen minutes, max."

Wedge got up, he walked over to Jaina's post, hit a switch, and said, "This is Admiral Antilles, all starfighter pilots from Red Group, Gold Group, Rogue Group, Blue Group, Grey Wing and Green Wing all report to Starfighter Briefing Room, in flightsuits, deck six." He flipped up the switch, and told Jaina, "Notify all ships to prepare for battle, tell them to launch all fighters, on my mark, set up the commlink to pick up the signals in the Briefing Room."

Jacen had already removed his regular uniform, and handed it to a Yeoman, who handed him his flightsuit. He ran with Wedge to the

turbolift, when a young female science officer said, "Admiral, a ship has come out of Hyperspace, it's the Kenobi."

"Tell Luke I don't have time," Wedge said as he reentered the lift.

Jaina stopped him, "Sir, it's not Uncle Luke, it's Ceara." She smiled, so did Jacen.

Wedge rolled his eyeballs, "OK, tell Ceara to dock on docking level six, and to report to me."

They entered the turbo, and Jacen put on his flightsuit. Within ten seconds, they were on deck six, and the door opened. Jacen zipped up his flightsuit, they walked down the hall and entered the briefing room, all crew stood at attention. Wedge walked up to the podium, and Jacen stood by the other squadron leaders.

Wedge said, "At ease."

The entire flight crew sat down, and Wedge said, "We don't have any Holos to give you on this mission, but, we have word that there will be approximately ten Star Destroyers dropping out of Hyperspace within the next ten minutes, Red Group will be flying the K-Wings, Gold Group, you'll take the V-Wings, Green Group, take the E-Wings. Grey Wing, man the Calamari Fighters. Blue Group, handle the X-Wings, Rogue Group, take the B-Wings. Any questions?"

The room was silent, Wedge smiled, "You have five minutes to get to your fighters, let's go."

Jacen ran to his ship, the K-Wing, his Artoo unit R2-657 was snapped into place already. As he put his helmet on, his wingman, Gare called over the innercom, "What's up, kid?"

Jacen looked a little smug, "Not much, vet, how are you?"

Gare looked over to Jacen, "Angry that you got Red Leader, but other than that, all right, see ya out there, bet I crush more TIEs than you."

"I doubt it," he said, "When was the last time you went out on a mission other than recon?"

The windshields closed on both of their fighters, Gare replied, "About four years ago, at Ganneb."

"Oh," Jacen replied with a little, 'I'm better than you are,' in his voice.

"Why," Gare asked, "When were you last fighting?"

Jacen hit a couple switches, "Last week, I'll tell you about after we finish this mission."

"Ok," Gare said, and he cut the comm.

Ceara walked out of the Turbolift, and Wedge turned to see her, he smiled, and said, "Ceara, what brings you on this unexpected visit?"

Ceara walked over, and hugged Wedge, "I've come to visit Jacen and Jaina, if I knew you were preparing for a battle, I wouldn't have come."

Jaina got up, and looked at her, she smiled, "Ceara! It's good to see you, how are you holding up?"

Ceara turned around to see Jaina, "What are you doing on the bridge of a Mon Cal? I figured you'd be off on Coruscant, I just figured I'd hitch a ride on The Independence."

"Well, you're wrong," she laughed, "You want to talk?" Ceara nodded, and Jaina looked at Wedge, "Um, Admiral, can I take a little while off?"

Wedge shook his head, "I need you on the bridge, but, I'll give you tomorrow off, Ok?"

"All right," she smiled, then she looked at Ceara, and hugged her, "I'll see you later."

"Ok," she said, and she walked off the bridge.

Dey turned to the ensign and asked, "How long to we drop out of hyperspace?" He replied, looking at the panel, "One minute, forty-five seconds until drop out, sir."

Dey hit the comm panel, "All hands, brace for battle... Fighters, get out as soon as we reach the point. All decks report in. Dey out."

A officer that sat below said, "Sir, all decks show ready."

And on the viewscreen, the blur of Hyperspace became streaking stars, as...

...Admiral Antilles realized that a fleet of Star Destroyers was dropping out of Hyper, but, he didn't know what to say when he saw a bigger ship than the Emperor's Flagship twenty some years ago! He started to shake, and he managed to blurt out, "Red Alert!! All fighters, prepare to launch, now!" He looked at the ship on his screen, and yelled, "Get me schematics on that thing, now!"

Jacen pulled out of the dock, and saw the huge Star Destroyer, and the others that seemed like bugs on it, he called over the speaker, "All wings report in."

They did, and he said, "Lock S-Foils in attack position, and stay away from that thing!"

The S-Foil on the fighter pulled out from the hull, and they ran to see that seventy-five TIEs of all shapes, sizes, classes, you named it, it was there. Jacen was hit, but, he wasn't hit bad, he fired at the small ship, and destroyed it. One down-- millions to go, he thought.

He checked his damage, minor to the port Hyperspace Initiator. He called over to Gare, "Red Six?"

Gare replied, "Copy Red Leader?"

He said, "Set your course for the Imperial Class Star Destroyers, Reds Two, Three, Four and Five, cover for us."

The K-Wings swooped around, and headed for the Avenger II. Heading at two hundred and ten kilometers per hour did have it's advantages, they could easily outrun the TIEs, being the fastest things traveling in normal space. They reached the Star Destroyer, and Jacen fired six laser blasts at each shield tower, taking them out immediately, and he pulled out, as Red Six destroyed the ship.

Dey saw the immense destruction of one of the ships under his command, he yelled to Darkrider, "Ready all ships, head for the lead Mon Cal. Attack at will." Wedge saw the fleet move towards his ship, "No," he yelled, then, he hit a few switches, "Launch anything with laser cannons, ready forward shields, all ships, open fire."

The entire fleet opened fire on the massive Imperial Fleet, fighters were lost, so was one of the Mon Cal Cruisers, not The Independence, however. Although two of the Calamari Cruisers destroyed the Super Star Destroyer Tarkin, and about fifty TIEs in the process, then, Home One's shields went down. Wedge yelled to the helm officer, "Full about, take us to full speed, evasive actions. Ready for Hyperspace, if we get hull damage, but not a moment sooner."

The entire fleet covered Wedge's departure, as the other Calamari Cruisers took the Palpatine's shields out.

Dey saw the warning, "Hit the starfighters, ignore the cruisers."

Jacen saw it coming, but, he couldn't believe it, a TIE came barging in after him, and crashed into it's shields. He pulled out of it, and reset his shields, he flew along side the huge Star Destroyer, and three TIEs ran into the Star Destroyer. He saw that Gare had just been attacked by several TIEs, he opened a channel, "Red Six, are you all right?"

Gare answered back almost immediately, "I've lost my R2 Unit, no hyperspace, and no warnings on missiles, unless someone sees it."

"OK," he said, "head back to Home One, I'll cover you."

"Roger," Gare said, "Red Six out."

The two ships flew back to the cruiser, then, twenty TIEs came rushing in, and fired on the ships, one was a TIE Bomber Advanced. It targeted Gare's ship, and fired, Jacen saw it, "Gare, watch it, you've got one on you, they've got a missile on you!"

Gare saw it, and made evasives, but, then, a TIE did a suicide run on Gare, he didn't see it coming, and his K-Wing blew to bits and pieces. Jacen saw it, and he screamed, "No!"

That second of confusion was enough for the TIEs to come after him, the TIE Bombers fired several torpedoes, and Jacen saw them, and he hit the ejection seat. As he blew out of the cockpit, he touched the R2 release button, and he went unconscious...

Jaina saw the explosion, "Check for survivors!" She scanned all comm channels to see if he was out there, but she couldn't find him.

The science officer looked at her, and shook her head. Jaina slammed the controls down, and put her head in her hands. She couldn't believe it, she cried.

Then, the damage officer said, "Sir, we have hull damage, minor, but it could grow quickly."

Wedge put his hand on Jaina's shoulder, "Put a tractor beam on the wreckage, try to find the black box. Then let's get out of here."

A minute later, The Independence turned, and hypered home.

The Palpatine was under heavy fire, Dey yelled at the helm officer, "Retreat, all craft prepare to pull out. The area where those two ships were destroyed, launch a group of three Assault Gunboats, and a shuttle to pick up any survivors." The shuttles were launched, and the Star Destroyers retreated.

Jacen woke up on a shuttle, standing over him was a Imperial Officer, he said, "He's up, sir, I don't think we should do this though."

A officer said, "I don't care, just ready for the mindwash."

Jacen was woozy, but, he could still hear, he realized what was going on. He noticed that there were no guards, just those two medical officers. As the one who he saw before him leaned down, Jacen summoned all the strength in the Force he could and punched the medic out. He fell to the ground, and Jacen kicked the other one, he grabbed a laser gun off the second one he brought down, and set it for stun, and he fired at both of them. The door to the cockpit was locked, he set the laser for disrupt, and destroyed the door, one of the pilots got up, and took out a laser. But, Jacen beat him to it, and fired, the pilot's chest burned, and he fell over the panel, the other one hit Jacen in the stomach. When Jacen hit the wall, he fired, and the pilot disintegrated.

He pulled the dead pilot off of the controls, and saw what was around him: Gunboats. He saw the hyperspace was set and ready, but, he

didn't engage it, then a signal came through, it was from one of the escorts. He answered the call, and the caller said, "Shuttle Omega, are you hypering out? We'll cover your escape."

He was shocked, "Uhhh, sure, hold on, and we'll be out of here." He looked at the panels, and saw the right one, he engaged it. He looked at the streaks in the sky, he couldn't believe it. How could you get caught in something like this? He didn't know what to do. He looked back at the two guards he stunned, one of them was about his size, so he put on that uniform, then, he had to do something with those two, before he reached the Imperial Base, wherever it was. There was a locker in the back of the shuttle, it looked big enough to place them in, so he threw his flightsuit and the officers into the locker, and put in his own code.

Now, he still had that dead body of the pilot on his hands, he decided to drop him off. So, he made the ship drop out of Hyperspace, put the dead pilot in the photon torpedo launcher, and flooded the tube, he saw the pilot fly across the middle of the sky, he couldn't believe he did that. But, it was too late. He reengaged his engines, and went on his way. Where? He had no idea, the computer was controlling the course.

The giant skyscrapers of Corsucaunt, the New Republic's Headquarters stood out on a sad day, the Military Fleet had returned, yet, without Jacen. Jaina sat in her dress uniform, with her head buried in her hands, she was crying.

Ceara walked in, in her black Jedi garb, she sat down next to her, and put her arm around her, "Have you heard from your parents, yet?"

Jaina pulled her head out of her hands, and shook her head, "They're in hyperspace, I won't be able to reach them for another hour."

Ceara looked out the window, "How about Anakin?"

Jaina laughed, "He turned off his transmitter, we've been searching for any reports, but they're always negative. I hope he got captured, that way, he's alive."

"Anakin?" Ceara asked.

Jaina laughed again, "No, Jacen. Anakin can take care of himself in a situation like that, but, I haven't been able to read a disturbance that great in the Force to make me realize that he's dead."

"They say that twins can always tell even non-Jedi twins." said Ceara trying to comfort her cousin and best friend.

"I know but I'm not a Jedi Knight." said Jaina

"Well," Ceara replied, "You do know the fundamentals of the Force, you could defend yourself in a lightsaber duel, you could lift objects with your thoughts, you can feel people close to you in your lives, would you like to learn more?"

Jaina got up, she leaned over the window, and saw the speeders flying over the city, "I know I should have completed my training but I wanted to be pilot so much and then I couldn't even pass the test. My brothers are Knights, my mother uses it as an ally, and you you're a master." (I had to think of a somewhat logical reason why she wasn't a Jedi, it was too chavenstic to think Han would let the boys get training and not her.)

"Well," she said, "I wouldn't call myself a master. I'm a Knight, although Father thinks that I should take on my own student, perhaps I can give you some training after we find out what happened to your brother. Which reminds me I should call him and find out when he's going to arrive for the memorial service. He should be here for it."

Jaina asked "Can I come?"

Ceara smiled, "Sure."

Luke's face was on the screen in Ceara's quarters, "Ceara, I'm afraid I can't come for the memorial services."

"Really?" she asked, "I don't understand why, the Ulian freighter isn't scheduled to come in for another two weeks. But,--"

Luke interrupted, "A Jedi Master can't come to the memorial service of one of his pupils, even if he is his nephew, it's part of the Force you don't yet understand, I'm sorry."

"But I thought--"

"You are a full Jedi, but you can't understand, I will mourn my own way," he said.

"Understood," she said.

"Oh, before you sign off," he said, "I know there's someone who just arrived who knew you kids very well when you were young, but you probably don't remember him."

"Who?" Ceara asked.

Lando Calrissian walked out of his shuttle, and down to where the two girls were standing. He said, "Ceara, Jaina, man, it's good to see you two again."

Ceara said, "Lando, I'm afraid I don't remember you that well."

"Well, no one's perfect," he said, "Do you remember Pentaris II?"

Jaina nodded, "Yea, that's where--"

"--I pushed your father into the lagoon!" Lando finished.

"Lando!" Jaina yelled.

"Jaina!" Lando yelled back.

Then, she whispered to Ceara, "Who is this guy?"

They took Lando to regular quarters for a Retired General, one that looked over the entire city, once there, Lando used his wristband to call someone, he said, "Jordan, I need you up here right away."

The voice of a young man came back, "I'm on my way."

In a minute or so, Jordan came up to his quarters, and Lando introduced him to the girls, "Jordan, this is Ceara Skywalker and Jaina Solo, Ceara, Jaina this is Jordan Calrissian, my son."

Ceara smiled, "Nice to meet you, Jordan."

Jordan smiled back, "Same here."

They sat down at the table, and Jaina said, "So, Lando, I read your record, you were the commanding officer of Ganneb Base for fourteen years, that was some job!"

He laughed, "Retirement was the hardest decision I had to make, but after my wife died, I couldn't take it any more. I decided to go to a rest planet for a few years. I'm not totally retired, I still am a member of the New Republic Council, and I still run Ganneb. But, not as much as I did five years ago."

"That must be hard for you," Jaina said, "For both of you. I guess it's hard to realize you'll miss something, until it's gone."

"You bet it's hard," Jordan said, "You have to think about it, and every time you see her body lying in the wreckage, dying, and you can't do anything about it, you bet."

Lando said, "That's enough, Jord."

"Sorry," he said, "So, who is this Jacen?"

Jaina said, "Well, he is--was--is, I don't know, he's my brother."

Jordan asked, "Would you like to try to find him?"

Jaina looked at Jordan confused, she didn't understand, and she asked, "How?"

Ceara said "See I knew he was alive. Twins are connected that way."

Jordan said, " Well, let's not get carried away. I'm a computer worker, and I've intercepted plans for this ship you encountered."

Lando asked, "How come you never told me?"

Jordan said, "I didn't think you'd believe me, a ship almost the size of the Death Star, that you destroyed, that was being built for the last seven years so deep in the Galactic Core that we've never even been near them, and you wanted me to tell you, you'd never believe me!"

Lando frowned, "I'm sorry, I guess I didn't believe you all those times before, when things were going to happen, like the shield failure, or the computers going down, but you're right, something that big, you bet I'd never believe you."

Jaina said, "You'll need to report those files to Admiral Antilles, he's in charge right now."

"OK," Jordan said, "I will."

In the computer lab, Wedge, Ceara, Lando, Jordan and Jaina were studying the specs, "As you can see," Jordan said, "It's about twenty times that of an Imperial Class Star Destroyer, and thirty times as deadly. Their hyperspace computer can make calculations in less than five seconds. If you wanted, you could fit ten Imperial Star Destroyers inside, but, that would be an empty hull. It probably has forty-five percent of the Empire's population, and more TIEs and fighters than you could possibly imagine."

Wedge walked over to another terminal, "Is it larger than the Emperor's Flagship that we encountered at Pinnacle Base?"

"No," Jordan said, "The Eclipse, Palpatine's flagship was much larger than a Super Star Destroyer, this is about ten times as large."

Lando asked, "How do you plan to get into it?"

Jordan hit a couple buttons, and a new schematic came up, and it showed a small port off the starboard bow, he said, "This port here is a docking port that was put in the original design, it was meant to drag little of attention, it could fit a ship about the size of a Corellian Freighter, do we have one?"

Jaina looked down, "We need to find Anakin."

"Agreed," Wedge said.

Lando asked, "Why?"

Jaina said, "He's got the Falcon."

Lando was shocked, "Han lent it to someone? After the D-S-2 (Death Star II) Incident, I figured he'd never lend it out again."

"Well," Jaina said, "he did."

"Who's Anakin?" asked Jordan.

"He's also my brother."

"OK," Jordan said, "Another thing we'll need is a Sensor Blocker, it's in a sensor blind spot, but if there's escorts, frigates, TIEs, other Star Destroyers, they'll pick us up."

Wedge said, "Wait a minute, you said it was in the original concept, what if it was pulled out?"

"Then, we'll have to get the hell out of there fast," he smiled.

"And if they catch you?" Lando asked.

"They have to catch us first," Ceara said.

Wedge looked at her, he smiled, and said, "OK, Jordan, we'll get to work on that sensor blocker, in the meanwhile, try to find the Falcon, and tell them to get back here."

"OK," Jaina said, the older two walked out of the room, and the three started cheering, Jordan said, "OK, now let's find the Falcon!"

Greenworld was a planet that had been colonized seventy-five years earlier. After a major battle, the first small skirmish in pre-clone war history, the entire surface was rendered useless, until the first settlement was set. They adapted pressure domes, and life support systems. Before the battle, the planet flourished with life, and was one of the founding worlds of the Republic, however, the nuclear and other chemical weapons used on the surface caused an atmospherical collapse, when over thirty-three million Republic Citizens perished. Word had it that there was cloning on that world, and that was the reason the Republic attacked it.

However, once the wreckage was cleared, they realized there were no cloning capabilities on that world. So a neutral race, the Farallins, bought Greenworld for seven billion credits and applied the pressure domes, so it became habitable. Unfortunately, the government fell two years later and it became a living hell, small battles in orbit, large battles on the ground, and over a million casualties a year: a perfect place for a bounty hunter, or a Hutt.

But, it was the only place where Anakin could get a piece of equipment for the Falcon, something called a Tarian Phase Adapter for his impulse drive. The explosion before going into the cluster caused that damage. Anakin didn't want to go there, he had to. That adapter was what controlled his drop from higher impulse speeds. Han never had wanted to do a major overhaul on the Falcon, so they couldn't change the adapter circuits.

Anakin walked alone down the hall with his finger on his lightsaber, he was ready for anything, especially another one of Jabba's old Bounty Hunters. He saw the door to the shop, he walked in, where he saw a old man standing over a console. He came up behind him, and grabbed him, the old man jumped, and he looked back at Anakin.

"Anakin!" he screamed, "Whew, I thought it was one of those blamed bounty hunters again!"

"No, just me, Zeek," he told the old man.

"Zeek," he said, thinking to back to an earlier time, "That's something your father used to call me, and you, when you were a kid, I'm usually used to being called, Fixer, or Hey, Old Man!" They laughed.

Anakin smiled, "OK, How `bout I call you Zeek?"

"Great!" he said, "What `cha here for?" He looked through a bin, "Hyperdrive Motivators? Auliviean Dampeners? Laser Chargers?"

"No," Anakin said, "Do you still have Impulse Tarian Phase Adapters?"

"Hmmm," he said, "I haven't built any of those since before the whole Ganneb incident, maybe, even before that! But, I might still have one from the time that you and your father rebuilt the Falcon."

He looked through his drawers, finally, he said, "So, is `ol Chewbacca with him?"

"No," he said, "He's with me."

"Oh," Zeek's eyes went wide, "Really, maybe I can see him while you're here."

"Maybe," Anakin said, as he helped go through Zeek's inventory. He found a droid's elbow, he threw it back onto the shelf.

Then, the old man found something, it was the Tarian Phase Adapter, he held it up, and said, "Well, here's the little baby, why do you need one, more fighting with the Bounty Hunters?"

"Yea," Anakin said as he took the adapter, "Headhunter came after me, but, I think he's gone now, how `bout you, had any problems with the locals?"

"One," a voice from out of the room said, a tall Bounty Hunter walked in with his blaster trained on Zeek, "This old crap sold me a defective Transwarp Initiator, it trashed my ship."

"Hey," Zeek said, "If you didn't push that thing to sub- hyperspace speeds in low-grav systems, that wouldn't happen."

"It's supposed to be able to do that," the Bounty Hunter said, he walked down into the pit where the two people were standing, "You owe me a new ship, old man."

"Why?" Anakin asked, "It's your fault."

"A teenager?" he said, "You're about as wimpy as the old man, no, it's his fault, in the wreckage, I found that the initiator, and after running a diagnostic, I found that it was built wrong."

"Look," Zeek said, "If you didn't threaten me, I would've done it right, but you rushed me, I'll give you a full refund, plus a few bucks more and... my ship."

Anakin's eyes opened wide, "The Galactic Express! Zeek, you can't do that!! It's an antique."

Zeek grabbed Anakin, and whispered, "Look, Anakin, it's all I have! I have to do this, besides, I can build another ship, Zeek's still got a few years on him!"

The Bounty Hunter was thinking, then, he said, "All right, I spent two hundred credits on that thing."

Zeek went into his cash box, and pulled out the two hundred credits, then some more, "Here's your two hundred, and another hundred more," then he pulled the chain off his neck, it had a keycard on it, "These are the keys to the Express, docking bay thirty-three."

"OK," the Bounty Hunter said, he put his blaster away, "I just hope for your sake that this thing still works."

He walked out the door, and Anakin asked, "Do you want to go to Imperial City with me?"

Zeek said, "My life's here," he said, Anakin turned around, but then Zeek thought, "My ship was my life, I was wrong, nothing can replace the Express, I'll come with you."

Anakin smiled, "Grab your stuff, Chewie's waiting."

Anakin and Zeek walked into the Docking Bay where the Falcon was waiting, Zeek stopped, and looked at her, "I remember that day when your father and I started this baby up, it was amazing, the roar of the engines, the lights, she doesn't look all that different."

He continued up to the ramp and entered the ship, Anakin raced to the front of the ship, while Zeek slowly made his way. Then, Chewie came running out of the front of the ship, and hugged Zeek, he growled in happiness, then Zeek smiled, "Ol' Buddy, how ya doin'?"

Chewie growled, and Zeek said, "That's good, Zeek's been wonderin' when you'd come back and see me again!"

Anakin walked back into the rec room, with a frown on his face, sat down, and cursed.

Zeek sat down next to him, "What's up kid?"

Anakin replied, "My brother has been lost in battle."

Chapter 3

The Imperial Rebellion had fallen to only twenty of the innermost systems, as well as a few outlying systems for surveillance. A cloaked Frigate would remain in those systems. The entire Imperial Fleet consisted of Dey's fleet, the Vader, three other Star Destroyers, a dozen Corellian Corvettes per task force, and a hundred thousand TIE Fighters. That was small, considering that the Empire once ruled a million systems, had three thousand Star Destroyers, hundreds of Corvettes per task force, and over a billion TIE Fighters. They had to face the fact that if things didn't change the Empire would fall once and for all.

The Palpatine and it's other seven ships dropped out of Hyperspace in the Harradas System, there the Vader, and a few Escort Frigates, were also in the system. Dey sat on the bridge, and looked at his viewscreen.

Darkrider said, "Sir, may I suggest that after this meeting, we go to drydock for major repairs?"

"You can do that," Dey frowned.

"Two ships isn't that bad!" he said, "we can pick--"

Dey grabbed him by the collar, "This battle will be won, I've never lost a ship before in my life! And, I never will again, I'm a Commander, and I'm a good one! I'm angry at you, and your stupid ship, we need better weapons!" He let him go, and Darkrider fixed his collar.

"Sir," he said, "There were reports that the Eclipse was able to hold a super laser, one so powerful it could destroy an entire planet, maybe, an entire system. If we get it approved with the Admiral, we can initiate it on the Palpatine."

"Look," Dey said, "We have to clear it with Ferrest first, he'd never try another Death Star type thing, remember what happened, exhaust ports, unfinished parts of the ship, you'll have to make it have absolutely no weak spots, meaning we'll have to put the shield towers inside the ship! That's a tactical error if I've ever seen one. I'm not as stupid as Tarkin, ya know," he made his best Tarkin voice, "'What evacuate, during our moment of triumph? I believe you overestimate their chances.'" I'm not gonna let that happen to my ship."

"Sir, you're right, we need better defenses, let's ask Admiral Ferrest for permission, and we'll try it."

"Fine," he said, "I'll be in my ready room, contact me when the Admiral gets here."

"Aye sir," he said.

Dey sat at his desk. Suddenly he got a really bad headache. He held his head trying to make it stop. Then he heard a voice in his head.

"Beware, Beware, beware, she will destroy you."

"Who what?" Dey asked.

"Just beware and what ever you do don't leave the Empire."

Dey grabbed the desk as the room went dark.

An hour later the entire command crew of the Palpatine stood in the docking bay, guards took every corner of the bay. Several Junior Officers, and enlisted personnel stood on the level overlooking the area. Dey and Darkrider exited the turbolift as the shuttle landed. Then, Dey said, "Attention, Admiral on the deck." All of the officers and enlisted stood at attention. The ramp lowered, and the Admiral stepped out. He smiled, and said, "So, both of you are still alive. Good. At ease, everyone."

The crew stood at ease, and the three command level officers went off into the turbolift.

They arrived on the bridge, and they went into the Colonel's ready room. They sat down, and Ferest said, "What's this I hear about you wanting to add more defenses to the Palpatine?"

The two looked shocked, Ferest smiled, "I've got spies all over the place, you should realize that. How do you think I've thwarted seven assassination attempts?"

"Anyway," Dey said, "We've heard reports about the Imperial Drydocks at Harradas having weapons such as a Death Star Laser. We'd like to impose that weapon into our systems now, besides we need major repairs after the battle."

"I've seen the damage reports," Ferest said, "I agree, we'll also impose better shield generators that can take more hits before going out, and maybe more concussion missile launchers."

"All right," Dey said, "We've lost two Star Destroyers, and all the others have major shield damage, or minor hull damage. It'll take a week or so to get the full repairs complete, then we'll be able to include the Vader in our fleet, on completion, I'll relinquish command to you."

"Sure," Ferest shook Dey's hand, "I guess that's all for now, good luck, I'll see you on Harradas Three."

The nine Star Destroyers arrived at Harradas III. Dey stood on the bridge, and looked out at the docking pylons. He hit the comm switch on his chair, and said, "This is the Ultra Star Destroyer Palpatine, requesting permission for eight docking bays for complete repairs, and upgrades to the flagship, authorization: Dey alpha two nine six."

The voice over the comm replied, "Permission to dock granted, Colonel, prepare to give your slave codes, so we can pull you in."

"Understood," he said.

He nodded to his tactical officer who began sending the signals, he said, "Transmission complete."

The ships skid into orbit, and approached the massive pylons that made up one of the last Imperial Drydock in the fleet. The Palpatine was huge enough that it fit an entire pylon, where the others fit four or five.

The Colonel went off the ship, and several officers saluted, he saluted back, he ran to the station commander, an old friend of his, Commander Freeman, "Dar," he said.

"Sal," Freeman replied, "or, should I say Colonel Dey."

"Whatever, Dar," he said, they started walking.

"So," Freeman smiled, "Damages on your ship already? Three ships lost? That doesn't sound like the "Take no prisoners" type of guy that I knew at the Academy!"

"Well," he said, as he looked out at his ship, "I guess I've become a little soft with rank."

"I guess so," Dar said, "Let's go up to my office, we can talk there."

They reached his office, "So," Dar said, "Have you had any reason to show your abilities?"

"No," Sal said, "you?"

"Naahh," Dar grabbed two cups of coffee, "I figure being a Jedi in this empire, now, would be as bad as serving on the Death Star a moment before it blew."

Dar handed the cup to Sal, "I've gotten some sort of message from beyond warning me to beware someone, someone who is probably a Jedi who will destroy me. I have to fight it."

"Are you crazy?" Dar asked, "We've been out of training for over twenty years, we can't fight with a lightsaber."

"I've been practicing on my leaves," he frowned.

"If you or I get caught, it means death, Ya know."

"I know."

"We can't allow either one of us to fall into the hands of a commander."

"I'm the second highest member in the fleet, the only one who could indict me is Ferest, and he trusts me too much, besides, it takes three commanders of higher levels of rank to indict someone for any crime."

"True," Dar said, " but you could be demoted, or kicked out of the fleet, that only takes one superior."

"Yea, we have to keep it a secret, if you get caught, I won't say anything, if I get caught, say the same thing."

"Right," Dar said, "I won't."

The Millennium Falcon arrived at Corsucaunt. Anakin was in the office of the Vice President, the VP was a woman named Winter.

"...And so, with the direct disobedient behavior, I give you three violations of New Republic Regulations, however, I am in charge, now, your mother is not, however giving the circumstances under your family, I will inform you that no formal actions will be placed on your records. Dismissed."

"Thank you, Ma'am," Anakin said, he walked out of the room.

Wedge walked over to Winter, and sat on her desk, she said, "You know Wedge sometimes I wish I didn't love those kids like my own. If he was someone else I could try him for those violations."

"But he's not just anyone else and besides he really isn't a member of NR so taking him to court would just cost time and money. Besides you do love him like he was your own."

"True," Winter said, "I don't like court trials anyway."

Anakin walked out of the office, there, Chewbacca, Jaina, Jordan, Zeek and Ceara stood outside. Jaina hugged him.

"How'd it go?" she asked.

"Pretty good," he said, "I only got a reprimand." The others smiled, he asked, "So, how are we going to get into this supership?"

Jordan replied, "They made a flaw in the design, we're going to get in their blind spot."

Anakin looked out the window, "As soon as they set up our scanner jammers, we'll get out of here."

Zeek walked over to Anakin, "Anakin, I can't come with you."

"Why?" Anakin asked.

"I just reported to the medical center," he turned away, "I have a disease, and need to be under close supervision. It appears to be..." he began crying "...fatal."

Jaina gasped, "What? You're dying?"

"I'll live for about three years, but I'm well over eighty," he said, "I'm gonna die anyway. They said it could have been treated earlier, but there were no doctors on Greenworld."

"I'm sorry," Anakin said, "I wish there was something..."

"No," he said, "If I didn't come with you, I would have died in a few weeks. They're holding it off as long as possible."

"I understand," Anakin said.

Zeek looked back at the young group, "I wish you all good luck."

Zeek walked away and the young group looked at each other in silence. They had had so much sad news in the last few days it was hard to handle more all at once. The only happy news was that Ceara was back in the group. Anakin reflected on how much she had changed since he last saw her. How long ago was it now? Six years? He had just been entering flight school the last time he saw her and she had been an awkward thirteen year old, and he hadn't seen her until now. Jaina had been the only one who had seen her with any regularity because the two were so close. She was a beautiful woman now, a very beautiful woman. Ceara caught him looking at her and she turned a little pink and looked away.

C-3PO stood outside the Millennium Falcon, then all of the sudden, he heard a few beeps and twerps, the droid saw R2-D2 walk into the docking bay, "Artoo! It's you, how have you been?"

Artoo bleeped a few times, "That good, eh? That's good."

A few bleeps and twerps came from the little Astromech Droid, in a form of a question, Threepio said, "Oh, I'm as good as always." Artoo gave a whir, "What? You don't believe me? Your an overweight clump of used Imperial Armor!"

Artoo screeched.

"Oh, switch off!"

The Millennium Falcon sat in the docking bay, repairs were complete, and upgrades were nearly complete. Anakin walked up to the front of the ship, the controls were much different than they were. The techs had done a major redesign under Chewie's close supervision. Chewie was standing, welding a control pad into the roof, he growled, "Grah-hy-rah?"

"Yea," he said, "The main engines are charged up, as soon as you're ready, we can pull out."

"Grakroarroom," Chewie said.

"Well," Anakin said, "I'll load our passengers."

The droids and the other people came onto the ship. Ceara and Jordan followed Anakin up to the front and sat in the back seats.

A few minutes later, Wedge's voice came over the intercom, "Falcon One, this is the bridge, hyperspace traffic has been cleared. You are cleared for immediate departure. Do you copy?"

"We copy, bridge," Anakin said, "We are engaging maneuvering thrusters, over."

"We are dropping the outer shield."

Jordan said, "Ready for departure."

"Chewie, engage." said Anakin.

The wookie growled, and they pulled out of the docking bay.

Wedge's voice again went over the speaker, "Set coordinates 657 Mark 2115. That'll bring you somewhere around where we believe is the place where they hypered to."

Chewie growled. Anakin said, "Roger, Home One, we are readying for hyperjump."

"Good luck, Falcon One," Wedge said, "Bring back Jacen, and you'll all be heroes."

"Falcon out," Anakin said, "Chewie," he got up, "Take the controls, I'm going to go see what they did to this ship."

Then, Ceara thought for a moment and followed him out. Jordan took Anakin's seat.

"So," he asked, "What does it feel like?"

Chewie looked at him in wonder, he growled in question, Jordan said, "I mean, being a Wookie, I mean you can beat up anyone, and your the oldest person I know, and for that matter, the hairiest."

He growled and pointed out the back.

"Sorry," Jordan said, as he put his hands up, and slowly walked to the back door, "I'm sorry." He ran out the back and Chewie laughed.

Anakin was in a small corner of the ship. He was looking at a small piece of equipment, the shield, this would help them get past the blockade. Ceara walked back where he was standing, he looked back at her.

He said, "Oh, hi Ceara, what's up?"

"Not much," she said, "Have you ever encountered the holocron?"

He put his tools down, and frowned, "The holocron was destroyed a long time ago, I never saw it."

"Would you like to?"

"What do you mean?" he said.

She took out the small box, and handed it to Anakin, it sprang to life, and it said, "I am Boda Baas, keeper of the Holocron of the Jedi. I present myself to you as a fellow Jedi, what is it that you would like to know?"

"Um..." he muttered, "How about me, what's going to happen to me?"

"Another destined to walk the sky became weary, and uncontrollable, he left his Jedi ways and it became unclearly. One, however would show him the way, and they would become good friends."

The image faded. Ceara looked into his eyes, he looked back, then, Anakin looked away quickly.

"Ceara, we can't do this." he said.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

He handed the Holocron back to Ceara, and decided to change the subject.

"The Empire has fallen, but their rebellion is still going, they have more weapons than this little ship. Just look at the specs on that ship."

"I know," she said, "But, I guess we're going to have to make the best of it, and hopefully be able to destroy that baby in the process."

The Imperial Shuttle escaped from Hyperspace, off to the right lay the Imperial Fleet, the ship was still under computer control, and Jacen was getting uneasy. He was ready, but, he knew he'd be captured. This reminded him of the stories that his parents told him about, of the saga of his father and his uncle rescuing his mother. A few minutes later the shuttle docked, and Jacen opened the door. He looked out and saw two officers coming towards him. Damn, he thought, this is going to be hard to pull off.

He stopped, saluted, the senior officer saluted back, the officer asked, "Where is the Rebel?"

"I had to kill him, sir," he said, "He killed the Doctors and my co-pilot."

"Hmm," the officer said, "I'll report this to Colonel Dey immediately, I'm sure Admiral Ferest will want to hear of this."

"Aye sir," he said.

"Carry on, Lieutenant Burke," the officer said.

Jacen walked over to the secondary turbo, he went up to a deck. He just picked one, hopefully, it was the one that he belonged on, unfortunately, it wasn't.

The doors opened, the security corridor appeared, and another officer said, "Hello, can I help you?"

"Uhh, I'm new on the ship," Jacen said, "I must've gotten lost."

"Where do you need to go to?" he asked, "What's your name?"

"Burke," he said, "Where are my quarters?"

The officer hit a few buttons, and said, "Ahh, Deck Six, section fourteen."

"Thanks," he said, as he walked back into the turbo. He sighed as the doors closed.

He reached his quarters and walked in. He flopped down on the bed, and looked around. He knew he couldn't keep this up for long. He saw a picture, he looked nothing like Burke, he hoped he didn't run into anyone who knew him. He looked over at a mirror, and saw a pair of dog tags, Lieutenant JT Burke they said. Well, he thought, at least I know my name.

"Computer," he asked, "Where am I supposed to be right now?"

The computer replied, "You are off-duty, Lieutenant, your next Tour of Duty begins in the morning, on the bridge."

"All right," he said, "Thanks."

The next day, Jacen walked down the corridor, he knew he had to report to Colonel Dey, the fleet's commander. And he knew he had to figure this whole ship out, by downloading the entire memory systems and schematics of this ship into a small diskette that he managed to replicate. It would allow the destruction of this ship.

He walked onto the bridge, and saw someone he hoped would be Dey. "Colonel?" he asked.

The officer swung around, "Yes, Lieutenant, how may help you."

"I'm Lieutenant Burke," he saluted, "I was ordered to report to you."

"Yes, Lieutenant," they began walking, "I need a man for an extremely difficult mission. I've read your file, very interesting. I need you to infiltrate the Rebellion."

"Sir," he said, "That job would be much to difficult. I've been in Rebellion Territory, there are too many sensor nodes attached to the border. Any Imperial ship couldn't get me out of there before seventy B-Wings were on top of me."

"True," he said, "Walk with me, Lieutenant."

They went down to the docking bay, there they saw a Mon Calamari Fighter, the pride of the Republic.

"This is a Mon Cal Fighter," Jacen said, "How could you capture one of them?"

"It was hard, but we managed to destroy it's flight group, and disable it after the Republic forces had left, the Assault Gunboat groups brought it back," Dey patted the hull, "We will repaint it as a civilian transport, and allow you to take it to Imperial City, and I want you to destroy it, after a period of time."

Jacen opened the cockpit, and sat in it, admiring the familiar cockpit design, "What makes you think that I'm the right man for the job?"

"Your record," he said, "I don't know why you haven't made Captain already, but I intend to get you there, if you survive this mission. You will hyper through Rebel Territory, to an area known as the Cron Drift, then, you will make another hyperspace jump to Corsucaunt, and without notice set up seventeen fission bombs on the main capital building. Be sure you're back with us when you fire those charges. It'll be as powerful a blast as a Death Star laser."

He thought of his family, he knew if he failed in returning, the fleet would be destroyed anyway. He decided to try and bluff the Colonel.

He smiled, "I accept, Colonel. I will serve the memory of the Emperor, and destroy the Rebellion."

"Good," the Colonel said, "Now, pack your bags, you'll be leaving tomorrow at 1830 hours."

"Very well, sir."

The New Republic Fleet had moved to the border, they were waiting for any news from the Falcon. Wedge was sure that this would be a defeat for the Republic if the Falcon didn't find the docking bay. He just couldn't help think about deploying the fleet into enemy territory, and destroying any or all ships, but he knew that would be suicide. The Palpatine would come after them, destroying them, like they did before. He had already sent out a message of grief to the families of the people that died.

He couldn't help think of the fact that there was a secret weapon on that Star Destroyer. There had to be. In all the cases there were. The Death Stars, the World Devastators, the Sun Crusher. He was the only

person besides Han who survived those battles, and still was in active military service.

He had thought of resigning of three occasions, one after the Death Star II incident, then, he was promoted, and given one of the highest honors, the next time was about four years ago, after Ganneb. The final time was three months ago, the Sullustan High Ambassador was killed by a terrorist from an outlying neutral territory. He couldn't help but think he'd be next. But, he was Admiral Wedge Antilles, hero of Yavin, hero of Endor, one of the founders of the New Republic, he signed the constitution. He was famous, he couldn't sneeze without someone handing him a handkerchief. So, he decided to stay on. He hoped that this mission wouldn't be his last.

He walked onto the bridge, and looked out the window. He saw the stars around him. The captain of the vessel, they called him Stryker, because he couldn't spell, and because he was one of the finest starfighter pilots in the galaxy, was leaning against the railing that showed the stars. He was a Calamarian, he was red as blood, some would think that he was ugly. But, Wedge wasn't racist, he joined Stryker.

"Good evening, sir," he Calamarian said.

"How's it going, Stryker?" Wedge asked.

"How's what going, sir?" he asked in return.

"I mean, how are you doing?" he said, as he sighed.

"Oh," Stryker said, "I'm fine," he returned his view to the window, then he realized he forgot something, "How's it going for you, sir?"

"Oh, I'm OK," he said, "Lovely evening, isn't it?"

"Oh yes sir!" Stryker said, "How's the wife?"

"Great," Wedge said, "She can't wait `til this Imperial fiasco is over. I can't say that I can, either."

"I really would like to go back to Calamari, to visit my parents," the Captain said, as he looked over at what Wedge believed was the Captain's homeworld.

Wedge said, "I was born on a ship, I've really never lived on a planet before Yavin, but then I just lived on the planets for months at a time. Finally, I found a home on Corsucaunt, and a wife, so I settled down."

"Interesting," the Calamraian blinked his huge eyes, "I could not think of settling down."

"Well, Capt," he put his hand on the Captains's shoulder, "I guess that what makes our two races different."

Chapter 4

The Falcon dropped out of hyperspace, over two kilometers out of visual range.

"OK, Chewie," Anakin said, "Engage the Sheath."

The Sheath was the field that would drop the, from visual scanners. Chewie growled.

Ceara looked out the window, "So, this is a Star Destroyer. Never seen one before in my life."

"This hopefully will be the last one any of us will see," Jordan said.

"Come on," Anakin said, "This field should keep us out of harm's way. Jaina, check the lateral stabilizer, they might be able to trace us if it's leaking."

She reached over to the control panel, "It's nominal."

"Good," Anakin said, "Let's bring her in. Jord?"

Jordan looked up, "Yeah?"

"Coordinates."

"Right," he looked at his datapad, "Section 113, aft quad."

"OK, Jordan, you and Jaina better replicate some Imperial uniforms," Anakin said, "make sure they fit us exactly, I don't want to get caught on this mission."

They walked back to the replicators, Jordan looked at Jaina, "So, what exactly do you do?"

"I'm the chief communications officer on the Independence," she said, "It's a tough job."

"I can imagine," he said, "I run comm sweeps of the area everyday, the things never keep stabilized, I have to rebalance them every hour."

"We have a program that'll do that," she said, "So, what are your interests?"

"Besides computers," he managed to replicate a uniform for Anakin, "I like to swim, I play a lot of sabacc, and I basically secretly keep everything in Ganneb running, where the technicians think they're doing it. How about you?"

"I am a master sabacc player," she said, "You could never even consider beating me, I ran Doctor Garal's program for sabacc, I beat the level 27 the first day."

"Damn," he said, "You're good. What else?"

"I also like to horseback ride and I'm a amateur pilot, I've been trying to get a post as a pilot for over a year now, but, I just can't pass the test."

"I'm surprised," he said, as he replicated another, for himself, "If your parents are the highest positions in the fleet, wouldn't you be given any position you wanted?"

"My parents say they aren't going to give us any recommendations for fleet positions, My mother says we have to earn our way up the ranks on our own, that's why Anakin never gained anything besides Flight Officer, he dropped out and decided to become a special envoy for the Republic, he doesn't have any rank, and he has no actual daily duties, except to stay out of the way."

"Really," he said, "I suppose I'm sorry to hear that,"

When all the rest of them were replicated, "Here," he held up a Imperial Uniform.

"Do you have anything in green." she said, after seeing the bland color. They laughed.

The Falcon approached the aft quarter of the Ultra Star Destroyer, Anakin looked at the huge fusion engines, he squinted, "Ya think they give off much thrust?"

Chewie growled in question, "Come on, Anakin," Ceara said, "We've got to get inside, stop fooling around."

"Who's fooling?" he looked back.

Jaina and Jordan walked forward, Jordan had a Captain's uniform on, while Jaina wore a similar uniform, with her long hair up in a small hat. She handed one to Ceara, who laughed when she saw it. Jordan threw Anakin's up to him, who knew it was coming. He turned around, so did Chewie.

"OK," he said, "this is the plan, we'll take Artoo with us, and plug in to a computer terminal, he'll download the entire data system. Threepio and Chewie will stay behind."

He looked at Chewie, "Try not to kill him."

Chewie growled. "We'll head to a stronghold," he continued, "Rip off a few weapons, then Jord, you and I will head up to the bridge, and attempt to disable they're main computer, we need to be quiet though, if

anyone knows about it, we're dead. By that time, Artoo should know where Jacen is, and we'll find him, and get out of here."

The proximity alarm went off, Chewie swung around, he activated the targeting computer, he growled, and Anakin looked at it.

"What is that? It's like no TIE Fighter I've seen before." he asked.

Ceara activated the ship's computer, "It's in the banks, it's a TIE Defender, it was introduced shortly after Hoth."

Jordan sighed, "Those are the best fighters in their fleet, they haven't been used in a while, but, word had it that when an Admiral tried to overthrow the Emperor, they used it to save him. Have they spotted us Chewie?"

Chewie growled again, it was a much more calm growl. "Good," Anakin said, "Bring us in, Chewie."

The ship entered the small docking bay. It was unguarded on the inside and it was very unknown. The ship set down, and the five came out of the hull, they ran across, blasters in hand, and Jordan stood near the door with a door jammer. Anakin nodded to him, and the door swung open. Anakin walked out, and covered the left, while Ceara covered the right. Seeing no one, they put their blasters away. Jordan took out the jammer and locked the door with a code that they only knew: Skywalker.

They walked down the hall, Artoo in the lead, then spread out, so it didn't look like they were in one group. They reached a turbolift, Jordan hit a button, and the turbo started up. No one said a word, and the door opened: Deck 15, the main computer center. They walked out again, and went to a door without a guard on it. They walked in, inside was a small terminal, fit for a R2 unit, Artoo plugged in, as the others went to other posts around the room.

A guard walked in, and said, "Does this droid have access for this computer?"

"He has level ten access," Jordan said, "I need some files for a mission I'm going on."

"We don't use Artoo units that much, Captain," the guard became suspicious, "How come this droid doesn't have a restraining bolt?"

"It must have come off, " he said, hoping he was convincing, "I questioned the welder droid that put it on, he said it was alright."

"Hmm," the guard looked at the droid, "What was the droid's designation that did it?"

"Oh," he said, "it was years ago, before the ship was completed, it was probably dismantled years ago."

"Then what's this droid's designation?" he asked again."

"R2-F6."

"OK," he said, "I'll believe you, but don't download any restricted files, or we'll have to disintegrate the droid."

Artoo whined, and Jordan laughed, "That means he's scared and don't worry, we'll stay away from the Admiral's mother's cookbook."

The guard walked out, and Jordan fell into a chair, Jaina clapped, "Bravo!"

"Thanks," he said, as he hit a few switches.

Artoo beeped again, as a schematic came up on Jordan's screen, "Woe, stop there, Artoo."

Anakin and the others walked over to the post.

"What is it?" Anakin asked.

Jordan said, "It's a superlaser, want to know how to build one?"

"Not really," Anakin said, "What's this?" he touched the screen, "That looks like they're planning on initiating a design of this superlaser onto the ship."

"You're right," Jordan said, as he hit a few buttons, "This says that the Empire has finally perfected it's design, and is ready to put it on a new weapon. The ship design is classified, and neither Artoo nor I can break it."

"Is that what I think it is?" Jaina asked.

"Yeah," Jordan leaned back in his chair, "It's the Death Star, all over again."

"It would take almost a year to make the necessary preparations," Jordan said, "Unless..." he hit a few buttons.

"Unless what?" Ceara asked, they were all getting edgy.

"Oh no." He pointed to an area on the screen, it said:

PATTERNING: 95%, PROGRESS: 06%."

"By the time that we find Jacen and head home, chances are there won't be a home," Anakin said.

"We've got to get back there," Jordan said, "And take this information, as well as the latest technical schematics back to Imperial City."

"We can't" Anakin said, "This mission can't fail, and I'm not gonna let it. It counts on Jacen's life."

"Artoo," Jordan commanded, "skip the rest of the alphabet, look for any files under the name of Solo."

The droid complied, and several titles appeared: SOLO, HAN, SOLO, LEIA, SOLO, JACEN, SOLO, JAINA, SOLO, ANAKIN

"Bring Jacen's file on the screen," Anakin said.

The file came up, and Jordan read it silently, he finally came to the end, but nothing about being captured, "Nothing, he's still out there..."

"Or dead," Jaina cursed.

"Maybe not," Anakin said.

"What do you mean?" Ceara asked.

"You two should remember," Anakin said, "When we were younger, we played a game where we were captured, and Jacen came up with the idea of being put in another officer's place."

"Do you think that's what he did?" Jordan asked.

"Probably," Anakin said, "But, there's absolutely no way to find out."

On the bridge of the Palpatine, Captain Darkrider was sitting at a post, looking at a representation of the galaxy. He saw the points along the border where they would attack in the next six weeks. Their final stop: Corsucaunt. He looked out the window, at the fleet. He knew he could find a way to incriminate Dey, and to become the leader of all this. The Imperial fleet knew that this would be the last huge attempt to attack the Rebels. If they failed, they would become extinct. Then, Darkrider heard a page, "Captain Darkrider, report to deck twelve."

He began walking, and reached the deck, where he saw six stormtroopers standing outside of a room, it was the quarters of Ensign Jak Briggs. Dey was kneeling over the body, with a few others around him. Darkrider knelt next to Dey, "How'd it happen?" "Slash right to the neck," Dey said, "Looks like the work of a sword or a saber, or something like that."

"Are you saying that it could be the work of a Jedi?" Darkrider asked.

"It's a possibility," Dey said, "We're not ruling anything out, I'd like you to run the investigation. This is a list of the last fifty people he was seen talking to," he handed the pad to him.

"Briggs worked in tactical, right?" Darkrider asked.

"Yeah," he said, "He also was a master of all the weapons," he pointed to the decor, "that would explain these blasters, swords, and lightsabers."

"I'll get to work on it right away," Darkrider got up, he walked out the door, and looked back at the gruesome sight. Then, after he was past the eyes of the stormtroopers, he thought, A murder, the perfect way to incriminate Dey. Good idea, whoever killed him, good idea.

Dey looked back after Darkrider left, he never thought Darkrider could be so easy to follow orders, he looked at the medical officer, "I want a autopsy on my desk first thing tomorrow."

He looked back, "Aye sir."

Ferest was standing in Dey's ready room, Dey sat behind the desk, "And you believe this was the work of a... Jedi?"

"Yes," Dey said, "The marks are consistent, they're-- they're too accurate for a regular sword."

"Okay," Ferest said, "We're already running a complete review of the docking station, everything checks out so far, but we're only to the B's."

"We're doing the same thing here," Dey said, "We expect to be done before the repairs are complete."

"All right," he said, "I want us pulled out of here at fifteen hundred hours in three days. Understood?"

"Understood, sir!" Dey said, Ferest walked away. Dar, he thought, how could you do it! You knew we formed a pact. Take care of yourself, just keep out of trouble.

Anakin looked over at the door, as it opened, Jacen walked through the door with an Imperial Uniform on. Jaina got up and hugged him. Anakin ran over as well, they said nothing, the Force said their words. Jacen saw a face he hadn't seen in three years... Ceara's. He hugged her, and she said, "So, we're all here now, can we go home?"

Jacen looked her up and down, "You look good, too, Kiddo."

"What are you doing here?" Anakin asked.

Jacen looked at him, "I had to come here, to do some "research" on my mission for the commander of this fleet, I have to go home to infiltrate Republic HQ."

"Oh, good," Jaina said, "do we have a traitor among us?"

Jacen laughed, "Of course not! I'm going to save the Republic, single-handedly, with my lightsaber."

Jordan looked at his panel, it beeped, "If you guys can hold off the celebrations here for a second, they seem to have found out about our little party here."

"Oh," Anakin said, "Jacen, this is Jordan Calrissian, Jordan, this is Jacen."

"Nice to meet you," Jordan said, "But, we did blow out the microphones, but we forgot about the cameras. Jacen, take out your blaster, and stun me."

"What?" Jacen asks, "Stun you, I don't even--"

"Do it," Jordan says, as he turned around and brought out his own blaster.

Jacen shot him, and he fell to the ground, then Anakin said, "I think I know what he wants us to do," he shot Jacen, with his blaster set on stun.

"Let's go," Anakin said, "you two, take Jordan, I'll take Jacen, come on, Artoo."

They ran out, as they shot the Stormtroopers coming towards them. They reached the turbo and headed down to their bay. More Stormtroopers stood in their way and they hit them some more. They reached the bay, and used the code to get in, they got in, and saw the Falcon, with Chewie waiting outside. "Get going, Chewie!" Anakin called.

Chewie growled in discontent and Anakin yelled, "What do you mean you took apart the Sheath?"

"He what--?" Jaina yelled.

"Come on," Anakin said, "We can still get out of here, it's a nonessential system."

They ran up the platform as the Troopers began invading the room, Chewbacca and Anakin held off them, as the girls took their injured comrades in.

"Chewie, we've got to have a talk about taking things apart without asking." Anakin said.

The two remaining freedom fighters ran into the ship and raced to the front of the ship. Anakin removed the Imperial jacket and activated the impulse engines. They took off and the lasers from the small troopers below hit the larger ship.

The ship shot out of the docking bay, and TIEs came shooting at them, Anakin maneuvered out of a TIE Defender's way, and he yelled. "Anybody with free hands, take a laser cannon!"

No one responded, "Chewie, you take the controls," Anakin rolled his eyes.

As he ran past he looked at Ceara, "Think you can handle a laser cannon?"

"I've never done it before but sure." she said.

Anakin led her down to the laser cannons, as a few lasers hit the hull. He jumped up to his post and saw a few TIEs coming towards his scopes. His area took a few hits and a panel exploded, he put on his commphones.

He yelled to Ceara, "How ya doing, kid?"

"Okay." she said.

"You're doing good for a beginner." he said.

"Thanks I get it from Luke." she smiled, perhaps her mother too she thought briefly then channeled the Force into guiding her shots.

They began fighting, Anakin shot down several, as Ceara hit one.

Anakin called Chewie, "Are we to the hyperjump yet?"

Chewie growls a very clearly pointed out, "No."

"Okay, we have a few minutes of oxygen in the tubes, but, you'll have to get us out of the tubes, before they close, and we're stuck in here, yet, we'll hold them off 'til the end."

Chewie saw another TIE erupt in his face, as he set the hyperjump on auto. He went down to the hold and felt a few eruptions. He saw the stars begin to go to blue and to streaks in the sky. He saw the pods beginning to close, and he put his arm through the doors at the top and his feet through the bottom step. Anakin rushed down, Chewie then let that door close, as he puts both arms through to open the other door. He grabbed Ceara from the pit and pulled him through, but her leg got caught. Anakin saw this and opened the door again. The air began to become thinner and Chewie pulled Ceara completely through the hole. Chewbacca growled in concern, Ceara rubbed her leg and said she was alright.

Anakin sighed, he put his hand on Chewie's arm, "Good job, bud."

Chewie growled in accomplishment.

The Millennium Falcon dropped out of Hyperspace at Coruscant. The passengers were fully recovered. As they arrived they saw that the Republican fleet had returned to the base as well as Lando's shuttle and Luke's other ship, The Force.

The ship landed at the main docking bay, and they disembarked, Jacen saw Luke, and hugged him.

Luke smiled, "What makes you think you can stunt-dive into a TIE?"

"Thought I was immortal!" he laughed, as Wedge came walking through the door, "Admiral!" he yelled, "How are you?"

"Great!" Wedge said, "It's great to see you, Jacen."

"You too," Jacen said, "It's great to see this old hall, and these old ships. It's great to be back." Admiral Ferest came off of the elevator and ran out the door towards Dey's office. Darkrider joined him. They entered the office. Ferest sat down unhappily.

"All right, Colonel, what's this about Rebel spies getting into our operation?" said the Admiral.

"Sir, you could've knocked," Dey said, "I was in the middle of a very important communicate to our agent."

"I don't give a damn who you were talking to, Colonel!!" he yelled, "Now get the hell off of that line, and talk to me!"

"Fine," Dey said, he cut the communications, "Now, sir, what may I help you with."

"Your impudent Stormtroopers allowed five Rebel spies into our computer labs on this ship," he stood up, and walked behind Dey's desk to his computer, "They have had a chance to download the entire weapon system schematics of this damn ship. Even though we have made sure there is no way to destroy this ship from a ship attack, especially a snubfighter, they could find the weakness that your damn engineers forgot to cover."

"And what is that sir?" Dey asked softly.

Ferest activated his console, and the superlaser system came on the screen, "This was your idea to put the superlaser on the ship, if they get inside the ship again, they can overload the system, and send this ship up into oblivion."

"Sir," Dey said, "my project is heavily secured, even after it is finished, the superlaser systems will have fifty guards on duty, at all times. Besides, any attempt to overload this system would be suicidal. We would go down, but so would the agent."

"Fine," Ferest calmed down, he walked back to his chair, "I, however, am in charge of this project, and the Empire for that matter. I'm giving the order that all nonessential personnel get off of this ship, and forming a skeleton crew of you, me, Darkrider, twelve legions of Stormtroopers, of my choice, the best fighter pilots in the fleet, and two shifts of people. That brings our complement down to two thousand."

"Sir," Dey said, "As second-in-command of this fleet, I cannot allow you to take command of this fleet. We will be walking into a very dangerous situation, and you are not expendable. You hold this fleet together like the Force binds the galaxy together, you must stay behind."

"I must agree Admiral," Darkrider spoke up, "This will be the most dangerous situation any of these people have ever been forced to decide in. We will win, but we cannot lose you. You are our leader, one people look up to. I can't allow you to do this."

"Sal, Garth," Ferest said, "You are correct, but, in this situation, I am expendable in this case. As are you, there will be another to fill my shoes, walk the path that I have helped reach it's goal, it all started with Emperor Palpatine, Lord Vader, and Grand Moff Tarkin, after they perished, another three took their place."

He looked at Darkrider, then at Dey, "We are the next to follow, we aren't expendable, but, we must do this, for the good of the Empire. Do you follow?"

He put his hand out, in a handshake. Darkrider stood next to him, Dey stood up, and shook his hand. They all smiled, as Dey took out a bottle of imported Corellian Ale, they toasted the Empire, and it's new uprising.

Outside of the office, people could hear the words uttered, "To the Empire..."

Chapter 5

Two days after the rescue of Jacen, Ceara laid on her bed in her quarters. She looked around. The place was still decorated for a girl who only visited on occasion. It resembled her room on Yavin when she was a little girl. She smiled at the memories of her childhood visits. She would come home with the boys on their breaks from the Academy. She and Jaina would have slumber parties and talk all night and during the days the four of them would play games where they figured out ways to defeat the Empire. But those days were gone. They were facing a real Imperial threat not a game. As she laid there, Ceara started to think about the Holocron and what it had said to both her and Anakin. Could Anakin be the loner Jedi that would save her? Anakin ... she thought about the look in his eyes before he pulled away. Why could she not get it out of her head? Maybe a walk would do her some good. She got up and left her room. Darkrider sat in his quarters lost in thought. The murder of the Ensign had gone unsolved. Not that anyone actually cared about the death. He was an expendable man and had no family so it was easy enough to cover it up. The important thing was that it was clearly the work of a Jedi and being a Jedi was a major crime. Darkrider was trying to pin it on Dey to gain control of the fleet. In fact, if it worked Admiral Ferest would be impeached for not noticing a Jedi in command and then Darkrider would be Admiral. Admiral ... Suddenly he heard a knock on the door.

"Enter," he said. Ensign Rogers entered the room. Rogers was a petty criminal, a thief, a smuggler, a sometimes spy. He had joined the

Empire to avoid being arrested. Darkrider knew he could trust Rogers because the ensign was scared of him.

"You sent for me, Sir?" Rogers asked.

"Yes," Darkrider said, "I need you to do a task for me."

"What is it you want me to do?" asked the ensign.

"I want you to sneak into Colonel Dey's room, here are the code keys to his suite. I then want you to get a hair sample. Take it to the lab and tell them that it was found in Ensign Brigg's room." "Yes, sir." "Dismissed, ensign." Rogers walked out. Darkrider thought this is just the start Dey I will frame you for this and all of your power will be mine. Jordan and Lando Calrissian were in Lando's suite. "Son, I need to get back to Ganneb. Are you joining me?" asked Lando. "Dad, I think I'll pass. With all that's going down they could use me and besides I like being involved." "Does Jaina have anything to do with this? I've see that you two hit it off and she is very pretty." "Dad! Does everything have to be about women? Besides she's a good six years older than me. But yes it is about Jaina and Jacen and Anakin and Ceara. I never had many friends my own age and it's nice having them around. Okay?" "Yes, Jord. Goodbye and good luck." "Bye Dad." Meanwhile, in the young Solo's suite. Anakin and Jacen were sitting in the living area catching up. "So that's what you were up to all those months. Sounds exciting." "Ah, it was pretty boring sometimes too," replied Anakin, "I missed you and Jaina." "We missed you too, little brother." "Well, I'm just glad to have you home, safe. What were you thinking? And they call me the daredevil, reckless one." "I have no idea. I guess I take after Dad more than I thought. Can we change the subject?" "I guess, you know it was good to see Ceara again." "Yeah, she sure grew up to be quite a beauty." "She sure did." Anakin's thoughts drifted off towards Ceara's green eyes. Just then Jaina entered the living room. "Hi sis." they both said. "Hi guys," she replied, "I have some good news." "About time we got some." Jacen said. "Jordan decided to hang around and give us a hand and Ceara is too. Uncle Luke is planning on staying for a while. But that's not all. I got word from Mom and Dad. They're having a great time but they are returning soon. I didn't tell them about Jacen but I told them about the Superlaser. So they're coming home." "Great news, but I was trying to forget about the Superlaser." said Anakin. "They'll be home sometime tonight and we are having a briefing at 08:00. We're all invited since we discovered the information on the Superlaser." "Great, I just love military briefings," Anakin said, "Why do you think I left the military." Colonel Dey sat in his headquarters. He had just finished overseeing the evacuation of all unnecessary personal and the installment of Admiral Ferest into command. Just then two security officers came into his office. "Yes, " Dey asked. "We've come to bring you to Admiral Ferest for questioning on the charges of murdering Ensign Briggs and of being a Jedi." "What!?" he thundered. "We'll let the Admiral do the talking." They were soon inside Admiral Ferest's office. The Admiral dismissed the officers. "So, what is this all about, Sir?" Dey asked. "Well, Sal. We found one of your hairs in Ensign Briggs quarters." "So, I was near the dead body it's not surprising." "Yes, I realize that but I have sources that you were once trained as a Jedi. We have to make sure." "I assure

you, I have not practiced since I was a teen and I have no desire to."

"Well, I believe you. But if anything else turns up that points to you being involved in this murder or being a Jedi, you will be kicked out of the fleet so fast your head will spin. I don't put up with this stuff. I am still in charge here. And I sure would be sad to see you go."

"Understood, Sir." "Dismissed." Dey went back to his office and clenched his fist. He couldn't believe it. But he would get whoever tried to set him up. But first he would crush the Rebellion. Then he heard the voice again.

"Beware, beware, beware she will destroy you, find her, and save yourself and the Empire."

"Whoever she is I will find her and destroy her before she destroys me." Dey found himself vowing. Ceara walked down the hallway. She thought maybe she'd go see Luke for a little while. She turned the corner and stopped to look out a window. The city was beautiful at night. She looked out at the planets and wondered which one she came from. Suddenly, she felt a great pain in her head and heard a voice. It said, "Beware, Beware, he knows." "Who knows what?" she cried just before she fainted.

Chapter 6 Anakin was talking to his siblings when he felt the sudden urge to leave. "Excuse me," he said getting up, "I need to go stretch my legs a little." "I'll come with you." offered his sister. "No, don't worry about it," he replied, "I'll be right back." Saying this, he got up and quickly left the suite. Jacen looked at Jaina and shrugged his shoulders. The twins were used to their brother doing strange things like that. They then went on with their conversation. Anakin hurried down the hallway. Something was calling him forward and he had to follow it. He noticed that it was leading him in the direction of Luke and Ceara's quarters. He wondered if one of them needed him. He found out when he turned the corner and found Ceara lying on the floor. He quickly ran over to her and listened for her pulse and for breathing. She was alive but unconscious. He looked for injury and finding none lifted her head onto his lap and tried to wake her. "Ceara." he called gently as he shook her. Her eyes opened and she looked up at him. He looked at her and thought that he had never seen anyone so beautiful in his life. Then he thought about turning away but he didn't want to drop her so he waited. "What happened?" she asked. "You fainted," he replied helping her to sit up, "I don't know why. I found you out cold on the floor." "I remember this voice telling me to beware and then nothing." "Well, let me get you to Uncle Luke's room and we'll make sure you're alright." Anakin helped Ceara into Luke's suite and quickly explained the situation to his uncle. Luke, greatly concerned, ushered his daughter into a chair and quickly examined her for concussion and any other physical cause. Seeing that there was nothing, he instructed Anakin to make her a cup of tea and sat down beside Ceara. "Are you okay?" "Yes, Luke." "Tell me what you remember." "I was standing at the window lost in thought when suddenly a voice cried Beware, Beware. He knows. But I have no idea what that means and I must have lost consciousness after that." Anakin gave her a cup of tea and looked at Luke hoping that he understood. Luke looked lost in thought and it took a long time. Then Luke said, "I'm not sure what exactly that means. But it seems to be a warning from the Force. Someone either living or dead is trying to get a message through to you and you

seem to be in grave danger." "What can I do?" "I don't know my little one. You'll just have to keep your eyes open and be extra careful."

"Great, someone I don't even know is out to get me for some reason that I don't know of." "Maybe it has something to do with the Holocron." offered Anakin but after seeing Ceara's face and the questioning look on Luke's wished he hadn't. "The Holocron?" asked Luke. "It's, um, working again." said Ceara. Anakin taking it as his cue to depart said his goodbyes and left, leaving Ceara and her adoptive father alone to discuss the Holocron. Darkrider sat in his office. He was angered by the fact that Dey managed to con Ferest into believing that he was in no way involved in the murder of the ensign. He thought for a minute. He remembered that there was a lightsaber in Briggs' collection of weapons if he could someone plant one in Dey's room it would insure his arrest. He sent again for Rogers and instructed him to plant a lightsaber in Dey's room and then send security there to look for it. There, thought Darkrider, that should put an end to Dey once and for all. Back in Luke's suite, Ceara had explained how the Holocron had started to work again and what it had said to both her and Anakin. Ceara noticed that Luke looked upset that she had not told him and she knelt down at his feet. "Master, forgive me." she cried. Just as she knelt, Skywalker had a flash back to another time and another beautiful woman with eyes like Ceara's and hair redder than Ceara's copper tresses. He remembered Joruu C'baoth ordering Mara Jade to kneel to him and he came back to reality. "Don't," he said rather harshly and seeing his daughter's face he quickly added, "You don't have to kneel to me." "You looked so upset." "Only that you didn't confide in me earlier." "I'm sorry. I just haven't had the time." "I know." "Luke, did you know my mother?" "Mara..."he whispered. Ceara didn't need to ask how he knew but she needed to know about her mother. "Yes, Mara Jade. Tell me about her." "Where to begin. She was very beautiful with eyes like yours but her hair was red not like yours which is both red and brown." "I know. I saw a picture that Artoo had on file but there wasn't much. You sound like you knew her well. Were you in love with her?" Luke was taken aback by what she said but knowing his ward like he did he knew to answer honestly. "I might have been. I don't have much experience with these kinds of things. And she floated in and out of my life so much what ever I might have felt for her became just a memory. My association with Mara didn't start out on a good note. She wanted to kill me." "What!?" "Yes, she did. It's funny though the first time I met her, she saved my life. She was serving aboard the Wild Karrde and I was stranded in space. She saved me. But she made no bones about the fact that she wanted me dead. We then were forced to travel through a forest together and various other adventures where she saved my life on more than one occasion. She even saved Leia and the twins from being kidnapped by Imperial forces." "Why did she want you dead?" "You see Mara was very strong with the Force and when she was very young she was made the personal aide to the Emperor called the Emperor's Hand. She could hear his voice anywhere and could give orders to the forces. When he died, he commanded her to kill me. She really didn't want to but she had no choice in the matter. She ended up killing a clone of me which succeeded in erasing the voices from her head. She then returned to the Wild Karrde while acting as a liaison from the Republic to the smugglers." "What happened to her?" "Noone knows. I haven't seen her in fifteen years. I remember because when you were four she was in the Imperial City and I came to visit you. I ran into her and I said I was going to visit my daughter. She wanted to come along and she

watched you with a very usual look in her eye. When we left she kissed me and told me to take very good care of you. That's the last time I saw her. She did some work with Lando for a while maybe he's heard from her." "I think I remember her now. She was very beautiful but that's all I remember. Talon Karrde told me he hadn't seen her in ten years when I tried to contact her, since Artoo said that she worked for Karrde." "Ah, so you did try to find her." "I had no luck. But what you said about my mother makes me think. Maybe she is the reason why I have these strange powers." "Perhaps. She was very strong in the Force although she had no formal training. She was also very smart and perceptive. She was alot like you in many ways but..." "But what?" "I don't know. Your father must have been a Jedi too. You couldn't have got it all from her. There's just something about you." "Great, there are thousands of Jedi living and dead. Who knows who my father is or was." "Perhaps it's best not to know. I sometimes wish I hadn't been so stubborn in trying to find out if Vader was my father. But I never would have found out about Leia so I guess it all worked out for the best." At this Ceara fell silent as if lost in thought. Luke knew not to disturb her so he just let her be. And they both sat lost in their own thoughts. Dey was looking at the list of targets that the Empire was supposed to hit within the next six weeks. It had been revised after the Rebel spies had infiltrated the ship. Coruscant was still at the end of the list. He didn't care much about that idea knowing that this would give the Rebels time to plan. But the Admiral and Darkrider both believed that a show of force was necessary. Dey thought about it perhaps they were right by the time they reached Coruscant most of the Rebellion's essential systems would be back into Imperial hands and the Rebels would be backed up against the wall. First stop, Cona then the universe. Dey smiled in triumph. He also smiled at the thought of the lightsaber which someone had obviously planted in his quarters and Dey had intercepted and destroyed. After this battle, he would work on a trap to catch this would be framer. But at this time he had more important things to do.

President Leia Organa Solo and her husband arrived in Imperial City quietly. Han was determined to avoid fanfare because Leia and he needed quiet at least until tamer's briefing. He looked over at his wife. Her face was again worried. It had been so good to hear her actually laugh again. It was so seldom that he heard that. Luke and he both had been able to alleviate pressure by cracking a quick joke. Leia had been that way once too but now the affairs of the galaxy weighed heavy on her shoulders. "Sweetheart?" he questioned. "Yes, what?" Leia answered as if woken. "Are you okay?" "Just tired. I'm trying not to think about tamer. And I would like to know what possessed the children to infiltrate a Super Star Destroyer although I'm glad they did." "Well, sweetheart. I guess I'll have to tell you." "Tell me what?" "Luke contacted me but we didn't want to worry you until we were sure." "Sure of what?" Leia's voice became slightly annoyed. "Jacen was lost in battle. Sweetheart, don't look like that. He's safe and sound and nothing happened to him. He was captured but he killed the guards and assumed one of their identities. Jaina, Anakin, Ceara, and Lando's kid went to rescue him, and found both him and those laser plans." "Wonderful, my son was in danger and you didn't tell me." "Sweetheart," he said drawing her close, "It's okay. I'm sorry I just didn't want to ruin things for you. And I know our kids they're survivors like us. And Ceara was there and you know Luke's

kid is incredible. And Lando's kid is supposed to be a genius with computers. If they needed us they would have called us." "Oh, Han. Have we reached the age where our children have to protect us?" "Never sweetheart. Not us." Leia laughed and they went down to visit their children. The next day dawned over Imperial City and the people in the palace were buzzing with excitement. The rumors flew. Some people said that the young Solos had uncovered something which could end the Imperial Rebellion once and for all. Others whispered that the Rebels were going to destroy the planet. At any rate, traders refused to fly until their sources could get them some idea of the situation and the banks were in an uproar. The day was very cloudy and Jaina Solo, looking out her window, could not help but think that that was a sign. But, she smoothed her dress uniform and headed for the briefing. She met up with her twin in the hall. He too was in dress uniform and neither said a word as they entered the conference room. It wasn't quite 08:00 yet but quite an impressive group had gathered. Admiral Antilles sat looking uncomfortable in his uniform. Their father looking even more so and their mother looking regal as befitting a Chief of State and a princess. Jacen took a seat by his father and Jaina sat by her mother and next to Jordan Calrissian who beamed at her and then looked around to check out the action. Luke and Ceara Skywalker entered the room soon after. Luke was suited up in his usual black. Jaina noted that Ceara looked a bit tired although she looked exceptionally beautiful in a black dress and a gold cloak which partially covered her lightsaber which she displayed prominently considering that Jedi Knight was her only rank. They sat across from Jaina and Jordan. Ceara leaned across the table and said to Jaina, "I like the way you've done your hair." Jaina who's long dark hair was done in a very intricate braid, thanked her and then commented about the number of celebrities that were in the room. Jordan nodded and said, "Man, it's a virtual who's who. Everybody who's anyone is in this room. Retired generals, politicians, even those Noghri things that your mom is so fond of." "Hey, those Noghri saved my life when I was a baby. They may look frightening but they're very loyal allies and friends." replied Jaina. At this point, Anakin walked in the room which completed the group necessary for the briefing. Jaina noticed that he looked very tired and she remembered that Jacen had noted that his light had been on for most of the night. He nodded to his sister and Jordan and didn't even look at Ceara before sitting next to his brother. At the strike of 08:00, Chief of State Leia Organa Solo rose and addressed the room. "Honorable council members, Vice President Winter, Admiral Solo, Admiral Antilles, officers, honored friends. We have a crisis on our hands. These young people have uncovered some very valuable information concerning the rebels. So saying, I turn the floor over to Captain Jacen Solo, Lieutenant Jaina Solo, Envoy Anakin Solo, Citizen Jordan Calrissian, and Citizen Ceara Skywalker, Jedi Knight." As the young people got up and moved towards the front, an older Calamari, Ackbar's oldest son, said to the Corellian next to him, "I must be getting old, to live to see the day when these legends' children were old enough to take center stage." "I didn't know Skywalker had a kid," remarked his neighbor, "She looks rather young to be a Jedi." "She was adopted. She is nineteen years old but she became a Jedi Knight when she was thirteen years old. They say that she will become a Jedi Master by the time she's twenty one."

His neighbor whistled and turned to the speakers. Jordan plugged a data card into the screen projector. Jaina, who was the most well spoken of the group having learned diplomacy at her mother's knee, spoke for them. "Thank you, Chief of State Organa Solo. My name is Lieutenant Jaina Solo. My brother, my cousin, and Citizen Calrissian were on a rescue mission," here she stopped and gave her twin a smile, "When we came upon this very valuable information regarding a new super weapon that the Rebellion has developed." At this, some of the members gasped. The rumors were true. Jaina noticed her mother go white and then regain her composure. She knew that her mother had watched a similar weapon destroy her planet and kill her own parents so she tried to reach out with the Force to reassure her mother. Her mother responded and gently nudged her to continue. Jaina said, "This Super Laser which appears to be even more powerful than the first Laser on the first Death Star is in the last stages of production. We have reason to believe that they plan to attack Coruscant but will start with a lesser planet first. I turn the floor over to Jordan Calrissian." After waiting for the subsequent wave of shock to go over the crowd, Jordan pushed a button and what plans he could get on the Superlaser were displayed in three dimensional form. "As you can see the new Superlaser is a much more advanced version of the Superlaser on the first Death Star. It is about six times as powerful in fact. It probably has the capabilities to destroy a star but I doubt that even the Empire would risk the effects of that. It was listed as near completion when we received this information and therefore we can conclude that it is finished now and probably installed upon the Ultra Star Destroyer Palpatine at this moment since we could not find evidence of any Death Star like activity. As far as I could tell from analyzing the data which will be made available to you, the only way of destroying this laser is to get inside and overload the system. This will not be easy since it was easy for us to get into the Star Destroyer in the first place, I'm sure that when we were unfortunately discovered that they made the place a virtual fortress. We will have to obtain plans of the Palpatine in order to do so. Jacen do you need to talk?" "Yes, I have something to add." "Alright I turn the floor over to Captain Solo." "When I was in Imperial hands, I took the identity of another officer. As that officer I was instructed to infiltrate the Republic. If I were to send a transmission to the Imperial forces telling them that I was captured by the spies and telling them that I got out of prison by feigning allegiance to the Republic I may be able to gather information from them on what they are planning on doing." At this Leia interrupted, "Don't you think that would be dangerous? What if they don't buy your story." "Madame Chief of the State, I think they will believe me. I convinced them that I was an Imperial Officer in the first place. If they don't believe me there is no harm done. I'm here. I managed to get a spy code key. It may not work any more but I don't think they realize I have it. " "I think that would be an excellent idea, in the light of all of this." added Ceara. "What else can we do?" questioned Anakin, "We can't destroy the thing if we can't get to it. Maybe Jacen can." "Agreed," said Leia, "If that is all..." The group nodded. "Then this briefing is over. Captain Solo will attempt to transmit the spy code. Jordan, if you would care to get that data to us, the Council will now go into a meeting time. Thank you all."

Chapter 7 Things bustled aboard the Palpatine as the Imperial forces prepared for their attack on the planet Cona in the Teke Rho system. Admiral Ferest overlooked the preparations the idea was a show of force. He figured that they should be able to over take Cona without even firing a shot. The forces were on hand just in case the Republic happened to be in the area but it seemed unlikely because Cona was fairly unguarded. It wasn't an essential system but any system would be welcome to the Imperials. The Imperials had lined up a small uninhabited moon if a demonstration of the laser's power was necessary. He saw Dey and Darkrider approaching he motioned them towards the command deck. An ensign walked up to them and after saluting said: "Cona in range, sir." "Thank you Ensign." replied Ferest, "Here it begins." And smiling grimly, he turned to the window as the forces made the leap out of hyperspace. Meanwhile, back on Coruscant, the Council was holding an emergency meeting. While they met, the young group were in the Solo's quarters. Jaina was pacing back and forth. Jordan was busy entering in Jacen's spy code key in order to see if it still worked. Jacen was sitting next to him. Ceara stood nearby looking over Jordan's shoulder. Anakin stood across the room fingering his lightsaber and occasionally trying to stop his sister's pacing. "Jaina would you knock it off," Anakin said, "That's driving me crazy." "I'm sorry but I happen to be very worried that we are going to fail and this is how I do it." "Oh, let her be we all handle pressure differently." commented Ceara. "Alright, fine, but she's going to wear a hole in the carpet." "Wohoo!" came from Jordan. This stopped Jaina's pacing and she came running over as did Anakin. "I take it you got in, Jordan." Anakin said. "Yep, sure did," Jordan said, "Okay, Lieutenant JT Burke what do you want to say to your boss." They laughed and Jacen thought for a moment. "Okay, tell them that I was captured by the rebel spies and that I managed to avoid imprisonment by claiming that I was coerced into joining the Empire and that I really wanted to be in the rebellion. They bought my story and gave me a job in the palace and I am awaiting instruction." "Will do," replied Jordan, "It's done." "Let's hope they buy this." Ceara said. "Well all we can do is wait now." said Jaina as she again started to pace. They all got into waiting positions and Ceara sat next to Jordan who was trying to see if he could get any information about the council meeting. Jacen went into his room and closed the door while Anakin frowned over a data pad containing the progress of the Falcon after Chewie had taken it apart again.

The Imperial fleet jumped out of hyperspace in front of Cona. They had been taken by surprise and had been unable to get a distress signal out in time. Ferest commanded that they open communication channels which were soon open. The President of the Arcona of Cona, looking very nervous, appeared out the holo. Ferest said, "This is the Imperial Admiral Ferest, we ask for your surrender and we will not even fire we will take you peacefully." "And if we don't?" asked the Arcona. "We will proceed to demonstrate our new laser on your moon Arn." "You would not do that, Arn is a source of minerals. No surrender." Ferest could tell that the President was calling his bluff. The minerals were very important which is why that had chosen another moon Rho. "Very well," Ferest said closing communication. He knew that Rho would frighten the Arcona enough to surrender. He nodded to Dey who spoke into the communicator. "Prepare to fire upon the moon Rho on my mark." "3, 2, 1, Mark." The trio turned to the window as the moon Rho exploded into tiny pieces. Ceara suddenly

sat very still. Jordan turned to her and said: "Hey, what's the matter?" "There's a system under attack." "What?" asked Jaina, "Which one?" "Teke Rho," answered Ceara, "I have to tell Leia and Han." She dashed out of the room and the others sat stunned. Jacen rushed out having heard her. They decided to wait for her. Jordan looked puzzled. "How did she know that? There wasn't any communications." "Ceara has these powers," Jacen explained, "She can just tell when something like that happens." "Is that common? I mean you three didn't notice." "I felt a little disturbance," said Anakin, "But that's all. It's not common. She has powers that nobody can explain. I've heard that she can do all sorts of unusual things." "Not even Uncle Luke can do some of the things she can," said Jaina, "Once she got angry and she managed to defuse her negative energy into a ball of pure energy and destroy it. It's very strange." "I take it nobody knows how she got those powers." "Noone," said Jacen, "But she doesn't even know who she is or where she's from. Uncle Luke found her on his doorstep 18 years ago. There was no note or anything." "I'm sure glad she's on our side then." answered Jordan as they settled in to wait. Ceara rushed into the Council Meeting. The Council looked up at her in amazement. But upon seeing her face they realized it must be important. "Father, Uncle Han, Aunt Leia, the Teke Rho system is under attack." They did not ask how she knew this. The Council members who did not know about her gift just took it in stride because Luke, Han, and Leia took her seriously. Han Solo started to sound an alarm and was stopped by the look on her face. Ceara's face had become deathly pale and her eyes were shining like stars. "Don't bother," she said her voice unearthly calm, "They surrendered. The Rebels destroyed the moon Rho with their super laser and the frightened Arcona surrendered." The Council members were shocked. They all sat there in stunned silence. Leia put her face in her hands. Han got up to support Ceara who had sunk to the floor from the strain of keeping up her connection with the far off system. Luke rushed over to help and got her a glass of water. "I'm sorry, Aunt Leia," Ceara said when she regained her speech, "I didn't mean to barge in here." "That's alright Ceara," replied Leia, "I'm glad you did." "This is not good at all." said Han. "Leia," said Luke, "Maybe we should break for a little while. I want to take Ceara back and we need to regain our senses." Several of the other Council members agreed. "Yes, your highness," Winter said she had never really gotten out of the habit of that, "We could all use some time to adjust." "Sounds fine with me." replied the Chief of State, "Meeting adjourned."

Jordan and the Solos looked up as the door swung upon. Luke and Solo entered the room leading a still very pale Ceara. Leia following behind noticed that her youngest looked extremely concerned about Ceara but said nothing. "What happened?" asked Jaina as she rushed over to her cousin. "She just held a connection with Arcona," Luke explained, "It took alot out of her." "I'll be fine," insisted Ceara, "I just need to sit down." "Here take my seat." offered Jordan jumping up. Ceara sat down and Jordan went to get her a glass of water. Jacen and Anakin grabbed some more chairs for the others while Luke and Leia hovered around Ceara. "Why don't you two give the kid some air?" said Solo to his wife and brother-in-law. "Thank you, Uncle Han." said a relieved Ceara, "I'm fine just tired." "So, any luck with your spy scheme?" asked Luke. "Nothing yet." said Jacen. "I was afraid you'd say that." came from Han. "Hey wait a minute," said Anakin, who had sat down next to Ceara and therefore was

in front of the computer, "This thing is bleeping." "Bleeping?" asked Jordan, "I think we got our response." He quickly ran over to the computer and typed in the code key. "Here we go, Jacen. They seem to have bought it." Cheers went up from the assembled group and Jordan proceeded to read the message. So you outsmarted them. Good job Burke. What news from Coruscant do you have? Want to know about attack. "That's all?" asked Jaina. "Well, it is a coded message," said Anakin, "Besides I'm sure they're testing him." "What should I reply?" asked Jordan. "Tell them that news of the attack on Arcona had come to late for the Rebels to do anything and that they are in closed session. Tell them that I can't get any concrete info but there are rumors that the Rebels have the plans for the laser, which I know is true because the spies who captured me took them. Tell them that Coruscant is in a panic." "You're not going to tell them that." said a shocked Ceara. "He has to," said Leia, "Otherwise, they won't believe him." "Yep, he's gonna have to leak some info we really would rather keep to keep up this game." said her husband. "Well, Jordan?" asked Jacen. "I'm typing as fast as I can. There we go." "Now we wait." said Anakin. "Again." moaned Jaina On the Palpatine, Ferest said to Dey. "So have you gotten a reply from your spy yet." "Just did sir." "So what do you think?" "Well he said distress signals came too late and that Coruscant is in a panic. I think he may be legit because if he was a rebel he wouldn't have let on that Coruscant is troubled. Of course, I may be wrong." "Well, carry on with him and if he turns on us we'll crush him like a grape." "Very well sir. I'll continue to test him." After Ferest had left, Dey started to meditate on the strange sensation that he had felt at Arcona. It was almost as if someone had been watching him, staring at the goings on who wasn't there. Was it that unknown voice? Or was it someone else? He remembered a girl he knew a long time ago the Emperor's Hand who had supposedly been able to be the Emperor's eyes and mouth through out the galaxy. He wondered if she was still out there and if she had been watching. It was very unsettling. He didn't like being observed by some unknown being. But he poured himself a glass of ale and lifted it high. "Well, whoever you are I hope you enjoy the show because the galaxy will soon be mine, in the name of the Empire." He smiled in triumph as he downed the glass and turned out the light.

CHAPTER 8 Ceara walked down the corridor towards a window. When she looked out of the window she noticed that it looked out upon chaos. Particles of dust and rock blew through the air. She saw stormtroopers roving the streets, frightened people roved around and tried to hide. Then from around the corner a figure came. Ceara jumped and turned to face it. In side a hood was a sinister face and he laughed at her. "See Mara Jade, you tried to disobey me and here is what happens to those who don't obey the Emperor." "But my name isn't Mara!" screamed Ceara. And the figure reached out to strike her ... Ceara screamed again and woken to see a very worried Anakin standing over her. She looked around. She didn't recognize the room she was in. "Where am I?" she gasped as she became completely awake. "You're in my room," said Anakin, "You fell asleep and so I carried you in here. Are you okay?" "Yes, it was just a nightmare. Where is everyone?" "Well, I'm assuming Jacen and Jaina are asleep. They went into their rooms about three hours ago. Jordan left earlier. I think he has the room next to yours but I didn't want him to carry you all that way." "Where have you been sleeping?" "Over in the

chair, ya get used to it being on a ship all the time." "Oh, well I hope I didn't wake anybody else up." "Nah, my room is pretty sound proof besides you know Jaina she can sleep through an explosion." "That's true," Ceara started to sit up, "I really should go back to my room." "No, stay." said Anakin a little too quickly. They looked at each other for a very long minute. Then a flushed Anakin said, "I mean its no big deal. You don't want to have to go all that way then you'll be wide awake. Just stay for the night. The chair's fine. Besides after that screaming, I want to make sure you're okay." "If you're sure?" "Positive, now go back to sleep." Ceara laid back down and pulled the covers up. Anakin went back to his chair. Neither got much sleep for the rest of the night but neither said a word just maintained their silent vigil until morning. The next morning, Ceara headed towards Luke's quarters. The Jedi Master had sent for his prize pupil, and Ceara wondered what he wanted. She hoped he wasn't planning on leaving. She needed him and she wasn't about to go back to Yavin 4 now. She was needed here and she had been toying with the idea of joining the Republican forces in a formal capacity. With the crisis at hand she knew that it was easier to get an official position. She entered Luke's apartment. When she opened the door the room was dark. She lit her lightsaber and walked into the living area. "Luke!" she called into the darkness.

The lights flew on.

"I'm sorry, I was meditating and lost track of time." said an embarrassed looking Luke. "So, Dad, you sent for me?" she asked sitting down. "Yes, I did," he sat down, "There are some things we need to talk about." "Okay." "Now, I know this is probably what you consider meddling and I know that I vowed never to run your life but there are certain things we have to discuss. First of all, are you ever planning to return to your teaching position at the Academy? I know I let you go but I have been short handed and now that I have taken an extended leave of absence I've had to send most of the students on an extended vacation because the teachers that are left are too specialized to handle all of the classes." "I was going to return to teaching but not for a while. I'm sorry Luke but you know I was meant for more than Yavin 4 can offer me. Please understand. "

"I do, I don't mean to sound harsh but you are my best student and teacher. And I'm not just saying that because you are my daughter." "I know that. What else?" "I have heard that you were thinking of training Jaina. I know we had discussed your undertaking of a few students of your own but I've been thinking that you may need some more maturity and thought before you do that. You are nineteen even if your skills are great but its a big responsibility." "I realize that. I was planning on referring her to you. Besides we have a crisis on our hands. There isn't enough time to train Jaina completely." "Alright. What are you plans regarding your stay here?" "I've been thinking about joining the Republican forces. I'm needed here and I'm planning on staying as long as needed. Is that a good idea?" "Of course, little one. I just want you to keep in mind that you've led a very sheltered life. I feel responsible for that and I'm very sorry. I felt that I owed you a normal childhood. So I kept you secluded. I'm very sorry, can you forgive your foolish father?" "For what? For wanting to keep me safe? You've taken very good

care of me and I haven't felt sheltered. I've kept in touch with the world. I visited often. My aunt and uncle are two of the most powerful people in the Republic. You just protected me. I understand that. But what is it you really want to talk about? I can tell that there is something on your mind." "You know me too well. It's about Anakin." At this Ceara's face reddened but she said nothing. "Leia and I have noticed that there is something going on between the two of you. She says that his concern for you is far from cousinly. Am I right?" "Perhaps. I don't know, Luke. He looks at me and I feel things that I've never felt before. And I don't know what to do."

"I knew this day would come," Luke sighed, "I had hoped to better prepared but I'm not. I wish you had a mother to talk to about these things."

"I doubt Mara Jade would be any better at it. In the mean time, I'll talk to Aunt Leia. Okay?"

"I'm glad you have someone to talk too."

"I love you, Luke." she said hugging him.

"I love you too."

He hugged her back and they both laughed.

"So, how are the spy plans going?" "Well. I guess. I don't know. I wish something would happen. This waiting is driving us all crazy and the Imperials haven't made a move yet." "I know and the Council doesn't like it any more than you kids do." "What's going on with that?" "Well, Han's got some crazy idea about hitting them where it hurts. Time was when I'd rush out and do what ever popped in my head like that. Guess I've gotten old. Han was old too. I don't know what happened during that vacation but he's become just as reckless as Anakin." "Well, you know those Solo men. Jacen's no better thank god for me and Jaina. Even though I'm not really a Solo, I'm close enough." "Well, I don't know, daughter of mine, I think you have a bit of an adventurous side too." "Boy, all I get is abuse," laughed Ceara, "I should get going. Jaina and I were supposed to have lunch together. Bye, Dad. I'll see you later." "Bye, Ceara." Ceara left and met Jaina coming to get her. The two girls laughed at the coincidence. They then went off to have lunch. Meanwhile, Anakin was walking in the courtyard when he ran into Jordan Calrissian. Jordan beckoned him to follow and so he did. They ended up in Jordan's room. Jordan switched on the computer. "So what's up?" asked Anakin. "I found this very amazing thing when I was going over the plans for the Superlaser last night." "Yeah, what?" "Well, seems that there might be a weakness in the thing after all. But we'll have to make a special trip to find out." "Would you care to explain? You're killing me over here." "Okay, here goes. When I was studying the plans I found something in code. It was a really tough nut to crack but I finally broke it. Anyway, apparently there is a self destruct mechanism built in just in case. But the only way to activate it is with a certain remote control device. But it apparently hasn't been made yet and the plans for it weren't included with the others. So I did some research and I found out that they have a

factory located in the Hobath system. So if we can get there maybe we can find the remote or at least the plans to make one ourselves. What do you think?" "I think you're a genius! What until I tell the others!" "Hold on, Anakin. I was thinking that a smaller group would be better." "You're right. We're stepping on each other's toes here. Who should we bring?" "I don't know, you, me, maybe one of the girls. Jacen should stay here to keep up his spy thing. Three should be enough although we might want to take the Wookiee too."

"Okay, I need to fill my Dad in and we'll discuss this further. Until then let's keep it between the two of us." "Great."

Anakin bolted out of Jordan's room and towards his parents' apartment. He was half way there when he saw his father going towards the same place. "Dad," Anakin called, "Can I get a word with you?" "Sure, kiddo. Is it something that may upset your mother?" "Probably." "Well then we better not talk in there. I'll go tell Leia that I need to talk to you and I'll be right back." Anakin smiled and waited patiently. He knew that he was interrupting a rare quiet moment for his parents and he felt honored that his father was making time for him. He had heard from Jaina that their father was attempting to make more time for them but Anakin still felt lousy. Solo then came out of the room and they walked down the hallway. "I'm sorry, Dad. I know how few quiet moments you and Mom have so I appreciate you taking the time." "It's okay, Anakin. I promised your mother that I would spend more time with you kids. Besides it looks important. But I would like to get back, um yeah, you know." "It's okay, Dad. I'm an adult I know. So here goes." And Anakin quickly told his father about Jordan's plan. Solo nodded and agreed that it was a great plan. "Okay, son. I'll send Chewie with you. It'll set your mother's mind at ease. Do you need C3PO?" "No, I don't think so. I had all I could take of Goldenrod. I may need Artoo but he's Ceara's now so I'll ask her. That's about all." "You'll have to ask Wedge if he can spare Jaina if you want her. I have a feeling that we may need her expertise but I'm not her direct superior so I'll let Wedge call the shots." "Thanks, Dad." Anakin talked to Admiral Antilles and he said that if at all possible he would need Jaina around. He filled his siblings in on the information. Both agreed that a small force would be necessary and that they needed to stay behind. Anakin and Jordan then decided to approach Ceara with the information. As the two were talking in the courtyard, Ceara walked by. "Hey, Ceara," Jordan called, "Come over here." "What's up?" she asked sitting down next to them. "Jordan has this plan." replied Anakin. Jordan filled Ceara in on their plans and then gave her a moment to process it. "So are you in?" asked Anakin, "Right now it's me, Jordan, Chewie, and Artoo if you can lend us him. Would you like to come? We need another Jedi and your skills are quite useful." "Well." said Ceara. "Come on, Ceara." urged Jordan. "Okay, I'll do it. When do we leave?" "Tomorrow, 09:00. We're meeting in Dock 7." came from Anakin. "Oh, man. Are we using the Falcon?" asked Jordan. "Does it even work this time?" asked Ceara. "Yes, and Yes it does work. Everything's fixed, trust me." The next morning, the team and their family assembled. Leia hugged Anakin and made Chewie promise to take care of him. She hugged Jordan too because he had no family there even though he had had a long talk with his father before. Ceara and Luke didn't say anything to each other but the Force said all their words. Han highfived his son and

then told the Wookiee to take care of his ship. Jaina hugged Jordan and told him that she'd miss their talks, he said he'd miss having her around too. The Solo siblings had a group hug which soon included Ceara and Jordan. Threepio and Artoo said their goodbyes. As the team ascended the ship, Anakin noticed Zeek coming. "Take care of the ship, lad and if you need anything call me." "I will Zeek." Then they got on the ship and took their places. Anakin turned to the others and said: "Well here goes nothing. May the Force be with us." And the Falcon took off into the morning sky.

Chapter 9

The Falcon was in hyperspace.

It had been two days since the team had left Imperial City, Corsucaunt for the Hobath System. Anakin was restless. He sat behind the controls, waiting for something to happen. He would not have been surprised if there were Imperial Interdictors around the Hobath System. They would take the Falcon out of hyperspace, and they wouldn't be able to leave. But, with just a few more minutes before the Falcon would be at the drop point, he didn't think that it would happen now.

Artoo was buzzing about the back of the ship, making some last minute adjustments to the computers. Jordan and Chewie sat down playing sabacc, of course, Chewie won every time. Meanwhile the other members of the team armed their weapons and prepared for battle. Ceara felt cold, she felt disoriented, she walked up to the cockpit, and sat down next to Anakin.

He smiled, "How are you?"

"I don't know," she said, "I feel a disturbance, something huge in the Force, something bigger than anything Luke told me about."

"Maybe it's hyperlag," Anakin said, "It was common to the early Jedi, when they were in Hyperspace more than eighteen hours."

Ceara smiled, "How did you know about that?"

Anakin's smile faded, and he turned to the controls, "I'm a Jedi you know even though I may not have used the Force for a long time. One of Uncle Luke's friends, one of my father's friends, Kyp Durrone, told me about it, about fourteen years ago, before he died."

"Kyp's dead?" Ceara asked, "When? How?"

"He died about twelve years ago, you were probably too young to remember," Anakin said, "He was on a survey for the Academy, about the time that Jacen and I visited the Academy for our lessons in the Force. He went out to the Dagobah System, Luke asked him to retrieve something, a relic of Master Yoda's, word had it that the X-Wing that he was travelling in had been tampered with, he never came back. Uncle Luke, and the Council believed when he set down to land, his engine systems failed, and the ship went into the side of the mountain, and exploded."

There was a few moments of silence, when the exitHyper went off, Anakin called back, "All hands to battle stations, we're coming out in ten seconds, Jordan, get to a cannon, Chewie, take the conn." The people ran to the places where they were to go.

Jordan called to Anakin, "Why do we need the cannons?"

"Jord," Anakin said, "Do you really expect there to not be any defenses?"

"I guess not," he said, as he jumped down into the seat, he activated the cannon, and looked out the port, "Here they come."

TIE Fighters. Twenty of them came rushing at the freighter, Anakin glanced out at the planet.

"There aren't any Star Destroyers, it'll take a few hours to get reinforcements from the planet. Chewie, give me full shields on the aft quarter, then keep going for the planet, and keep redirecting the power from the hyperdrive and the replicators into the engines." Chewie growled his reply.

Anakin located the communications satellite, and fired at it, destroying it instantly.

A few moments later, three of the TIE Fighters had been destroyed. Anakin shot one of the TIEs which exploded destroying another TIE fighter in the process. He smiled.

Suddenly a blast hit the cockpit. Ceara screamed as the control panel she was at exploded. She fell to the ground unconscious. Chewbacca saw her and gently moved her into the living area. He then growled down to Anakin who scored another three hits. "Is she okay?" he yelled back up.

Chewie answered him.

"Get back to the cockpit." Chewie growled and ran back to the cockpit. Artoo followed him.

Jordan, who had now scored four TIEs yelled up to Anakin, "How much longer do you think this will be?"

"Uh," Anakin replied, "A few minutes." he said, as he blew a TIE Bomber into oblivion.

He thought for a moment, "This is too easy," he said, "I don't get it."

"There's still four more," Jordan said, then, a TIE started making a suicide run.

"What the hell is he doing?" Anakin asked, then he figured out what was happening.

"Chewie!" he yelled, "Set course: bearing three-two-three-oh, mark seven-five, and hurry!"

The ship lurched and Anakin took out the fighter in one blast. Then, the remaining TIEs fired at the engines, the ship rocked, and Anakin almost fell out of his seat.

"Damage report, Chewie!" he yelled.

Chewie growled, as he checked the logs, then, yelled to Anakin. "Damn!" he cursed, "Jordan, keep getting them off of us!"

He jumped down from the gun.

"Where the hell are you going?" Jordan asked.

"Hold on!" Anakin yelled as he raced to the cockpit.

He sat in the pilot's seat and nodded to Chewie. Who ran to the back with Artoo and they worked on repairs.

"Two more, Anakin!" Jordan yelled.

"Well," Anakin replied, as he banked the ship, "We might not have to worry about it, we're approaching the planet. I'm going for an deep orbital dive, pulling the shields to the front, those TIEs won't survive."

"Hey," Jordan yelled in his headset, "What about me? If you do an orbital dive, chances are the cannons'll heat up really quickly."

"Nah," Anakin said, "My dad put a cooling system in. Hang on, everybody!"

The Falcon dove into the atmosphere. The three TIEs followed very closely behind, then Anakin moved the controls swiftly, and the TIEs burned up. Anakin's smile was as big as a moon.

"Yahoo!!" he yelled.

Jordan smiled as well, and he shook his head as he removed the headset, and jumped out of the pit.

Anakin steered the Falcon to a small clearing in the trees. He landed the ship, and went back to check on his other passenger. Ceara lie across a small bed. Anakin saw her and realized how beautiful she was. He leaned down, and examed the scars on her face. They were small, but they were enough to drive her away from consciousness. He leaned down, and smoothed her long red brown hair. He smiled and then kissed her. She slowly came to and smiled at Anakin.

"Hello, stranger." she said silently.

Anakin pulled the hair that was still in her face, away. "Hey," he whispered, "You gave me quite a scare, there."

"I guess I'm pretty good at that," she smiled, then, she reached for a pain in her head, "Where are we?"

"We're on the planet where we're supposed to be," he said, "Are you okay? We need to get moving."

She groaned, "I guess so," she tried to get up, "Help me."

Anakin helped her up, and they started out of the back of the ship.

Luke hit the table. "We should've heard from them by now."

He looked over at Wedge, who was standing with Han and Jacen at Republic Headquarters.

Wedge dropped the pad he was holding, "Luke, they're going to be fine. If I know Anakin, they're already making their way into the compound."

Jacen went over, and put a hand on his uncle's shoulder.

"Uncle Luke," he said, "From knowing Anakin for all of my life, and knowing Jordan and Ceara like I do, chances are they're fine."

"Don't worry about it, kid," Han said, "They'll be fine."

Zeek made his way into the command center, "Hey, Han." he said.

"Hey, Zeek," Han returned, "How ya doing, buddy?"

"Pretty good," he said, "to be expected."

Han walked over to check a computer console, a droid, KX-7 walked up to Han with a report, "Thank you," Han said.

"Hey, Zeek," Wedge said, "Is your real name Jarvis Kaldow?"

"Why," Zeek said, "It's been ages since anyone called me that, as a matter of fact it is."

"Well," Wedge smiled, "I remember first reading your report on the Gammorean G7-Class Fighter, when I was just getting into flying, when I was about twelve," he continued, "It was really good."

"Thanks, Admiral," he said.

"Call me Wedge." he said.

"All right," he glanced over at Jacen, "Wedge."

"There's one thing that I was curious about," Wedge said, "That was--"

An alarm cut him off, Jacen checked it.

"Dad," he said, "We've got a problem."

Han moved over to where Jacen was standing, and glanced at the console, he hit in a few keystrokes.

"Damn," he cursed, "The Republic Fleet at Korma reports that the Imperial Fleet is there, and they're threatening the planet."

Han shook his head, and he moved to the other side of the table, he hit a button, and announced:

"Attention: This is General Solo. We've got a crisis on our hands. The Imperial Fleet that attacked Arcona is now in the Korma System. We've got a major crisis on our hands, all fighters will launch to protect this system..."

He turned to Wedge and Jacen who moved over to control panels, "But first, we need to solve the problem, and figure out which planet will be the next target."

Wedge glanced over to Jacen, "Do you have any idea?"

Jacen frowned, and shook his head, 'no'

..."Red and Gold Squadrons will report to the Independence, immediately, we will head into hyperspace immediately, and attempt to stop the Imperial Fleet at Korma. Now, all officers to your battle stations, we will maintain a red alert status until the situation has been stopped. If we can't stop it, then there will be no other choice than to evacuate Corsucaunt, and make a stand elsewhere. Solo out."

Han glanced over at Wedge, Jacen and Luke who still stood around, he glared at them "What are you waiting for. Move!"

Then, the entire room was empty; except for Zeek and Han. Zeek shook his head, "Han, ol' boy. It's time to retire."

Han sighed, "Look, Zeek, I've tried. But, they pulled me back in ten years later."

"Well then, tell them off!" Zeek said.

"How can I tell off my own wife?" Han yelled.

"Well," Zeek shrugged, "That could be a problem."

Han put his hands on the back of his head, and started walking around, "I just can't handle it, anymore. You're right, vacations didn't

help, neither did stress-releasing programs. After this mission is over, my military career is over."

"That's my boy," Zeek said.

"You'd better excuse me," he said, "I better get to the Independence."

"All right," Zeek said, "Take care of yourself, buddy."

"You too," Han said, as he walked out the door.

The Palpatine hung in orbit of Korma. Dey and Darkrider stood next to Ferest, who was contemplating.

"To destroy a planet, or not to destroy a planet. Which shall I do. Millions of lives in the balance, all in my hand. If I push the button, they die. I say, we wait."

"Sir," Darkrider said, "We can't just sit here, we've got to show some act of aggression."

"I don't think so," Dey said, "We can't just do this, the Rebellion is a group that should be toyed with."

"All right," he said, "Captain. Take down a landing ship, take Assault Gunboats, some AT-ATs and AT-STs, and bring a brigade of my best troops. We're going to do all three things."

"Aye sir." Darkrider said, and he left the bridge.

"Sir," Dey said, "Letting Captain Darkrider lead a group of our finest into battle is suicide."

"Colonel," the Admiral turned to him, "Why?"

"Because," he smiled, "The Captain's toying with my career, and my life right now."

"Oh," he said, "I see. Well, we can't have that, can we? What do you want me to do about it? You can take care of yourself."

Dey's face turned cold, "May I speak freely, sir?"

Ferest nodded.

"Sir," he said, "Darkrider is one of the worst officers I've ever seen. Ever since I came on board, he's been insubordinate, overly anxious to get me in trouble, and ready to kill me at any cost. I can't believe you're just sitting by and watching it, sir."

Ferest glanced back, then turned his chair around, "You're the one who started it, Sal. If you didn't put his command abilities down, this never would have happened. I suggest you apologize."

"Sir," he said, "I have nothing to apologize for."

"Nevertheless," Ferest stood up, "Captain Darkrider may believe that you did."

"It's too late for that now," Dey said, "He's made several attempts to get me off this ship. I suggest you have this talk with him." Dey walked over to his post, angrily.

Jaina sat on the bridge of the Independence. The red alert lights flared around her as she moved her chair to communications. Being the senior officer present, she was in command. She awaited the arrival of the other command officers, so they could head the Imperial Fleet off at Korma. Then, they arrived. Jacen took his place at the helm. Han took the command chair and Luke and Wedge stood waiting at the viewscreen. Jaina pushed her headset into her ear, she was getting a message.

She turned to her father, "General Solo," she said. It was no time, or place to call him 'dad.'

"What is it?" he turned and asked.

"I'm getting a personal message from the Chief of State sir," she pushed the headset in again, "it reads, "Good luck Han."

"Acknowledge the message, Lieutenant." Han said, as he turned the chair back toward the viewscreen.

Jaina acknowledged. Han saw fighters come into range in front of him, he shook his head.

"All craft, prepare to enter hyperspace, set your course for Korma."

Red Leader's voice came over the speaker. "Course plotted and laid in. Hyperspace at your command, sir."

"On my mark," Han said, "Let's move."

Anakin stood at the tactical table on the Falcon, his team stood around him. "...Now, we have to enter the compound at this location," He pointed to an area on the 2D viewscreen, "Chewie, you and R2 will create a diversion, while Ceara, Jordan, myself, and the rest of our team enter the compound. Jansen, you'll lead your team to this point, right outside the compound, I expect there to be a few Stormtroopers out there."

"How do you define a few?" Jansen asked. A slight silent bit of laughter went up over the crowd.

Anakin smiled, "I'd say there'll probably be about thirty or forty."

Jansen nodded his head, "Oh, great."

"Now," Anakin said, "Jordan believes the plans are located in that building," he pointed to it, "We're going to have to do some heavy fighting to get that far into the compound."

Ceara spoke up, "Wouldn't it be easier if we made a more discrete move into the base?"

"What do you mean?" Jansen asked.

"Well, if we try to get over the wall, wouldn't that be easier?"

Anakin shook his head, "Most Imperial Compounds have a forcefield that blocks the wall for at least thirty meters. The most direct route, for that matter the only route in would be the main entrance."

Ceara nodded.

Anakin looked at his team, "Any questions?"

The crowd shook their heads. "All right," Anakin smiled, "Let's do our job and get out of here. Get your weapons."

The crowd dispersed, and Anakin bowed his head, and whispered, "And may the Force be with us."

Chapter 10

The Imperial ground forces on Korma had just landed outside of the Republic's sensor range. Darkrider stood outside, watching the Speeder Bikes and AT-STs being unloaded, while the AT-ATs stomped out of the larger cargo carriers. He took out his comlink, "Darkrider to Palpatine, come in Admiral."

The Admiral's voice came over the speakers, "We read you, Captain."

"Our forces are ready for battle," he smiled, "Just give us the order, and we'll launch the attack."

"Not quite yet, Captain," Ferest said.

Darkrider swallowed, "What do you mean, sir?"

"Captain," Ferest said, "We have to give the Rebels a threat, first of all."

The commander of the Republic Base on Korma, Commander Jak Regal zipped up his uniform, as he climbed the stairs leading to the stronghold, high above the base, he reached a Lieutenant who handed the Commander a pad, "What is it?"

"We're receiving a communication from the Ultra Star Destroyer in orbit, sir," he said, as they continued up the last stairs to the lookout, "They'd like to discuss terms of our surrender."

The reached the top of the stairs, and the Lieutenant ran to his post. Jak stood next to the viewer, "On screen, Lieutenant."

The Lieutenant nodded, and the ominous face of Admiral Seth Ferest filled the screen.

"Imperial Commander," Jak said, "I'm Commander Ja--"

"I don't care who you are," Ferest interrupted, "You will surrender your base, or it will be destroyed."

Jak laughed. "I'm sorry, Commander. I will not surrender this base."

"You will be sorry," Ferest said, "We will not be as `nice' to you as we were to the Arcona, you will watch each other die." He cut the communications.

The Lieutenant glanced back at Jak, "What does he mean?"

"You got me," Jak said.

"Sir," another Lieutenant called, "I'm receiving signals from the south. It's an invasion fleet."

"Go to Double Red Alert!" Jak yelled, as he stepped down, and looked to the south, "Prepare the troops." Everyone just stood there, Jak looked back, "Well, come on," he said, "Let's move!"

Darkrider sat in the AT-AT, he watched the massive AT-ATs, the AT-STs, and the other craft in front of him, pummel the look out base. He smiled, and armed his own cannon, he fired at one of the Rebels fleeing from the scene, and burned him down to his shoes.

Dey ran to the alert center, he saw a signal from the planet was lost.

"Sir," he yelled, "We've lost contact from one of the AT-STs. It looks like they have tighter defenses than we thought." He hit a button, and the screen filled with attack droids, that pummeled the helpless speeders and AT-STs.

"Damn," Ferest yelled, he opened the comlink back up to Darkrider's AT-AT, "Darkrider," he yelled, "Those Rebel bastards have Class-twelve Attack Vipers."

"Class-twelve?" he asked, "I need some more fire power!"

"We're putting most of our effort into this attack," Dey interrupted, "What can we give you that you don't already have?"

"TIE Advanceds," Darkrider called back, "I need a hundred TIE Advanceds."

"Are you sure those things'll hold up under gravity?" Ferest asked.

"Well," he said, "We can always try."

Ferest looked over at Dey, who nodded, "I think it's our only chance."

Ferest thought it over for a moment, then nodded, he hit another button, "I need one-hundred TIE Advanced pilots, report to your stations, at go under the atmosphere, Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Delta Squads, to your ships." He terminated the link.

"Thank you sir," Darkrider said. Then, Ferest terminated that link.

The Republic fleet was in hyperspace. Han looked over the schematics for the Korma base. He turned off the monitor, and walked over to where Luke was leaning over the railing. Han stood with his hands crossed behind his back.

"Lovely night in hyperspace," Han said.

Luke continued his gaze. Han put his hand on Luke's shoulder, "Hey, what's wrong?"

Luke turned slowly, he looked at his brother-in-law. "I don't know," he said, " just have this feeling that somebody, somewhere is walking into a trap. And, I have a very bad feeling that it's Ceara and Anakin."

Han turned his head quickly, then turned back slowly, "Luke, you've got to realize that every tremor in the Force may not be what you- -"

"It's not a tremor," Luke interrupted, "It's a feeling. A deep, dark feeling. It's like nothing I've felt since...", his voice trailed off, he thought about the last time he felt this feeling...

Luke snapped out of it, as he heard Han repeating his name. Luke turned to him. " The Dark Side.... returns."

"What?" Han asked, "The Dark Side... the force?"

Luke nodded. We're getting closer, he thought. "I don't understand it. Even the reincarnated Emperor didn't give me this feeling, neither did Joruu C'Boath. Just the Emperor, on the Death Star."

"Luke!" he yelled, as Luke fainted.

His friends rushed to his side. Jacen felt his pulse, and opened a commlink, "Medical team to the bridge."

The teams left the Falcon. They stayed together, all of them had a laser rifle in their hands, except for Ceara. They walked through the high brush. They walked for several hours, until they finally reached the

edge of the compound. Chewie and Artoo moved to the compound's back entrance. Jansen's team moved to the other side on the left of the door. Ceara, Anakin, Jordan and three other troops stayed in the brush.

Then, Ceara whispered to Anakin, "Where's our diversion?"

Then, it came, a laser was fired, and Anakin recognized that sound, it was Chewie's bowblaster. Anakin nodded to Jansen. Anakin ran in, staying low. A few troopers were still in the area. One of the troopers saw Anakin, luckily Anakin saw him first, and fired. Ceara lit her saber. She jumped one of the guards, and he fell. Jordan stayed in the shadows of the buildings.

Anakin rolled on the ground. He fired at another soldier, who hit the ground. Jansen ran into the compound, the twelve officers fired several shots at the stormtroopers.

Jansen yelled, "Anakin! Go!"

Anakin nodded, Ceara followed close behind him. They found Jordan, and backed up against the wall. Anakin looked at Ceara, who held her lightsaber very tightly, "Now what?"

Jansen continued to fire. One of the security officers was shot. He fell to the ground. Jansen took cover behind a control panel. One of the Stormtroopers on the open level tried to move to shoot Jansen. Another security officer shot the Stormtrooper.

Anakin looked out, the entrance to the building was clear, thanks to Jansen and his team. All they had to do was run to that door and open it.

Anakin looked at Jordan, "Go for it, I'll cover you."

Jordan ran across the compound, and got near the door, he inserted an access code: ACCESS DENIED. Damn, he thought. He inserted another one: ACCESS DENIED. He tried again: ACCESS DENIED. He hit the computer, "Damnit!" he yelled, "What's with this thing?" Then, the door opened, he looked at the monitor: CODE ACCEPTED. He laughed, and ran in.

Anakin and Ceara looked at the door, Jordan gave them the signal.

"Go," Jordan said.

She started to run, but Anakin pulled on her arm -- he kissed her, "Good luck," he said.

Ceara looked in his eyes for a moment, then snapped out of it, and ran to the door.

Jordan smiled when she arrived, "As soon as Anakin gets here, let's lock the door, and get to work."

Anakin fell in the door a few moments later. Ceara helped him up, and he looked into her eyes, she looked back. They found themselves holding each other, until the sound of laser blasts stopped them. Jordan locked the door. Now, there was a blast door that stood ahead of them.

"What do we do now?" Anakin asked.

"This," Jordan asked, he took out a laser cutter from his computer case. "It'll take me some time, I have to get to the door mechanism." He started cutting.

Outside, Jansen fired another shot at another Stormtrooper. Chewie came running through the front access, and kneeled behind the computer terminal next to Jansen. Chewie growled. Jansen looked at him, "Good job, Chewie. Now, let's hold them off until Anakin and the others can get there job done."

Artoo came up to the two, he beeped something to Chewie. Chewie replied with a huge growl of agreement. Artoo moved out to the center of the compound. He beeped, and let out a gasp. The troops on the upper level fell to the ground. Chewie and Jansen got up from behind the terminal. The other guards got up as well.

"Good job Artoo," Jansen said.

But then, out of a building, thirty new troopers came out. One of them fired a laser directly at Artoo. He squirmed, and electricity flew everywhere. Artoo fell to the ground. Jansen fired at the trooper, and looked at Artoo. He shook his head, and continued firing at the troopers around him and his friends.

Luke laid in the infirmary on the Independence, unconscious. He had some machinery hooked up to him. Han stood over the fallen Jedi helpless. Wedge and Jacen were talking to the doctor. Wedge, Jacen, and the doctor moved over to Han. Wedge looked at , "General, Doctor Ten'er has something to report."

"We've been running some tests," the Bothan doctor said, "It appears that Jedi Skywalker is suffering from the ancient Jedi disease -- Parralax A. And, it looks like he's had it for quite some time. It effects the nervous and respiratory systems, as well as almost all the senses. The Jedi can feel pain at any moment, can hear a voice, can have a feeling. These can be directed from the Force, but I'm not a Jedi Doctor, so I don't exactly know."

Han nodded, "But, will Luke be all right?"

Ten'er breathed for a moment, "It's too early to tell. He'll be around in a few hours, but he will be very disorientated. I'd like to learn all that I can about this disease, before I try to implement treatment. But, our database doesn't have Old Republic medical files. I don't even know if Imperial City has any records on ancient Jedi diseases, but I'd like to open a link to the Medical Database on Corsucaunt, as soon as possible."

"As soon as we drop out of hyperspace," Wedge said, "I'll see what I can do."

"All right," Ten'er said, "Thank you, Admiral."

The doctor looked confused for a second but just said, "Any help that you can give will be much appreciated Madame Skywalker."

He then turned to leave. "Wait," Han said, "Is there any chance that Jacen has it?"

The doctor looked at Han, "I don't know, I'll have to hold the Captain for tests, if he desires to know."

Jacen nodded, "I think that would be wise."

"I think Jaina should also come in for further testing," Han said, "I'll ask her when we go up to the bridge. Thank you, doctor."

Han and Wedge stepped outside. Wedge headed for the lift, but Han stopped him.

"Wedge," Han said, "You're my second-in-command, you're also one of my oldest and dearest friends. This is why I'm telling you first."

"What is it, sir?" Wedge asked.

"This is friend-to-friend, not commander to second-in-command," Han said, "Call me Han."

"All right," Wedge said, "Han."

"I am retiring after this Ultra Star Destroyer thing is over," he said, "After that day, I will no longer be in charge of our military. You will."

"What?" Wedge asked, "I thought--"

"No," Han said, "My military career is over after this battle. I realized, during my short vacation that I need a permanent vacation from the military. It's over, Wedge. Or, should I say, after tomorrow--Fleet Admiral Antilles."

"Han," he said, "I outranked you from the start," he sighed, "The reason I stepped out of the way, was because I didn't want this responsibility, and because you were one of the greatest military heroes of the Rebellion and the Republic. You dropped your commission twice, and you picked it up again. But, we never had this conversation before today. I think I might be ready for it now. I accept, and I'm honored, Han."

Han smiled. The two walked down the hall, Han hit Wedge on the back. Then, a comm buzz alerted them.

"Bridge to General Solo," Jaina's voice said, "We're approaching Korma. We'll be arriving in six minutes."

"We're on our way," Han said, and they rushed to the lift.

Chapter 11

On Hobath Four Jansen shot the last of the second wave of Stormtroopers. He ran out to Artoo. Artoo bleeped, his body had an exposed section. Jansen reached inside, and pulled out a handful of grease.

"I don't believe this," he shook his head, as Chewie ran up to help him.

Chewie growled. Jansen nodded, he yelled over to two officers, "Cartaino! Hansen! Get Artoo back to the Falcon."

"Yes sir," they acknowledged.

They walked away, carrying the damaged droid.

Jansen put his blaster in the holster, and walked over to a ladder, his aide came up to him.

"This'll be a good way to keep a lookout until Anakin and the others are done." He climbed the ladder, Chewie, and three of his fellow officers followed him. They took equidistant positions above the area, and waited.

"Damn, I'm good," Jordan said as the covering of the mechanism fell to the ground.

"Now," he said, as he reached deep into the hole, "I'm gonna disable it, and open the door." He strained for a few seconds, then smiled, "Bingo."

The door opened, into the dim room. Three Imperial Officers stood inside, one standing at a console, near a reactor core, and two drinking over a table. Anakin walked through the door, Ceara and Jordan stood behind him. Anakin's blaster was raised, and pointed straight at the one at the console's head. "Now," he smiled, "You'll do as I say."

The three troopers sat, tied up next to the reactor, gagged and without their uniforms. Anakin stood next to Ceara, who was standing next to Jordan, who was digging into the computer system.

"Now," Jordan said, "This system is fairly old, I can be in, in less than three minutes."

Anakin put his hand on Ceara's shoulder, "When we get out of there, would you like to go to dinner some time?"

Ceara looked back at Anakin, and smiled. "I'd like that," she said.

Anakin nodded, "Good," he said.

Jordan smiled, when a beep went off, "Got it! The system is a high-level security system on the Palpatine. And, it looks like I've got the plans, right here." A picture of what they were looking for came on the screen.

Anakin nodded, "All right," he said, "Now that we've got it, let's get the hell out of here, all right?"

"I'm afraid it won't be that easy," a voice said from behind a door, the three freedom fighters turned around to see seven Imperial soldiers, and three Stormtroopers walked out behind of the wall. "Lady, and gentlemen, I'm Lieutenant Urick Vanel, leader of the Hobath Research Facility, and I'm afraid you are under arrest for breaking and entering. At least, two of you are."

"What?" Anakin asked, "I don't--"

Jordan spoke up, "I'm afraid I'm going to have to take your blaster, Anakin, and your lightsaber, Ceara."

"Jordan?" Ceara asked, in awe.

"Yes, Ceara," he said, "I'm sorry."

Then, Chewbacca, Jansen and the others walked into the compound, with their hands above their heads, followed by Stormtroopers.

"All right," Vanel said, "Let's go."

Anakin glared at Jordan, as he felt a Stormtroopers blaster in his back. Jordan frowned as Anakin and the others walked by him. Like father, like son, he thought. But, Jordan knew he would retaliate.

The fleet arrived. The Palpatine still sat in orbit, with a few of her escorts no on other patrols. Han saw this massive sight, and gaped, but still managed to utter out the words, "All wings report in."

"Red Leader standing by."

"Red Six standing by."

"Red Twelve standing by."

"Red Three standing by."

"Red Eighteen standing by."

"Red Nine standing by."

It continued until all thirty pilots of Red Squadron reported, and all twenty five of Gold reported. Han then looked at Wedge, and nodded, "Lock S-Foils into attack position," Wedge said.

The foils on the E-Wings came down, and the Mon Cal Fighters came flying into attack formation, heading directly for the Palpatine. Han smiled, and whispered, "May the Force be with us."

Wedge glanced over at Han, and smirked. So, Han finally appreciates the Force. Good job, my friend.

Red Eighteen flew across the port bow of the Palpatine. Han could hear Red Leader reprimanding him, "We can't try any attack runs yet, we want them to move first, so hold your fire, Red Eighteen."

They entered the section and stayed at a standstill.

On the bridge, the communications officer said, "Sir, the Palpatine is hailing us."

Han nodded, and looked at Wedge. "Shall we?" Han asked.

"Let's," Wedge responded. The two walked to the forward of the bridge, and stood in front of the monitor.

A face appeared on the screen. Han nodded, and said, "Imperial Admiral, I'm General Han Solo, and this is my first officer Admiral Wedge Antilles."

"Ahh," Ferest said, "the great Han Solo and Wedge Antilles, heroes of the Rebellion, and the Republic. I am Admiral Seth Ferrest, commanding officer of the Palpatine, and leader of the Empire, you could call me Emperor Ferest if you'd like, but personally I don't like being known that--"

"Fine," Han raised his hand, "What do you want?"

"No," the Admiral frowned, "What do you want? Launching your fighters is an act of war."

"Maybe so," Han said, "But, sitting in orbit of a Republic Base could also be considered an act of war."

"Well," Ferest said, "You do have me there. What are your terms, General?"

Han smiled, "That's better. My terms are: you will leave this area immediately, and return to Imperial Space, you will hand yourself over as a military prisoner, and if you do have the superlaser on board the Palpatine, you will drop it into space at once."

Ferest thought for a moment. "No dice, General," he said, and the viewer turned off.

The communications officer frowned, "Sir," he said, "I'm picking up one thousand new comm signals in the area. TIEs, sir. We're outnumbered."

"Prepare to retreat," Han said, "Set a course for Corsucaunt, and tell the fighters to hold off as long as they can, then retreat to any Republic Base."

"Course laid in, sir," the helm officer said.

"Let's go," Han said.

Wedge looked over at him, "General--"

"There was only one way out!" Han said, "I was stuck between a rock and a hard place, if I didn't go, they'd still be out there, destroying planets, and if we stayed, we'd be dead. It may cost more lives in the end. But, it was the safest thing to do, but we will have another chance."

"Yes, sir," Wedge said.

Han watched the space around him turn to a stream of light.

Chapter 12

Ceara sat in the brig. She never felt so betrayed. She realized now, that Jordan infiltrated the Republic using Lando. As soon as she got out of there, she would feel better. Anakin stood up looking out at the stormtrooper, who sat just out of his reach, if this forcefield was lowered. He touched it, gently. Electrical impulses moved up his hand.

"I wouldn't suggest that," the Stormtrooper said, "That's a thirty-thousand volt forcefield."

"Sorry," Anakin said. He walked back over by Ceara.

Ceara saw the pain in his eyes. Betrayed. All of them. Then, more Stormtroopers came in. They pushed Jansen, Chewbacca and three other security officers into the room. Lieutenant Vanel followed him, he had a glove with some sort of electrical system on it. Chewie was screaming, and his arm was cut open, and bleeding heavily, as he struggled with his guard. The troopers pushed them into the other cell, and held Jansen down. Vanel lifted his hand to Jansen's face. He pushed his fingers together, and electrical impulses shot from his hand. "Now, Mr. Jansen... where's the ship you came in."

"Like hell I'm going to tell you that!" he screamed.

Vanel stayed calm, "All right, we'll start out a little less painful, surge 36."

He stuck his hand around Jansen's neck, and he screamed. He let go. Jansen fell, he came to, but was very shocked.

"Tell me, Mr. Jansen, now."

He clinched his teeth together, "I won't tell you!" He stood up, and strangled the Lieutenant. Then, as he did that, Ceara saw his face turn cold, as a ray emanated from a guard's gun. He fell, and didn't get up. He was dead.

Ceara leaned into Anakin's shoulder, and began to cry. Anakin held her tightly, and watched as they dragged the body away.

"Well," Vanel said calmly, like this never happened, "Now you know what we'll do if you defy us. We'll be back in a few hours, to ask another one of you fine people a few questions." And, he and all of the guards left.

Ceara pulled away from Anakin's shoulder. Anakin pulled the hair back from her face.

He looked deeply into her eyes, and said, "There's something that I've wanted to tell you for a long time, Ceara... ever since I saw you on Corsucaunt, I realized that... I love you."

Ceara was still shaken (not scared fear is part of the dark side), and was still being held by Anakin, and said, "I love you, too, Anakin... I always have... I always will." And the two kissed.

The door opened, and the two separated, to see Jordan walking in. "Anakin, you've got to listen to--"

"I'm not listening to anything that comes out of your mouth, Jordan," Anakin said.

"Just listen, damnit!"

The room became silent. "I had to do it," he said, "The Imperials coded a message to me on Pinnacle, along with the plans. Someone in the Empire had this all planned out. I was a pawn. But, I have the information. I have the plans, and have sent them to the Falcon, those who have survived have the information, and are building the remote as we speak."

"And how are we to believe you?" Ceara asked.

He walked up to the forcefield, "You're going to have to believe me on this on, Ceara. I can't deny that I did this, maybe for profit, maybe to get my name cleared, maybe just to do something for the underdog. But now, I feel as if I've betrayed everyone."

"Prove it," Anakin said, "Let us out."

"I can't now," Jordan said, "I will, but you're going to have to sit tight for a while. Just hang on, and I'll get you out of there. Okay?"

No one answered, and Jordan left. Ceara went to Anakin, and they stayed in each others arms, for a long time.

Luke was awake. He was awake, and moving around. He was awake, moving around, and annoying the doctors. He wasn't sure what was happening to him, but he knew it was not good.

He looked at Jacen and Jaina who were sitting getting tests done, "Well, kids. Looks like there could be a problem with the new Jedi."

"Well," Jacen said, "Everybody's sick at sometime or another, you just happen to be the first, Uncle Luke."

"Yeah," Jaina said, "Don't worry, I'm sure you'll be fine."

"I hope so," he said, "Because somebody's gotta lead you guys into a new era. And, without some of my other people, it just doesn't seem like it's working."

"You'll be more than fine and don't worry about the Jedi, they'd rather have you well then anything else." said Jacen.

"Ceara..." he murmured.

A comm signal went off, "Bridge to Skywalker."

Luke walked over to the comm system, "Skywalker here."

"We need you on the bridge, immediately, sir."

"I'm on my way." he said.

The doctor walked over to him.

"You aren't leaving," he said.

"Yes I am." he said mysteriously.

"Yes-- you are." the doctor returned.

He smiled at Jacen and Jaina, and walked out the door. The doctor stood there thinking about how that happened, he shrugged, and went back to his work.

Han and Wedge stood on the bridge. Luke walked onto the bridge, and walked over to them.

"We've just dropped out of hyperspace," Wedge said, "We have the Wild Karrde in orbit of Coruscant. They want to talk to you, Luke."

"On screen," he said, as he turned towards the viewer.

Talon's face appeared on the screen, and looked very old, and grey, similar to Luke's and Han's and Wedge's. Certainly older than the last time they saw each other.

"Ahh," Talon said, "Luke, how are you doing?"

"Fine, Talon," he returned, "How about you?"

"Oh, getting along," he said.

"What's the reason for the visit?" Han asked.

"I have some information for your daughter, Luke."

Luke nodded, and looked as if he was waiting, "What would that be, Mr. Kardde?"

"I've located Mara Jade," he said, "She is on the third planet in the Deviiion system. She won't talk to anyone but you, Luke."

"And what do you want to do about it?" Luke asked.

Talon laughed, "Well, I'd like you to come with me to Deviiion Three, and talk to her. It's not that hard to figure out."

"I'll come over immediately, but I'll need some assistance," he said.

"What do you mean-- assistance?" he asked.

"Very simple," Luke said, "My niece and nephew, the twins Jaina and Jacen Solo, you might remember them when they were babies and--"

"Fine," Talon rose a hand, "Take a shuttle over, we'll leave as soon as you arrive."

"I'll come over in a few minutes."

"See you then," Talon said, and the screen flickered off.

"Luke," Han stopped him as he walked off, "Are you sure about this?"

"Yes, Han," he said, "And I don't need your permission. I'm going over, right now."

"All right but be careful," he said.

"I will," Luke nodded, "and may the force be with you all."

He walked out the door, and Han looked at that door, and whispered, "And with you, Luke."

A few minutes later, the Wild Karrde turned, and jumped into warped space, off to find Mara.

The ground rocked around Darkrider's AT-AT. Republic Attack Vipers kept firing against the hull. He screamed, as an explosion fired the back of the cockpit. He hit a comm switch, "Darkrider to Ferrest!"

"Go ahead, Captain," he said calmly.

"Get us out of here, Admiral!" he yelled, "We can't take much more of this."

"Hold off as long as possible," he said, "We've still got a few problems up here."

The cockpit flared again, his copilot was shoved forward, then another explosion took out the younger officer. He was alone now. "Computer," he said, "Give me full shields."

The computer replied, "Negative power on shields, hull strength down to thirty-one percent."

A bolt rocked the AT-AT. "How many more hits can this thing take?" he yelled.

"At least five more hits can be sustained, before the hull collapses."

"Damn," he yelled. One bolt hit the ship. Four left. He looked out at the Vipers going towards him. So, this is the end, he thought. Dying in a three-thousand ton walking flea bag. He didn't like it one bit. Another hit. Three left. To his family, to his friends, he would take these last seconds. Two left. He fired everything that was left into the Viper in front of him. One left. Goodbye to this universe, he thought... The final hit... he saw everything light up, and darken as he realized it was over...

"Captain Darkrider's AT-AT is gone," Dey said, somewhere between happiness and sadness, "I think it's time to use the weapon."

"You're right, Dey," Ferrest said.

"Mr. Tagge," he called, "engage superlaser. Fire when ready."

Tagge nodded, he hit a few switches, "Fire all weapons."

As the beams emitted from the Palpatine, thousands of people, even their own, felt the pain of death and destruction, and Ferrest smiled.

A few hours later, on another world, Mara sat in the corner, shaking. She knew Luke would be here soon, she knew she would see Ceara soon. All she could do was wait. She felt him out there, somewhere. She felt the thousands of lives die, she felt her daughter in trouble... but what could she do? Nothing from here. Karrde was a fool to come looking

for her. He knew that, so did Luke. She got up, and walked over out of the alley.

She wore tattered old clothes, and was very cold, her lightsaber hung down from her side. She walked over to the vendor, Kam who sold coffee and Jem'ka. She loved jem'ka. Everytime she tasted the Bantha eggs, along with the Tauntaun juice, she couldn't believe it. She stopped in front of it, and held herself, she was cold.

"Um," she said, "I'll have some of that."

"Sure, Mara," Kam said, "That'll be three credits."

She looked in her pockets, "I know I've three credits in here," she said, "That'll keep me alive until he comes."

"Who comes?" the Kam asked.

Mara sighed, "No one you know, Kam."

"Oh, okay," Kam said, He held out the plate to her, "Here you go, sweetheart."

She gave him the credits, and took the food. She sat down at a table, and began to eat. She looked over at the street, where she usually saw the morning sky, but instead saw an Imperial Officer talking to another vendor. The vendor pointed over towards her. She cursed, and ran off into the alley again. The officer came running towards her. But, she ducked into the corner, and used the Jedi mind trick to shield herself from the troopers. They kept running past her, and ran away. She came out of hiding. They'd found her. The Emperor's Hand will not serve for the Empire again, she thought, I'll die before that happens, and she ran out of the alleyway.

Chapter Thirteen Anakin saw Ceara's face grow white and as he went to ask her what was wrong, it struck him. It nearly knocked him over the pain of a thousand souls crying out in terror and then silenced. He looked over at Ceara and realized with horror that she could actually see the suffering. She tried not to scream as the terrifying visions grew worse. "Korma," she muttered and tried to remain conscious. Anakin had to do something he had to stop those visions and then he leaned over her and with all of his skill in the force blocked the images. When it was finally over, they both looked extremely tired. "I didn't know you could do that." Ceara whispered. "I didn't know it either but they always used to say that I was very gifted in the Force." Anakin whispered back. "Then perhaps all is not lost then." Ceara said mysteriously. Anakin was about to ask her what she meant by that comment when Jordan returned with one of the Republic's security officers disguised as one of the Empire's. Anakin and Ceara looked at each other. Ceara said, "We don't have much other choice then to trust him do we?" "I guess not. Okay, Jordan what's your plan?" "I don't really have one at least to get you out but I wanted to show you that I was telling the truth. We have to get out of here because that remote needs to be built somewhere else before they think to search the Falcon. I managed to convince them that it was an unimportant

piece of junk but they're not going to believe me for long. By the way, they blew up Korma a few minutes ago but I suppose you already know that." he paused and looked at Ceara who just nodded. "I couldn't believe it," he continued, "I should have known better but I figured they'd just stick to uninhabited moons or something like that. I was so stupid. But I need to get you guys out of here. I have an idea that just might work. Sit tight. I already made a deal that you guys won't be visited again until tomorrow and Hansen here is going to give Chewbacca some medical attention and he will be serving as your guard until I get back in about an hour or two. I also have been trying to get word to your parents but that's proving to be very difficult." He walked out of the door and Hansen set to work on Chewie. Anakin turned to Ceara and said, "Remind me to kill him when we get out of here." "No, Anakin don't," Ceara pleaded, "Leave him to the Republican courts." "They'll try him for treason and he will be executed, he'll be better off if I killed him myself." Ceara just looked at him and Anakin sighed. "The Republic ought to make your eyes their secret weapon they could melt a heart of stone. I won't kill him." "Good." she replied. And then his blue eyes looked into her green ones and they floated there for an eternity where all that could be said was shared silently and they clung to a hope that they could get out of this together. "General Solo," came the voice over the intercom, "We've just received word. Korma was destroyed by the Imperials." "Damn it!" Han shouted pounding his fist on the table. "We have to get word to Leia and the rest of the Council. Coruscant must be evacuated immediately to the alternative base." "Will do, Sir" answered the intercom. Han stared out the window. He thought about his family, his youngest son fighting on some distant planet for all he knew dead or captured, his other children and his brother-in-law and closest friend god knows where looking for a woman who had caused nothing but trouble for his family and what she had to do with Luke's daughter was anyone's guess, Leia, it hurt too much to think of her on a planet that could be gone before he could get word to her... Leia was all he could think about as he put his head down on the table getting to her before it was too late. He couldn't go on without her, didn't even want to think about it, couldn't even remember what life was like before her, please, please let there be enough time. On the planet below, Leia felt the destruction too and she could almost swear she heard Han's silent plea. She dismissed it as impossible but she went about ordering the evacuation of Coruscant even before the official word reached the planet. By the time Han's message had arrived she was already gone on her way to the alternative base. Luke and the twins felt it too on the Wild Karrde. Jaina feared that her uncle would fall ill again but he managed to stay well. Jaina walked into the room that he was staying in to check on him. Finding he was well, she decided to ask him the question that was bothering her. "Uncle Luke?" "Yes, Jaina?" "Why are we trying to find Mara Jade? I remember her slightly from when I was a child but other than that I know nothing about her except that she kept the Empire from kidnapping Jacen and I." "Well, I suppose I should tell you since apparently Ceara didn't. Talon didn't know either, I guess his natural curiosity about why my daughter would be looking for Mara Jade led him into searching for her." "But why is Ceara looking for her?" "Because she is Ceara's mother." That bombshell left Jaina speechless for several moments. Then she turned to her uncle. "Did you know? How long did Ceara know? And why didn't she tell me?" "Slow down those are too many questions but I'll start with the first one. I didn't know until

Ceara told me. I always had noticed the resemblance but then I suppose there could be other women with eyes like that. As for Ceara she found out shortly after she left me when she made the Holocron work again apparently she put two and two together when the Holocron addressed her as the Jade in the Sky and she found Mara's name on Artoo's files. I don't know why she didn't tell you maybe she was planning on it before all the crisis began." "She did tell me she wanted to talk but then Jacen disappeared and we never got the chance. Are you sure she's Ceara's mother?" "That's why I need to find her to find out. " "What are you going to say to her if you find her?" "First, I'm going to thank her for the precious gift she's given me, then I'm going to ask her why she did it. But I'm still worried about Ceara. I still feel that something terrible has happened to her and Anakin. I don't know what I'd do if I lost my little girl, I don't want them to take her away too." "I'm sure she'll be fine, Uncle Luke," Jaina said trying to reassure him, "Anakin and Ceara are survivors. Until we know something we have to remain positive." "I guess you're right." Luke smiled at his niece. These young ones were very wise. He decided that perhaps after this crisis abated then he would make sure Jaina underwent her training, it was far too long delayed. "Luke," came Talon Karrde's voice over the intercom. "Yes, Talon?" "We're coming out of hyperspace outside Devilon Three. It's a somewhat neutral world but the Imperials have influence in the area so you're going to have to lie pretty low." "I understand, Talon," Luke replied, "Thank you." "Oh by the way, you wouldn't mind telling me what your daughter wants with Mara anyway would you?" "I see you haven't lost your curious streak," Luke smiled, "I'm sorry I'm afraid that information is between Mara, my daughter, and myself." "I guess, you can't blame a guy for trying. Anyway we're now out of hyper so we'll be landing in a few minutes. Hold tight. Karrde out." Luke and Jaina looked at each other and prepared themselves for their arrival on the planet below. "Okay, here's the plan." Jordan said as he entered. "What is this plan?" asked Anakin. "Okay, I've got the guys on the Falcon dressed as stormtroopers and they're going to come and escort you guys out." "Oh, that sounds nice and simple." said Anakin in a very distrustful tone. "Would you shut up and trust me," Jordan said, "It's gonna work of course it won't be easy just in case they start shooting or something because someone might wonder what we're doing with you guys. Oh and when I let you out can you keep the Wookiee from killing me." "Ceara will since she's already keeping me from killing myself." "Stop both of you," said Ceara in a tone that none expected of her, "We don't have any choice if we want to get out of here and we're going to get along and no one is going to kill anyone. Got it?" Jordan and Anakin both nodded. Anakin felt a new form of respect for her she had spunk too and she loved him. He was so proud of her. She was speaking again, "Jordan, we don't have any choice but to turn you into the authorities when we get back. I'm sorry about that." "Well, I guess I have to pay the price. Dad will be very disappointed. Just please don't let me see Jaina. I respect her and I don't really want to see the hurt in her eyes." Then there came a knocking on the door. "Ahh, there's my crew. I'll check then let you out." He opened the door and in entered Hansen, Cartino and a few of the other crew that Jordan had hid away on the Falcon. One of them let the force shields down. Chewie hugged Anakin and growled at Jordan but was silenced by Ceara's look. Anakin looked at Ceara and shrugged his shoulders. "Here is your lightsaber and blaster. Now hide those and let's get out of here." They

made their way out led by the disguised stormtroopers. They had made it almost to the Falcon thanks to Jordan's tampering with the alarms when they ran into a troop guarding the ship. The first stormtrooper stopped them and asked where they were going. Jordan said, "We have orders to search this craft and I'm bringing the prisoners along to make sure everything is searched." "At this time of night?" asked the skeptical trooper. "Well, you know the boss." said Jordan. "They're not buying this." Ceara muttered to Anakin. "I need to check this out first." "Oh no you don't." said Jordan as he whipped out his blaster. "Idiot," muttered Anakin, "at least he's several feet from the others." "Now are you going to let us pass?" asked Jordan. "I don't think so." the stormtrooper said as he sounded an alarm. Jordan shot the guard and the group scattered as the other troopers heard the alarm. Anakin grabbed his blaster and started shooting his way through. Ceara blocked several shots with her saber and ran behind him. Anakin and Ceara hit the Falcon first and Anakin quickly got the door open. Ceara yelled for the others and they made their way towards it. Chewbacca got on board and started the engine. Anakin made Ceara get in and began firing his blaster at the rest of the stormtroopers as the others came on board. One of the officers was hurt badly and Hansen tried to get him on board. Anakin had a hold of the officer when Hansen was hit. He wasn't hit too bad so he threw the other officer in and jumped in afterwards. Ceara bandaged Hansen quickly so that he could help her with the care of the badly injured man and so they strapped him in the back. Anakin jumped into the pilot seat. "Hopefully we can hit hyperspace before they get a chance to call their buddies." Chewie growled indicating that the ship was already for take off. "Hang on back there!" he yelled as the Falcon soared into space.

Chapter Fourteen Mara Jade looked out from the corner she had hid herself in. He was here and so were the stormtroopers. What to do? She was not about to serve the sad excuse for an Empire that existed now and she knew that it was time to face Skywalker. After all she had left him her child and she owed him an explanation and their (she smiled at the irony) daughter was in danger, grave danger and only the truth could save her ... What was that? She heard a sound and eased back into the shadows. He would have to find her himself. She wasn't fool enough to come out into the open. The Millennium Falcon jumped into hyperspace as quickly as it could. Luckily the Force was with them and they made it through with only one TIE Fighter to contend with. It was easily shot down and even though Anakin was a tad suspicious, he saw the other squadron approach just as the Falcon shot into hyper. They were lucky. Anakin left Chewie in the pilot seat and went into the back of the ship. The team members were clustered together talking. Hansen was bending over the badly injured officer trying to make sure he was comfortable. Ceara had taken care of the lesser injuries but she didn't have medical training like Hansen did. Jordan sat by himself in a corner, his head hung in shame. Anakin knew some of the members trusted Jordan, the others held in check by Ceara's mere presence in the room. There was something about the young Jedi that commanded respect even without her powers. Ceara was seated on the floor in front of Artoo, frowning in dismay at her injured droid. He came up behind her and kissed her forehead. "Problems, sweetheart?" he asked. "Hi, Anakin," she smiled, "I have no idea how to fix Artoo. I wish Jaina was here she's mechanically inclined. I'm useless when it comes to this stuff." "Hey, what am I? I didn't help Dad rebuild the Falcon so

that it would be up to the latest technology no that wasn't me." Ceara laughed, "I'm sorry Anakin. I just meant that Jaina was always so good with this kind of thing. Funny she can fix anything but she can't pass a pilot's test. You'd think that the same natural skills would go into it." "Yeah, I know. I know she gets her knack from Dad but the pilot thing I don't know. Both sides were excellent pilots, I think she's just too happy being senior officer and she really doesn't want a pilot post." "But can you fix Artoo?" "I can give it a try." She watched him look at Artoo for a long second then muttering to himself he pulled a plate off and found damage in a spot she couldn't see. She had seen him do that before and she wondered if it was an ability in the Force or just a natural knack with machinery. Although Jaina couldn't see through metal and she was good too. Anakin picked up some tools and set to work. Artoo was beginning to be put back together. He turned the droid on and he bleeped then was silent. Anakin looked puzzled then he did something that startled Ceara. He pointed his finger at the droid and held it for a minute. Then he said, "Fix." Artoo turned on and started bleeping away. Anakin smiled a very triumphant smile and Ceara stared at him in amazement. "How did you do that?" she asked, "I can't do that." "Always could," he answered, "I am a Jedi you know. And we're all skilled in different ways in the Force. I can't do what you can do and you can't do that even though you're a very powerful Jedi." Something in his tone clicked in Ceara's head and she motioned him to follow her to a more private area. When they were alone, she asked what was on her mind. "Is that why you stopped using the Force because you were jealous of me?" Anakin didn't answer he just looked at her. "That's it isn't it? You were used to being the powerful one, more powerful than the twins, probably even more powerful than Luke until I grew up and achieved knighthood when I was younger than you and without much training. You think I'm more powerful and you're jealous. And jealousy is a product of the dark side so you quit instead of giving in. Am I right?" "Yes." Anakin said, "Yes, I was jealous of you. You came from nowhere with these incredible powers and I was jealous but I'm not anymore. Since I saw you again and fell in love with you I've been using my powers to see if I still feel the same way. I don't. I realize now that we're all powerful in our own ways. You can see visions and all those other things. Jacen can control animals and other `living things. I can see through metal and fix things and Jaina well she's untapped but she is very well rounded in her skills she can do many basic Jedi things well and she probably has a special skill too if it was let out. I knew you were the one to lead me back to the right path when the Holocron spoke to me. Please believe me." Ceara didn't say anything, she just kissed him and Anakin knew all was right in the universe. Meanwhile, Luke and the twins debarked on Deviiion Three. They all were dressed in a very nondescript fashion in order to lie low. Deviiion Three was neutral but the Imperial Rebellion had much sympathy in the area and stormtroopers were a frequent sight. Talon Karrde had parted company with the group stating business in the city's trading district. He told them where he was staying so they could check in when they found Mara. He gave them directions to the place where Mara had been staying when he found her. As they set off towards the place, Jacen felt this strange sensation. He looked over at his twin and noticed that she had a strange expression on her face. Jacen said, "Uncle Luke, I don't think Mara's in there." "I felt something strange too." said his twin. "I know," Luke answered, "But I have to check it out. Be careful." The three

looked around for stormtroopers. Seeing none on the street, Luke and Jacen pulled out their lightsabers. Jaina didn't have hers because she generally didn't carry one but she pulled out her small blaster. Luke ignited his saber and carefully walked into the dwelling. Jacen and Jaina followed also very carefully. The place was thrashed and noone was there. Luke picked up an object from the corner and stared at it. The twins rifled through what was there. There wasn't much a few clothes, some cooking utensils, and a datapad. Not much at all, the dwelling itself only contained a bed, a table, a lamp, and a small cooking plate. Nothing else not even a refresher unit. Jaina noticed Luke's staring at the object. "Uncle Luke," she asked, "What are you staring at?" "It's a picture, a picture of me holding Ceara when she was an infant. It was backwards in the frame as if Mara knew that it could spell trouble if it was found. I wonder how she got this. I don't even remember this and I've kept all of her baby pictures." "She was around occasionally when Ceara was a baby perhaps she took it then or had it taken," offered Jacen, "But I don't get it what would Mara Jade want with a picture of you and Ceara." Jaina quickly whispered to her twin what Luke had told her and then waited for the subsequent wave of shock. Jacen was stunned. But then he said, "Explains a lot about her doesn't it?" Luke and Jaina nodded. Then Luke put the picture in his tunic explaining that Mara would probably not return and she probably would like to have it back when they found her. "Do you think whoever it is who did this found Mara home?" asked Jaina. "It was probably stormtroopers and I don't think so judging from how the room was thrashed. It's obvious that she's poor so if they found her they wouldn't have bothered but if she wasn't they would have looked for some clue as to where she went." answered Jacen. "But what would the stormtroopers want with her?" asked his sister. "She used to serve the Emperor and the Empire has always wanted her back in their fold but she refuses to serve them and so they want to force her back." said Luke. "Great and she probably knew that they were after her and we'll never find her now." said Jaina "Nah, it just makes things more fun." said Jacen. "Well, we should get going there's nothing here to help us. Anything that would the stormtroopers have. Perhaps we should look around the town and try to get our bearings as to where she might be at." said Luke. And thus saying, the three left the dwelling and headed off towards the center of town. Han Solo's fleet came out of hyperspace near the planet of Dantooine. Dantooine was a very remote secluded world that had once been a Alliance base over thirty years before. The Republic had returned to the planet about five years before to begin work on a base for just such an emergency. When Han's ship landed, Chief of State Leia Organa Solo was waiting for him. Solo saw her waiting at the end of the landing and he felt like a kid again. He ran down the landing and into her arms, he picked her up and kissed her and put her down and held her tight. "I didn't think you would get my message in time, I thought I'd lost you forever." Han said. "I never got your message. I felt that planet explode and I knew where to go. So I left early." "Oh, sweetheart. I'm sure that was very hard on you after what happened and all." Leia looked at him and smiled even after thirty three years the pain of watching her adopted world explode still lingered, but Han remembered and tried to make it better like he always did. "I'm okay, honey," she said, "I'm just glad you're here and safe. Where are the twins and my brother?" "They went on a quest with Talon Karrde to find Mara Jade." "Mara Jade? Why are they trying to find her?" "I have no idea. Talon

Karrde contacted us and told us that he had some information for Ceara regarding Mara Jade and told Luke that she would only talk to him. There was no stopping Luke and he and the kids set off after her. "

Leia looked at her husband and said, "There's something wrong isn't there?" "Nah, honey. I just got to remember that I'm 63 and I shouldn't be picking you up like that." "That's not it and you know it." "Can't lie to you can I?" Leia smiled, "Even if I wasn't a Jedi, I'd know that we have been married for twenty seven years that's more than enough to know when you're lying." "True enough. Let's walk." The two started up the ramp and Leia led her husband to the quarters provided for them. The rooms was very spartan in comparison to their lavious apartments on Coruscant but it was enough. They sat down on the couch and Han began to explain what was wrong. "Well, first of all Anakin has never checked in with us. We've been trying but either there is something wrong with his communications systems or we just can't get through and Luke is worried that something terrible happened." Leia quietly nodded, and Han continued. "I know that the communications on the Falcon are a bit on the bad side so I'm trying not to worry besides Anakin is our tough kid and he does have a strike team by his side." "So what is it?" Leia asked then realized something, "It's my brother, isn't it? What's wrong with Luke?"

"He has some sort of ancient Jedi disease called Parralax A. It effects his nervous system. The doctor didn't have enough information on it and wanted to search the banks at Coruscant. We can still do some research from here but Luke took off before the doctor could implement treatment. He was very sick for a while and the doctor thinks that it might effect the kids too but both Jacen and Jaina tested clear but I think you should be tested too and Anakin and Ceara when they get back." "Why didn't you stop him from leaving?" Han just looked at his wife, "Leia, do you honestly think I could make Luke stay if I tried?" "No I suppose not." "That's why I let him take the twins with him. Even though they're needed here, I decided that keeping Luke well was most important. They can look after him." Leia sighed, "I was I had known about it. I wonder why I didn't feel it. Ceara will be very upset when she returns. But I know my brother when he gets his mind set on something he'll do it. I just wish that he would remember that he's not twenty any more. I just realizing myself that it was almost thirty three years ago that my planet was destroyed. I was younger than Ceara then and now, now I feel so very old." "Ah come on sweetheart. We'll never be old, besides I'm much older than you and if you're old, that makes me ancient and I certainly don't feel ancient. But I need to tell you something else that might contradict what I just said." "What is that?" "I've retired from my position. Wedge Antilles will be taking my place. I can't handle the stress any longer at my age. I will continue to serve the Republic in an unofficial capacity as usual but I can't cope. I'm sorry, Leia." "I know. I knew you wanted to retire long ago. I knew that you hate being in that position but I always felt that you were the best man for the job but Wedge is more qualified." "I love you." "I know," Leia smiled at the old joke, then whispered, "I love you too and as long as we have that we'll never get old." "I know, I was realizing that I can't even remember what life was like before you. I don't know what would have happened to me on that day thirty three years ago when Luke and Ben Kenobi asked me to take them to Alderaan if I had refused to take them or if I hadn't agreed to

help rescue you. I'd probably be a very lonely guy since there isn't another woman like you in this universe except for maybe our very beautiful daughter." "Thank you but I'd rather not think of might have beens. We're here now and we have three children and a galaxy to worry about." Han sighed and said, "Can we wait until tomorrow?" "I'm afraid we only have an hour." "Figures." Anakin finally pulled away from Ceara. He said that he had to do something and walked out of the room. She followed him into the main passenger section. Jordan was still sitting alone. Anakin walked up to him and touched his shoulder. "Jordan?" he asked. "Yes, sir?" "I want to make an apology for wanting to kill you, that anger is part of the dark side and I need to defuse it." Anakin looked over at Ceara who smiled and nodded at him. "I think due to the circumstances and the fact that you did get us out of there that we might be able to intercede in your behalf but I can't guarantee anything. I mean you'll still have to be tried in the court system but maybe we can get you a lesser sentence." "Thank you," Jordan answered, "Thank you so much." Ceara went over to Anakin and hugged him. "I'm very proud of you." "Thank you." he replied. Just then Chewbacca growled. Anakin went into the cockpit. Ceara followed and slid into the other seat. "Everybody buckle up back there," Anakin yelled, "We're coming out of hyper." They came out of hyperspace in orbit of Coruscant. Ceara suddenly felt something strange a feeling of emptiness. She couldn't feel anyone at all on the planet below. Anakin must of felt something too because he started looking at the dials and gauges before him. Then Ceara said, "Anakin, how come the lights aren't on down there? It is nighttime." Anakin answered, "Because, there is no life signs below! Noone's down there." "Oh no, you don't think?" "No, maybe they just evacuated after Korma. They probably figure that was safer. But of course, we don't know where they went to." "Can we try to get a hold of someone?" asked Ceara. "My communications got blown out when we tried to get in at Hobath. That's what caused your burns." "So we're going to have to land?" "Yep and hope that the Empire hasn't gotten here before us." "Okay, everyone," Anakin said into the intercom, "We're getting no life readings on the planet. We figured they just evacuated but our communications systems are down and we need to get on something. So Jordan we might need your skills to send a message." So, the Millennium Falcon started its approach and they all crossed their fingers in hope that they could find their comrades soon before the Imperials got there.

Chapter 15 The Falcon landed in Imperial City. Anakin decided to leave the strike force in the ship along with Chewbacca and took Ceara, Jordan, and Artoo with him. They entered the residential wing of the palace through a back way that only Anakin and the twins knew about. Ceara remembered going through it once before when she was very small but could not remember how to get in. Anakin went first drawing his blaster, but it looked deserted. "Anakin," whispered Ceara, "why did we go this way?" "I need to get something from my room and while we're there we can try to find some communications or something." "Okay, whatever." she said. "This is so weird," Jordan said, "There's nobody here, not even a droid, man it's spooky." Ceara and Anakin had to agree with him and they made their way to Anakin's room. Anakin flipped on his light, deciding it was safe since his room had no windows. He opened a drawer and drew out what he had come for, his lightsaber. Smiling at Ceara, he fastened it to his belt. "Okay," Jordan said, "Can we go find some way of communicating

so we can get out of here in one piece?" "Do you know when they plan on attacking?" asked Ceara. "No," said Jordan, "I have no idea. I would have told you if I had." Ceara looked at Anakin and they both said they believed him. Anakin slipped into the common room of the suite and Jordan and he set to work disconnecting the computer and setting it up in Anakin's room where there was more light than just Anakin's hand held beam. Artoo rolled after them, leaving Ceara alone in the room. She looked around. She had really never been in Anakin's room except for that one night and then she had been asleep and in the dark. It was pretty spartan, which Ceara figured went with Anakin's personality. There was a large assortment of ship models on the shelves, along with curious rocks, crystals, and other things from his wanderings. One table was strewn with pieces of machinery and tools much like a similar table in his sister's room. There wasn't really that much else for Anakin was a very neat person and except for his machinery kept most of his things in drawers and closets and even his bed was neatly made. The only decoration besides his collections and certificates from the Jedi Academy and his flight school were a strange alien painting Ceara had never seen before and a family portrait. This had been done around the twin's sixteenth birthday and Ceara looked at it. There were the twins and Anakin and their proud parents, Chewbacca, she thought he was smiling it was hard to tell, and Luke and her as an eleven year old. How long ago that was, she thought, times were so different then. The Empire had only been a legend and the present Imperial rebellion only a minor annoyance resulting in just one or two incidents a year. Had it only been eight years? Had she had known that those eight years would see the Rebellion grow strong, news of her mother, the love of Anakin, and a terrible weapon that could shatter her life as she knew it, what would she have said? Her thoughts were broken by Anakin and Jordan walking into the room carrying the computer. Jordan started to set it up and Anakin walked over to her. "What are ya looking at?" "Just this painting and how young I was then. I was also thinking about how much life has changed since then." "Yeah, you've got a point. Buy there's no since dwelling in the past." "I guess you're right." "Of course, I'm right. Jordan are ya done?" "I think so. Let's try to get a hold of somebody who can tell us where everybody went." Jordan started typing in a key code and they all hoped someone out there would respond to their calls for help. Meanwhile, Luke Skywalker and the twins wandered through the streets of Delt on Deviiion Three. They were trying to figure out where Mara Jade could have hidden. They knew not to ask about her because they figured that would just announce their presence on the world to the stormtroopers who wandered around. They had come across them twice but had used Jedi mind shielding in order to keep concluded. Luke looked for the street that Talon's hotel was located and finding it led the kids towards it. Skywalker was a bit depressed, he had hoped to find Mara and finally get the answers he had been waiting for for nearly twenty years. Somehow, he had to find her even if it took another twenty. They were now in front of the Casana Hotel. When they entered they found Talon Karrde waiting for them. "Any luck?" he asked. "None." answered Luke. "I had a feeling she might have ran. She was pretty antsy when I found her." said Karrde. "Yes, I think the rebels are after her." "Do you think she stuck around?" asked Karrde. "Perhaps, who knows with Mara." said Luke. "Well, I took the liberty of reserving a room for you and the kids. Of course, the Republic will ..." "Be happy to reimburse you?" laughed Luke, "You smugglers never change." The three were soon settled in their room. Jacen

and Jaina looked at each other but neither wanted to ask their uncle if they were going to continue their search. Finally, Jacen said, "Uncle Luke, are we still going to try to find Mara?" "Of course, we are. She's still here. I can feel it. I have a duty to Ceara to find out the truth and Mara owes both of us this truth." "But, Uncle Luke what if she leaves the planet?" asked Jaina. "Then, I'll have to keep looking. This illness has caused me to think and I realize that I don't have a lot of time left and I need to settle my house, I need to find out why Mara left her child with me and who Ceara's people are. I owe my daughter this. You two don't have to keep going with me if she's not on this planet." "Uncle Luke," Jacen declared, "We'll be with you as long as you need us, or until the Republic desperately needs us back." Jaina said, "I agree with Jacen. We're staying with you." "Good." Luke smiled. On Dantoonine, Chief of State Leia Organa Solo led the military briefing. Han had just finished his description of the defeat at Korma and officially filed his resignation. This satisfied those members of the council that would have demanded his resignation of this blow to the Republic. Leia had appointed a representative to lead and round up those Kormans who were off world when the planet exploded. Leia noticed her second in command's face during the narrative and touched Winter's arm. She remembered that due to Winter's perfect memory she still could remember Alderaan like it was yesterday and this current tragedy was hitting her hard. "I'm alright." Winter whispered. "So now what are we to do?" Leia addressed the Council. "We need to find out the pattern, which planet is next." said Admiral Antilles. "Is there any correlation between the two planets attacked?" asked Counselor Albar, a Mon Calamari. "Not really, they were of different sizes and importance, the only seeming similarity is that they both end in the same letter." said Han. "That may not be that far off," Leia said, "Have you tried other seemingly trivial correlations such as the fact that both were populated by a non human species although Korma was sparsely populated." "But Leia, that's thousands of systems." said Han. "Yes, I know but there must be something we missed. Let's go over them again." "Okay, that works for me." answered Han. Leia looked around the room, "Are we all in agreement?" They all nodded their heads. What else could they do? Han and Leia went to feed all the information that they had on Arcona and Korma into the computer and waited for it to find any correlations between the two. "It's probably going to take at least an hour, maybe more." said the tech. "Well then let's go to the medical staff and have them test you for that disease that Luke came down with." said Han to Leia. "Alright let's go." On the Imperial starship Palpatine, an officer reported to Admiral Ferest. "Sir, Intelligence reports that Coruscant has been evacuated and at this time we do not know where the Rebels have relocated although there are several planets that are likely places for them to have gone and we're checking them out." "Well, do that as soon as possible Major." answered Ferest. "Yes, sir" the major replied and turned and left. Ferest turned to Dey who was sitting beside him, "Well, where do you think the Rebels went?" "I have no idea, I have not received word from my spy and I'm assuming that if he was legit he has been found out and again captured." "Do you agree that we should proceed with our next target then?" "Yes, but sir perhaps we should not destroy the next one." "I know, we need Boonta for its scrap metal yards. And our latest endeavor should be enough to allow us to take the planet without a great deal of time or expenditure since we did lose a great deal of manpower on Korma." "I suppose since the Rebels have evacuated Coruscant we

could move in and reclaim our historic seat." "Yes, but that can wait until after we crush them for once and for all." Meanwhile on Coruscant, Jordan, Ceara, and Anakin nervously waited for any form of communication. The computer's memory had been wiped so Jordan had installed a simple communications program and was trying to summon any Republican ships out there to answer their plea. Two hours later, they were all dozing off. Jordan was in front of the computer fast asleep. Anakin was likewise out on his bed. Ceara was sitting on the floor trying hard not to fall asleep and was basically drifting in and out of slumber. She noticed something on the computer screen and jumped up and read it. It read: "Capt Solo, do you read this is Rogue Four, do you copy?" "Jordan," Ceara cried shaking him, "Wake up!" "Huh," Jordan said. "Someone answered us answer back. I'll wake up Anakin." "I'm awake," came from Anakin, "You know you could even wake Jaina with that tone." "Haha," Ceara said, "Now let's respond." Jordan typed: This is Capt Solo. I copy Rogue Four. What's going on? Where did everyone go?" He then let Anakin type his identification number and waited for the response. It came quickly. "Thank the heavens, Capt Solo, your parents were quite concerned when you failed to check in. Was your mission a success?" Anakin typed, "More or less. I found out about Korma but then my communications went out so I came to Coruscant and found the place deserted." "The Chief of State ordered the evacuation to Red base eight. Rogue Seven and I just started our orbit and we will be more than happy to escort you there." "That won't be necessary. I know the coordinates. Thank you very much. Capt Solo over and out. " "Rogue Four over and out. Good luck sir." "You know where that is?" asked Ceara. "Sure, they are predetermined evacuation sites. I have the coordinates programmed into my flight computers. Let's go." "But where are we going?" asked Jordan. "You'll find out when we get there. Anybody need anything?" Anakin asked. They shook their heads no and started for the door but Ceara turned and grabbed the family portrait off the wall. Anakin said nothing and they headed back to the Falcon.

Chapter Sixteen Mara Jade looked over the ancient X-Wing. It wasn't much but that was all she could afford with the credits she got from picking pockets on the street. She knew she was probably letting Luke down by running away but it wasn't the first time and she would find Ceara some day and tell her the truth. Now she had to go, go as far away from here as she could. She started up the engine and flew off into the night sky. Luke Skywalker looked up suddenly and ran to the window. He saw an X-Wing taking off and felt a strange sensation. "Mara," he murmured, "You're leaving me again." "What, Uncle Luke?" asked Jacen who was still awake as his twin was fast asleep. "I think I just saw Mara take off." "Now, we'll never find her." "That's not necessarily true, I have an idea of where she is going but I need to get a ship." "Can we wait until morning? Then Mr.Karrde can get us a ship." "Yes, of course. Be careful not to wake your sister." "As if that could be done." The Millennium Falcon began its trip towards Dantoonie. Anakin had entered the coordinates and hoped that he could make it there without any incidents. He was tired very tired and he wasn't really in the mood to tangle with any Imperials. He looked in the view screen. Everyone in the back was asleep and Ceara was asleep in the sleeping chamber. He wished he could go to sleep too but he figured he'd better be on the alert. He had let Chewie get some shut eye so that they could take turns at the controls. He figured that at their present rate of speed it would take

them about four days to get to Dantoonie. That was going to be hell, and he wasn't too happy about it but what could he do. Han Solo looked over the datacards from the recent data searches on the two planets attacked. He noticed that the two planets were definitely not alike. Korma had been sparsely populated with no major cities and most of the population lived in primitive villages or were members of the Republican military encampments. There were very few natural resources and the only importance of the planet was its strategic location as a border planet. Arcona was a hot planet densely populated by a species of reptilian creatures. It was tropical so its resources were few. It was not strategically important although its moons were rich in metals. Yet, Arcona was not destroyed. "Leia!" Han called. "Yes," she answered from across the room, "What is it?" "I think I found something." "What is it?" she asked running over. "I noticed that the moons of both planets are rich in metal and one metal in particular, phobium." "Phobium?" Han hit some keys on the computer. A data card came out and he inserted it into another card. He read a moment and then said: "It's a metal alloy, it's used to coat hot substances to keep them protected. It's also used in ship building because it's very strong yet lightweight. Uhoh, wait a minute." "What?" "It says here that it was also used in the cores of the Death Stars." "No, not again." "It might not mean anything. They're probably just trying to rebuild their fleet and they need that mineral. We already saw that they don't need a Death Star for that laser." "Can you find out what systems have rich supplies of phobium?" "Working on it, it might take some time because for some reason, that information wasn't included with the other data." Ferest stood in his command center watching as his flagship and the small fleet he brought with him came out of hyperspace in orbit of Boonta. Boonta was a peaceful planet with two claims to fame, its speeder races and its scrap metal yards. It had a very small army and Ferest figured that it would be easy enough to conquer quickly and relatively easily. He probably wouldn't even have to waste the laser. Dey stood silently behind Ferest lost in his own thoughts. Now that Darkrider was out of the picture, he had no opposition and he was actually considering making a play for Ferest's position. But did he really want that responsibility? Besides Ferest was his friend and Dey was human, it was that side that had prompted him to offer to put Darkrider's children through the Academy something which Darkrider's widow had readily accepted. An officer walked up to Ferest, "Sir, the Boontan leader is on the viewer." "Thank you, on screen." said Ferest. The Boontan Prime Minister, a weasely looking human, appeared. Ferest said, "I'm sure that you are well aware that even with my small force that you are greatly outnumbered, and that we scrambled your primitive communications so you won't be getting any help from the Republic so I suggest you surrender." "Aw, I think we can work out a deal." said the Boontan twirling his moustache. "Good," said Ferest, "What we really want is free access to your scrap metal supplies and of course, formal allegiance to the Empire." "Fine, why don't you land and we can work out the terms of surrender." "Very well, we'll be down soon." Han and Leia were waiting for the results to come up on the screen when they heard a knock on the door. Solo answered it and standing there was his old friend Lando Calrissian. "Lando," Han said shaking his hand, "Don't stand there come in. What are you doing here?" "Well, your wife made a recall of all absent Council members and so here I am." "It's good that you made it. We're having a rough time of it." said Han. "That's what I hear,

especially after that Korma thing. What's this I hear about you retiring?" "Getting too old, too much stress, never really wanted to do it anyway. So I'm just doing the usual." "I guess you're just too good at what you do," smiled Leia, "It's good to see you Lando." "Hey is my kid back yet?" "No," Han said, "I think the Falcon's communications are out and they're trying to find us." "Great." "Yeah, I know and Luke is off on some mission to find Mara Jade and he took the twins with him." "Mara Jade?" "I have no clue either, I couldn't stop him." "Honey, I think the data's done now." interrupted Leia. "Good, let's see it." Just then Winter came in. "I'm sorry to interrupt but we just got news from Boonta, they surrendered peacefully to the Imperials." "When is this going to end!" Leia shouted knocking a vase to the floor. She had never lost control like this before. She even amazed herself and she looked at the shocked and concerned faces around her. "I'm sorry, I'm just upset." Leia said as Han took her in his arms. "It's alright." said Han. "I wonder why it surrendered so quietly." said Lando. "I know their leader, he'd sell his grandmother to save his hide besides they don't have much of an army." said Han. "Boonta isn't on the list." said Leia. "Yeah, but they have a huge scrap metal yard." said Han. "What are you talking about?" asked Lando. "We think we broke the pattern. The Imperials are after phobium." "Oh ho, makes sense." said Lando. "What else is on the list?" asked Winter. "Um, Lianna, Mordona, Hanthano, Tenna, Jedroco, and the Great Notta." read Han. "So, it could be any one of those planets." said Lando. "Yep." said Han. "Oh, by the way," said Winter, "We received some information that is good news. The Rogue Squadron came into contact with young Anakin and he's on his way here." "Thank heavens." said Leia. "He should arrive in about a day or so." said Winter. "That's good, now Leia, I suppose you'll have to call the Council back to discuss what we found." said Han. "Yes, sometimes I wish I was just an ordinary wife and mother." "Nah, you're just too good at what you do." laughed Han. "Well, to the Council then." sighed Leia. It was morning on Deviian Three and Luke and the twins were aboard a souped up Corellian Corvette that Karrde had managed to get them. Jacen was starting his flight check and Jaina was checking the instruments while Luke strapped in. Jaina then programmed in the coordinates that Luke supplied and they took off. Jacen and Jaina glanced at each other. Their uncle was usually quiet and he had not said a word since they had gotten aboard the vessel. Jaina hoped that he was not having another relapse. Jacen just wondered why they had to comb the whole universe looking for Mara Jade when the universe was in such danger but there was no way he was going to let Luke go by himself, he knew his mother would never forgive him and neither would Ceara, wherever the hell she and his kid brother were.

"I have a bad feeling about this." Jacen muttered.

Jaina nodded and then they flew on in silence. The Falcon was within five minutes of Dantoonie. Anakin Solo breathed a sigh of relief. It had been a long trip. He smiled at Ceara who was sitting beside him and then leaned over and kissed her. "Hey you," she smiled, "I'm so glad to be back. I've missed Luke so much." "Yeah, I've missed my parents too and my siblings." "Well, we're almost there. I'm kinda scared about what's going to happen to Jordan." "Yeah, me too. He's just a kid who did something stupid. Maybe we can do something about it and his dad is on the Council." Chewbacca growled, they were receiving an incoming message

as Chewie had repaired the communications while they were on Coruscant. Anakin put them through. "Incoming vessel, please identify." "This is the Millennium Falcon. Captain Anakin Solo speaking." "Please state your access code, Falcon." "Delta Rho Beta Five." "Thank you. Welcome home, Captain Solo, the Chief of State is very happy that you have returned and she will be meeting you at the landing." "Thank you. Falcon out." Leia and Han were waiting at the landing along with Lando. They watched as the Falcon landed. Artoo was the first to roll down the gangplank and beeped in happiness at his former mistress. Chewbacca came down next and Han hugged his oldest friend. Then Ceara and Anakin came down holding hands. Leia and Han exchanged glances and Leia after hugging the two tightly said: "Why are you two holding hands?" Ceara turned bright pink and even Anakin blushed as he said, "Mom, we've decided to start um dating I guess." "Dating?" questioned an amused Han. "I love Ceara and she loves me and we want to give it a shot." "I knew it." smiled Leia and hugged them again as Han gave his son a shoulder pat. "Your father will be very pleased." said Leia. "Where is Father anyway?" asked Ceara. "He went on a mission with the twins to find Mara Jade after Talon Karrde said he knew where she was." said Han. "Mara Jade?" asked Ceara who turned slightly pale. Han was about to ask her just what was up with Mara Jade anyway when Lando interrupted. "So where is my son?" "There." pointed Ceara as a handcuffed Jordan Calrissian was led down the gangplank by the Republican troops. "He's under arrest for treason." said Anakin. "What!" yelled Lando. Mara Jade looked out from her campsite on the moon of Endor. Noone would find her here in this vast forest. Even Skywalker would take days to find her among all these trees. She had to come back here, here to look at the place that the Emperor had died. After all these years she could still find the spot where it had happened. Dammit, Skywalker I wish I could have killed you but I just couldn't why did you have to be you. Why did you have to be someone I couldn't help caring about? She sighed no use thinking about it. She decided to go to sleep. As she got into bed, she whispered the same thing she had when she had left the baby on Luke's doorstep nineteen years before, "Take good care of her, Luke. If he finds out about her, it could spell disaster for the universe." "What!" Lando repeated. "He betrayed us to the Imperials on Hobath. We walked right into a trap. The Imperials killed one of my men and badly injured Chewie who by the way needs some more medical attention, as do some of my men. Ceara and Hanson could only do so much for them." said Anakin. "Is this true Jordan?" asked Leia. "Yes, madame." said Jordan hanging his head. "But he did help us escape from Hobath and he helped us contact the Republic so that we could get home." said Ceara. "Yes, he was just a kid being seduced by the dark side. I ask that you go easy on him because he realized the error of his ways and he is legitimately sorry." said Anakin. "Thank you very much." said Jordan. "Well, he has to be tried by the court but in light of what you have said and the fact that his father is a prominent member of the Council, I'll try to put in a word to the Court as an executive order for a lesser sentence unless you would like to drop the charges Anakin." said Leia. "No please don't drop the charges. I would like to face what I have done although death is a little extreme." said Jordan. "Very well. Confine him to his quarters to await trial." said Leia. "Thank you." Lando said and he followed his son, "We need to talk son." "I know, Dad." "I'm sure you guys are very hungry how about some dinner?" asked Han. "Dinner would be great but I think both of us would like to shower and change before hand." said Anakin. "No

problem. Your rooms are very near ours so follow us." said Han. "I had the replicator provide you with some clothing, because I didn't know what you wanted to bring with you." said Leia. "Thank you, Aunt Leia," said Ceara, "I've been really really sick of this outfit." Soon, Ceara was inside her room. She showered and then looked in the closet to find a outfit to wear for dinner. Aunt Leia sure had good taste she mused as she looked at all of the pretty clothes. She chose a green and gold tunic and leggings to wear and put her hair in a simple braid. She then headed down to Han and Leia's for dinner. Everyone was already there and she took her seat next to Anakin.

Anakin leaned over and whispered, " You look great."

"Thanks." she whispered back. Dinner was on the table and Leia looked at Ceara concerned. "What happened that caused those scars?" she asked. "Oh, Anakin's communications went out and I was sitting in front of them when they exploded. It's nothing really." "Well, make sure you have checked out when you seen the medics." said Han. "Why would she be going to the medics?" asked Anakin. "Oh, dear," said Leia, "We were going to wait to tell you." "Tell us what?" asked Anakin. Ceara looked at Leia and knew. "It's my father isn't it?" Leia nodded and carefully explained the situation to Ceara and Anakin. Anakin put his arm around Ceara who was visibly upset. "I wish I had been there when he was so sick." she said. "It's okay, princess. I know he understood that you would have been there if you could." said Han. "Thank you." she said. "If it helps any he's doing much better." said Han. "I wish you hadn't let him go off on that mission but then again the twins are with him and I know there's no stopping him when he gets set on something. I just wish he'd take better care of himself. I don't want to lose him." said Ceara wiping a tear away. After some silence and Ceara's regaining control over herself, they resumed eating. After dessert was served, Han couldn't control his curiosity any longer. "Ceara, why is Luke looking for Mara Jade? You turned pale when her name was mentioned." Ceara looked at him for a moment as if wondering if she should tell him. She also made note that noone was eating at the moment. "She's my mother." she said. Most of the table stared at her in stunned silence even Anakin and Chewbacca. "How do you know?" asked Leia. "Well, when I left Luke, he gave me the Holocron as a gift. Somehow I managed to get it to work again. It addressed me as the Jade of the Sky. I concluded that Jade was my name. I looked up the name Jade on Artoo's memory and found a picture of her. She was older and her hair is different and she was harder like she led a bad life, but it was my face. I couldn't believe it. So I talked to Luke about it and he said that he had noticed the resemblance especially in the eyes but had assumed it was a coincidence. It still could be but that's probably what Luke's trying to find out." "What's Talon Karrde's role in this?" asked Leia. "Well, the data on her said her last employer was Talon Karrde so I contacted him. She wasn't there, but from what I heard of Karrde his natural curiosity probably drove him to search for her wondering what Luke Skywalker's daughter would want with Mara Jade, he also told me that she owed him two hundred credits so that's probably another reason." "I hope he finds her and you can find the answers you need." said Anakin. "I hope so too, I need to know why she left me. I'm sure she did love me or she wouldn't have left me with Luke who is the best parent a girl could

ever have. But no matter what I find out Luke will always be my father always."

"That's good," smiled Leia, "I feel the same way about my father and mother even though they've been dead for many many years." "Well, it's getting late and you kids are probably beat. Make sure you go to the medics and get tested and those scars looked at." said Han. "Alright good night, Aunt Leia and Uncle Han, thank you for dinner." "Good night Mom and Dad." "Good night, kids."

Anakin walked Ceara back to her room and kissed her good night. "Sleep well, sweetheart. I'll see you tomorrow." said Anakin. "Bye." Ceara giggled and felt like a twelve year old and went into her room.

Chapter Seventeen

The Palpatine hung adrift in hyperspace. Dey and Ferest sat on the bridge, and looked out at the stillness of the night. Dey sat at the post formerly manned by Captain Darkrider.

Ferest was proud. They had left two Star Destroyers at Boonta, in order to control the people. After this had happened, and they secured the ore, the planet's population would be executed, and a biogenic weapon would be launched into the atmosphere, and the planet would die in a few moments.

Ferest glanced forward toward Sal. "How long?" he asked.

"Thirteen hours, forty-five minutes," he conferred. He groaned.

"Colonel," Ferest smiled, "Can I see you in my office?"

The Colonel nodded, and the two stepped up the staircase to the command level. They walked in, and Ferest moved behind the desk, "Colonel, I know there's something wrong. And I don't believe it was Captain Darkrider's death. What is it?"

Sal walked toward the window, he sighed, and put his head down. "She's... out there..."

Ferest leaned over the desk. "Who?"

Sal shuttered. He turned back to the Admiral-- his friend. "Her name... was Mara. Back when she worked for the Empire, she was known as the Emperor's Hand. She's...powerful in the Force. But, her skills aren't tuned, and so she's weak and fragile..." He broke off, and stumbled, he looked toward the window again. "We had a little adventure, thirty five years ago... when we met. We were both teenagers. Our parents were part of the diplomatic core. We decided that we'd screw the Empire... and join the Rebellion." He laughed, gently. "That's so preposterous now. Well, we stole a ship, an old-style class three Imperial Brigade Vessel. Well, we made it as far as the planet's orbit before TIE Fighters forced us down. Well, then, she and I were separated... she was forced off somewhere. A place I know now that was the Emperor's Palace, on Corsucaunt. And I was

forced off to the Navy. Well, after fifteen years, we finally got in touch... almost by accident. It was long after the war was declared over. I was on shore duty on Opoola VI. I saw a lovely lady with long red hair, a beautiful figure, but a look that I knew could only be hers. You see... I never forgot her.

"I walked up to her," he continued, "and she remembered me. We went to her quarters, and, well I figure you know what happened next. The next morning, she was gone... She left me a note saying not to look for her. I didn't. But, I loved her. I think I still do." He grabbed his head. "There's more. You know, I'm a Jedi... you also should know that I'm a Dark Lord of the Sith. She was a Jedi as well. If that one night, that one time, produced a child... it would be the strongest Jedi the galaxy had ever seen. I thought she was dead... I knew that if we did produce a child, I would fall... But it happened, and I'm not sorry for what I've done..."

Ferest nodded, "Sometimes a man must learn to put away his fears, and confront his problem. You must confront your problem, Sal Dey. Even if it destroys you, you must not run."

He nodded, "May I go now, sir."

The Admiral nodded. Dey began walking out the door. He turned, "After this mission is over... I'm resigning from the Imperial Navy. I'm not coming back."

The Admiral stood, "Dey!" he called. Dey turned. The Admiral looked at him and nodded. "May the Force be with you."

Dey slightly smiled, but turned. And left.

What am I going to do now? Ferest asked himself.

It was dawn on Dantooine.

Leia stood with Wedge, Winter, Ceara and Anakin on the observation lounge of the main observation building. They stood in a circle, looking over diagnostic reports and such.

Winter was making her report, "Since our sensor drones have reported nothing in the vicinity of Corsucaunt, I'd have to say that it could be possible to send a minimum complement back to secure the base."

Leia nodded, "Sounds like a plan to me. All right, Wedge, will you lead the team?"

He nodded, "I'm going to need a lot of help though. We're talking a few Mon Cals."

"All right," Leia said, "Take the Independence, the Freedom and the Republic back to Corsucaunt. Be sure to make sure you have several flights of starfighters aboard."

"Right," Wedge replied.

Ceara and Anakin were carrying on a conversation in the background. "We're going to," Anakin spoke up.

"No," Leia said.

"Why?" Anakin asked. "We were there a few days ago."

"You're not going, Anakin and that's final," Leia raised her voice.

"We're going," Ceara said, "I need to be there."

"Why?" Leia asked.

"I don't know," she answered, "I just... know that I-- Anakin and I must be there."

"Look," Leia said, "I'm not going to argue with you. Go, but be careful."

"Yes, Mom," Anakin said.

Wedge turned toward Anakin, "Will you make preparations to leave, Commander Solo?"

Anakin went to leave, then turned again. "Commander?"

"That's right." Wedge smiled, "I know how much this means to you, Anakin. And I know how disappointed you were when you took the officer's test. But, you've proven yourself to be an excellent warrior, lately. You've saved lives, you've helped us in our hours of need. The Republic needs officers like you. You deserve this."

Leia looked at him, "He's right, Anakin. You'll make a great leader some day."

He smiled, "For one time in my life, I'm speechless. Thank you." "We don't have time for speeches." Wedge headed for the staircase. "Let's move," he paused for a long time, well, long enough to make it sound with conviction, "Commander."

Anakin smiled, and he grabbed Ceara's hand, and they ran for the stairs.

Talon's Corvette was in orbit of Endor.

Years ago, the orbit of this moon was full of dust, and remains... remains of the second Death Star. And Luke Skywalker's final nightmare.

But, that was a long time ago. Now, Luke was going back for help. He and the twins had already left the ship and were heading for the Ewok Village. The Ewoks had become the smallest, but one of the most powerful

allies in the Republic. Unfortunately Chief Chirpa died several years ago, and the trust of the Republic might have been lost.

Luckily, as the three were Jedi, they could communicate with the Ewoks, without the use of the translator droid, maybe they would still trust them.

They landed in the midst of the great trees of Endor. These trees were hundreds of thousands years old. They were the tallest that Jacen had ever seen. Jacen remembered that his parents had recently visited here. He saw a footprint. It was about the same size as his mothers. He kneeled down, and glanced at it.

Luke, who was several feet behind him, stopped, and looked at it, too. Jacen glanced up.

"Who's? My mother's, or Mara's?" he asked.

Luke closed his eyes, "It's Leia's."

Luke and Jacen stood up. Jaina heard a noise, she looked behind her.

"What's that?" she asked.

Luke reached out with the Force, "That could be our welcoming party."

All of the sudden, six little Ewoks came out from the trees, spears drawn. Then, the leader, the eldest, recognized the leader of the Jedi. He signaled the others to lower their weapons. Luke recognized him. He smiled.

"How are you doing, Wicket?" he asked.

Wicket sighed, and gave a thumbs-up signal, he spoke in his native tongue, which the younger Jedi couldn't understand.

"That's great," Luke said. He noticed the markings on his headpiece. "You're the chief now, eh?"

Wicket nodded again. He again, spoke in his native language.

Jacen stepped forward, "Um, Uncle Luke?"

"What is it?" he asked.

"We can't understand them. What do we do?" he asked.

"Reach out, you'll understand," he replied.

Then, Jacen reached out toward the little bears. Then, he heard the bear ask, "So, Luke, what are you doing in the great forest?"

Jacen was shocked, he understood. He glanced over towards his sister, who also understood. They nodded toward each other, and listened again.

"Well," Luke said, "We're looking for someone. A woman named Mara Jade."

"I haven't seen anyone in the great forest since your sister and her mate came to visit."

"Well," Luke asked, "Do you mind if we visit your village, and set up an operation?"

"I'd be happy to let you come back to our tribe," Wicket said, "Maybe you're young friends would like to join as well."

"I'm sorry, Wicket, these are my sister's children Jacen and Jaina."

"Welcome, to our great forest." Jaina smiled, "Thank you, Chief Wicket."

"Well," Wicket said, "It's time for our mid-day meal. We're having nutmeat tonight, very good."

"We'll come with you," Luke said.

"Come," the bear lead them to the trees.

Talon Karrde had the Wild Karrde in the sky again.

Luke and Karrde had come up with a plan to help defeat this new Imperial threat once and for all. He was doing all he could from his end. He knew that chances were he wouldn't survive what was about to be done. But, Luke, Mara and the others were his friends, he'd risk his life to save them.

He looked onto the monitor. He saw that the last reported position of the Imperial fleet was in the Orious System. He believed the next stop would be right where he wanted them to be. Corsucaunt. He could be in the Cron Drift in an hour. He could have the ships he needed there at the end of that hour. He could have this war over with in thee hours. The question was would he.

They were on their way to the Cron Drift. An asteroid field/nebula that was exactly what he needed. He was ready. He estimated that the Imperial fleet would be in that area in two and a half hours. He knew what had to be done.

He made last minute adjustments to the shields, as the Drift was a very dangerous place. Technicians were running about, following Karrde's orders. He was a natural leader, the type of leader that the Republic needed. He was thinking of applying for a Generalship. He laughed silently. He'd never get it.

Then, the lead tech came up to him, "Captain. I have an update on our ships... they're in the Cron Drift, awaiting our orders."

"Good job," he said. "Tell them we're on our way."

Chapter Eighteen

The Independence and the other ships had reached Corsucaunt.

Commander Anakin Solo walked onto the bridge. He wore a blue-gray New Republic uniform. As Acting First Officer, he was in charge of ship operations, and command functions, under Admiral Antilles.

The Admiral sat in his command chair on the bridge. Anakin walked to the command area, and folded his hands behind his back. Wedge looked back at him, "What's the situation, Commander?"

"We've run several sensor scans of the planet," he reported, "Besides indigenous life, there's nothing down there. Also, no cloaked Imperial Starships in orbit."

"Good job, Mr. Solo," Wedge said. "Get ready to take a shuttle down there. But first, do we have the device on line as of yet?"

"Yes sir," he said, "Test simulations are complete, and we are ready to use the device when ready."

"Understood," he said, "Take a security force down, Commander."

"Aye sir," Anakin said for the first time in ages.

The Palpatine was several hours away from Corsucaunt.

Dey sat in the command chair, glancing out toward the white light of hyperspace. He looked down again, thinking of Mara. He would find her someday. He knew, though, that circumstances probably wouldn't allow it.

He stood up, and walked to the railing near the window. He glanced up at the ceiling, and looked back down. Several officers walked in front of him, but he didn't notice them.

Then, something happened. He looked out the window. The streaks of hyperspace were turning to a multi-colored array of energy. He knew that wasn't right. He glanced at the engineer, "Report?" The bridge shook.

"We're being pulled out of hyperspace!" he yelled. "I'm controlling it, but I don't think the engines will hold much longer."

Ferest ran out of his office. "Is it an Interdictior?"

The Sensor Officer looked back, "We're moving in and out of hyperspace. I can't get a clear sensor reading!"

"What's the condition of the rest of the fleet?" Ferest asked as he crawled down the steps.

"They're not in hyperspace," Dey replied from the sensor terminal.

"Our engines are strong," the Engineer said, "But, if we don't cut engines and restart them, we'll be blown into a billion pieces!" "Cut engines," Ferest ordered, "Bring us back on impulse. Shields up!"

The colored lights vanished. The bridge stopped shaking. And right in front of them were the five Star Destroyers, an Intredictor, and Twelve Class C Gamorrean Battle Cruisers, which were about the size of a Super Star Destroyer.

Ferest ran for the tactical control. "There's only one way we're getting out of here. Arm the superlaser!"

"Sir," the engineer yelled, "The power cells have been drained. We won't have full power until we get out of the way of that Intredictor."

"Where are we?" Dey asked.

"The Cron Drift," the nav officer replied.

The Wild Karrde flew in front of the Gamorrean Vessels.

Talon sat in the command chair. He glanced back at his crew. "Get ready, boys." He turned toward the monitor, "This is going to be a hell of a fire fight."

The Palpatine began to move toward the other ships.

Ferest looked back at Dey. "Give me full lasers. Take out that Intredictor."

The tactical officer and Dey worked to get the systems on line. "We're ready," Dey said.

"Fire!"

As the first laser bolts streamed from the mammoth Star Destroyer, the large Gammorean Cruisers headed toward the Star Destroyers. One after another, both sides were depleted.

After an hour, it was almost all over. The only ships that remained were the damaged hull of the Executer II, a Gamorrean Cruiser, the Wild Karrde and the Palpatine.

Dey looked out toward the wreckage. "It's almost over," he whispered silently.

Ferest was working with the communications officer, "Can you raise the Executer?"

"Their comm array is down," he replied. Laser bolts continued to hit the Palpatine from the last Gammorean ship.

Then, Dey noticed something on his board. "Sir!" he yelled. "the Executer's going to blow!"

Ferest looked toward the window. The Executer sat in space, wounded, dying. For a second, he thought he saw the ship come back to life. Then, a flash of light filled the area. The hull exploded. Light emanated from the explosion, which only took seconds. The bridge was full of light. Then, darkness. Dey looked down. Ferest continued to look out the window. Anger was the only emotion he felt.

"There's only one thing we can do," Ferest said.

"What's that?" Dey glanced back.

"We have to destroy the Imperial System." Ferest's eyes were fixed on the asteroids of the Cron Drift.

Dey nodded. "Set a course for Corsucaunt, maximum speed."

The nav officer acknowledged.

Ferest took one final look at what remained of his fleet. It was over, the Empire was gone. Nothing was left to do, he would destroy the Rebellion and the Empire in one final blow. It was over...

Meanwhile, Luke walked through the forest.

He knew what was happening in a distant asteroid field, but he had to do something else first. The Ewoks had graciously allowed Luke and the others to look for Mara. They wanted to help, unfortunately, it was time for the Ewok Festival of Lights, and they had to stay around the village at all times. Luke sensed that the Force was very near. He knew that he would find Mara soon. He heard a voice saying, "Beware. She is dangerous. Beware. Kill her." But Luke did not listen. The Dark Side was present here, as well as the light. Luke didn't understand. He didn't want to understand. Then, he saw a clearing. He signaled to the twins.

Jacen and Jaina ran towards Luke. They saw the clearing, as well.

"Is this it?" Jaina asked.

"I think so," Luke whispered.

Luke nodded, and they walked in. There, Mara lay on the ground. Luke ran to her, fearing the worst. But, her eyes were closed, and she had a pulse. She was sleeping. Luke stood up.

"Do we wake her?" Jaina asked.

"I think we should," Jacen replied.

Luke nodded. He knelt down and kissed her. Her eyes fluttered open, slowly. The first thing she saw was Luke.

"Luke," she smiled.

Luke smiled in return.

"I was hoping you'd find me." Mara whispered.

"Did you have any doubt?" Luke smiled, "I'll always be able to find you. You and Ceara are a part of me.

Mara smiled. Her family, she thought. Then, the thoughts of happiness went away. She sat up. "What about Dey?"

"Who?" he asked.

"Sal Dey," she breathed, "He's the father."

"Wait a second," Jacen said, "Colonel Say Dey, of the Imperial Rebellion?"

"I think so," Mara said, "We've got to stop him."

"Right," Luke said, "But first, you have to rest."

"There's no time for that!" she yelled, "He's going to kill them!"

"Who?" Luke asked.

"Anakin," she said, "and Ceara."

Luke realized what he had to do. "We've got a landspeeder waiting," Luke said, "Let's go."

It was dawn on Dantooine.

Han and Leia stood atop the tower, holding on to each other, and looking out towards the moons.

"Beautiful," Han said, silently.

"Yes it is," she said.

"I wasn't talking about the moons," he said.

Leia smiled. Han turned and held her close. The two shared a beautiful passionate embrace.

They separated, and Leia asked, "Are you enjoying retirement?"

Han laughed. "Yes," he said. "I'm also enjoying having more time with the Falcon."

Leia smiled. "Are you ever going to get rid of that ship?"

"Now, why would I want to do that?" he asked.

"Is this one of those love me, love my ship sort of things?" Leia held him.

He kissed her. "Yes."

They kissed again. Then, Leia's armband went off. The embrace was cut short.

She hit a button. "Yes, Winter. What is it?"

"Minister," Winter's voice came back, "I just received a communique from your brother."

"What did it say?" she asked.

Winter replied, "It reads: 'I've found Mara. We're on our way to Corsucaunt. No time to explain. This might be the last you hear of me. I love you. Luke.'"

Leia looked at Han. He shook his head and muttered something about the kid being crazy. She talked into her wristband again,

"Winter, fire up the Falcon. Tell Chewie to prep her for launch, and get Lando, Artoo and Threepio. We're going to Corsucaunt. "

Winter paused for a long time, "Understood."

"And arrange for Jordan Calrissian's temporarily leaving."

Winter really didn't know what to say. "Yes, ma'am," was the only thing that slipped out.

"Solo out," she said.

She started walking. Han grabbed her, "What are you doing?"

"I'm going with you," Leia said.

"Who said we're going anywhere?" Han asked.

She thought about it. No one really said anything.

"You see?" he replied.

"That's it," Leia said, "I'm ordering you to take me Corsucaunt."

"I don't work for you anymore," he replied.

Leia sighed, he had her there. "Fine, then I'm asking you, as your wife. Take me there, please."

"Why?" Han asked.

"Because, I have to be there. We have to be there. All of us, as a family. We need to go." Han grimaced. "The Falcon's on landing pad R. Let's go."

Chapter Nineteen

Imperial City was gigantic.

It was a good thing that Ceara and Anakin knew what they were doing. They had already headed to the main command center, where they had found that the command systems had been overridden, and all control was blown. Now, they were on their way to the underground computer center. Only the military knew about the computer center. It was the control center for every monitor, light and control panel in the city. It was fully automatic, but had a personal interface if necessary. They ran down the stairs to the room. Three guards came with them. They had been running for ten minutes straight. They were finally there. Anakin pushed the door open, and ran into the room. He took out his light beacon, and went to a control panel. He pointed to two of the guards, "You, and you, get the main systems online." He pointed to the other guard. "You, get that terminal online, I want to see what happened."

The guards went to their work. Anakin looked over the third guard's shoulder. Finally, the screen came on. Anakin read the screen:

ELECTRICAL STORM AT TIME INDEX

44152:2315:515:73:0:99

TO REACTIVATE SYSTEMS

REBOOT SYSTEM IN THRONE ROOM

Anakin glanced at Ceara, then at the other guards. "You three, hold down the fort. Ceara, let's go."

Ceara nodded, and the two ran back up the steps.

The Independence loomed above the planet. Wedge stood on the bridge, as junior officers ran around doing work, and getting ready for battle. Wedge was nervous. He figured this could be it. Then, a young Ensign walked up to him.

"Sir," she said, "The device is ready, but we're going to need to test it for a while. You know, some simulations."

"All right," Wedge said, "Proceed."

An alarm went off from the front of the bridge. Wedge walked to that officer's position. He glanced back at Wedge. "Sir," he said, "We've got a Corellian Corvette coming in. It's one of the trading guild's."

"What's it's designation?" Wedge asked.

"It's KA5153-A," the officer said.

Wedge nodded, "It's one of Captain Karrde's."

Another officer looked back at Wedge. "Sir, they're hailing us."

"On screen," Wedge said.

He turned to the screen, as the picture of the planet turned into Luke Skywalker's face.

"Admiral," Luke said, "It's good to see you. What's happened?"

Wedge held his hands behind his back. "As you know," he said, "We evacuated Corsucaunt. We have a small strike force on the planet getting things under control." "What about Ceara?" Luke asked.

"She's on the surface," Wedge reported.

"Give me clearance to land," Luke said.

Wedge smiled, "I don't know if I can do that. You see, this is a military operation."

"We'll land in the forest surrounding the city," Luke said.

"That would be fine," Wedge said, "But I'm warning you that there could be danger down there. We don't have any indications whether or not there are Imperial Soldiers down there."

"We'll risk it," Luke said, "Corvette out."

The screen returned to the picture of the planet. Wedge watched as his friend went down into the atmosphere. Good luck, my friend, he thought.

The Palpatine was almost to Corsucaunt.

Dey stood on the middle deck, looking at the stars. As they kept getting closer to Corsucaunt, he had the sensation that he had to do something. He didn't know what. But as they got closer, he also got a clearer interpretation of the whole thing. He knew he had to go to the planet. But, what was drawing him there? That he could not understand.

Meanwhile, Ferest was preparing for death. He sat in his office, with a bottle of his favorite ale in one hand, and his Imperial stripes in another. He knew it was all over. He slicked his hair back, and took a sip of the ale. He lifted his glass. "Here's to the best Admiral in the fleet," he said, drunkenly. He put down the bottle, and reattached his stripes. He stood tall, and walked out the door.

"Battlestations," he said. The entire complex turned to a dark shade of red. Dey cleared the way for Ferest, who sat drunkenly in the chair. "Prepare to take us out of hyperspace," he said, this time a little more confident.

"Aye sir," the nav officer replied.

The Falcon was also nearing Corsucaunt.

"Five minutes 'til Corsucaunt orbit," Han said from his familiar seat. Chewbacca sat at his side, and Leia, Lando and Jordan sat behind them.

Han smiled, "Nothing like flying this 'ol girl again."

"You're telling me," Lando said.

Han grimaced back at Lando. "Shut up, Lando."

Lando put his hands up. "Yes, sir."

"I'm going to need some help at the cannons," Han said. "Any volunteers?" he asked. He looked back at Lando. "Sorry, pal," Lando said, "My eyesight's not as good as it used to be."

He turned to Leia. "Sorry, honey. Never been good with a laser gun."

He finally turned to Jordan. "I'd be happy to."

"Great, kid. I owe you one," he said.

He got up, and hit the kid on the back. They got up and ran for the cannons.

Lando moved to the front, and sat in the pilot's chair. He looked back at Leia, who was glaring at him, with a stony look. He looked back at her.

"What can I say," Lando said, "I lied."

"Get ready, Han," he called back, "Two minutes."

Ceara and Anakin had entered the throne room. It was daytime, so the light shown through the large windows, and they did not need power. Anakin walked slowly toward the large windows. He took out the plans to the room.

"I don't remember where this power switch is," he said.

Ceara looked around, using the Force. Quickly, she gave up. "I forgot, I'm not good at that. Let me help."

She sat down, and looked at the blueprint. Then, she realized she couldn't read blueprints either.

"You're going to have to teach me how to do that." she said.

"Do what?" he asked.

"Read those things," she said. "If I want to be a Republic Officer, I have to have some knowledge of that stuff."

"You're probably right," Anakin said, "But, why would you want to be a NR officer? It would just hold you back from being a Jedi."

Ceara turned, "I don't know. I guess I just want to be with you." She kissed him.

"Let me tell you a secret," he kissed her in return. "I don't know how to read them either."

Both of them laughed.

Dey entered his quarters. He looked around, as if he knew he wasn't coming back. He went to his desk. He sat down in the chair, and opened a drawer. He felt around the left side of his chest. He felt what he was looking for, and ripped it from his chest. He looked at his rank pin, and threw it into the drawer. Then, he pulled out the long cylinder-like lightsaber. He flipped the switch, and a long red beam emitted from the saber. He deactivated it, and placed it on his belt. He stood, and walked toward the door, and exited.

It was a long walk down to the docking bay. They could trace him if he used turbolifts, so Dey decided he'd take the long way. He walked straight down the center of the hall, ignoring everyone around him. Everyone glanced back at the Colonel, wondering what was wrong. He reached the ladder, and climbed it down.

He was now on double-H deck, which was the main shuttle hanger deck. There were several guards at the wall, and one officer. The officer stopped the former Colonel.

"Woe," the deck officer said, "I can't let you go in there without proper authorization."

"I'm Colonel Dey," he said, "Let me pass."

The deck officer laughed, "Yeah right, and I'm the Emperor."

Dey looked deep into the officers eyes, "You will let me pass."

The deck officer backed away from the Colonel. He was shaking . "We'll let him pass," he said frightened at the Dark Jedi.

The Colonel walked in, and looked around. He saw what he was looking for... an old Tyderian Class shuttle. He walked up the ramp, into

the shuttle, not paying any attention to anything, except his tasks at hand.

Chapter 20

The Independence was still in orbit.

It had been only five minutes since the Corvette went down into orbit. But it had seemed like an eternity. Wedge paced around the bridge, looking at each and every one of his crew, giving them a reassuring nod. He knew that it wouldn't be long now, and he was ready for anything. Then, he walked to the front of the bridge, ready to give an announcement. "My friends," he said, "Today, the New Republic will prevail. We will again prove the Empire wrong in saying that they are the supreme race, that humans are the only correct race. We will not only defeat starships, we will defeat principles. Principles that the New Republic believe to be false. We will win, either way, we will win. Because, if we don't, we will still have people finishing what we, and our parents, and our grandparents begun for us. We will win. That's my speech, and it's not only words. It's the meaning. Will I finish this speech with 'May the Force be with us'? No. I've been told that the Force will be with me always. The Force will be with you always as well. So, I will finish with another phrase from a long time ago. Good luck."

It was like he knew the exact time that the battle would begin, because the next second, the battle alert went off, and the Palpatine came out of hyperspace.

Wedge leaned over the railing. "Launch all fighters."

"Launch all fighters," Ferest ordered.

Ferest looked around for Dey, he was going to tell him to set a course for that star. Unfortunately, he wasn't there. So, he'd have to do it himself. "Set a course for the star."

Then, Ferest saw the shuttle leaving the Palpatine. He seemed to be the only one to notice it. He decided that no one had to know that. And so, he ignored it as well.

Wedge looked at the Palpatine, beyond all of the firing in the foreground. His navigation officer was standing next to him. "They're changing course," he whispered. "They're not going to destroy the planet, they're going to destroy the whole system."

Wedge snapped to it. "Set a course to follow them. But, don't make it look like we're gaining anything. Keep a constant distance."

"Aye sir," the Navigation Officer reported. He ran to his post.

Wedge looked back at the Tactical officer. "Jim," he yelled. "Are we done with the simulations?"

"We'll need a few more," he replied, "But at the rate they're heading, we'll be done by then."

"How will we know when they're firing?" Wedge asked.

"There's a special sensor built into that thing," he said, "When they fire, we'll know."

"Sir," the Scanning Officer yelled. "The Millennium Falcon is coming into the area."

"Damn," he said. "We don't have time to talk. Catch us up with them. If the Minister is on board, we don't have much of a choice."

Lando flew the Falcon around the fighters.

"We've got a new problem, Han," he yelled.

"What is it?" Han came back.

Lando looked at the gauge. "Our core pressure's at ninety-five percent. If it goes any higher, we're going down."

"How did this happen?" Han asked.

Lando moved to a new panel, "Blame your Wookie," he said, "He's the one who keeps tearing the ship apart."

Chewie growled in disgust.

"Don't take it seriously pal," Lando said, "I was just kidding."

Lando rammed against the console. "I've got a bad feeling about this." Han and Jordan fought off the fighters. Jordan had become quite a good shot, Han thought. Maybe, when he got out of prison, he'd make a good tactical officer.

Then, Han's console gave an alert. "We've got a big problem," Lando's voice came over the speakers.

"What?" Han screamed back.

"Core pressure at ninety-seven percent," he yelled, "She's going to blow."

"Dump the core, damnit," Han yelled.

"If we dump the core," Lando yelled, "We'll burn up."

"No we won't," Han stepped out of the turret, "Kid, let's go," he called to Jordan. "Lando, dump the core, trust me."

"All right," Lando said. Han heard the sound he hoped he'd never hear. The sound of him losing his baby.

Han ran to the cockpit, followed closely by Jordan. Lando quickly moved from Han's seat, and let the old space pirate into the seat.

Han glanced at a few gauges. He still had steering controls, although they were minimal. "Chewie, give me anything you have left in thrusters."

Chewie growled in denial. Han got a look of disgust on his face, "What do you mean, no thrusters?"

Chewie growled, pointing back at Lando. Han glanced back.

"I didn't do anything! It's not my fault!" Lando screamed.

Han shook his head, and looked back at the ever looming planet of Corsucaunt. "Chewie, keep the nose up." Then, he added, realizing that might be harder than it looked, "If you can."

Chewie growled again. Han shook his head. "This is not going to work."

Leia looked at Han, "Where have I heard that before?"

"No time to discuss this in committee," he said, smiling.

Lando rolled his eyes, as he saw the front of the ship flare up.

"I am not a committee!" Leia yelled.

Han glanced forward, knowing that they probably wouldn't survive this. He moved the controls back and forth. The cabin got increasingly warmer. He shuttered, as the sweat began rolling down his face. He moved his hand through his hair. He heard the radar dish, and several other pieces of equipment fly off the Falcon. Then, the light of the atmosphere died, and Han saw the clouds, and Imperial City below.

He pulled the stick as far as he could in reverse. He was panting, "Chewie, engage emergency landing procedure."

Chewie growled in reply. He hit several switches overhead. Leia heard something fly out from behind. She ignored it, as Han looked back at her quickly. His eyes moved to the front of the ship. He maneuvered the ship, somehow, toward the trees surrounding the city. Now, Leia knew what he was doing.

In the back of the Falcon, Threepio was hanging on for his life. He looked at his little companion. "I really hate space travel," he complained. Artoo just beeped, as he rolled and hit the three-dimensional table. Threepio fell on the ground, and screamed.

Han noticed the ship was less than a kilometer from the ground. His eyes widened, and he yelled to everyone, "Assume crash positions!" All of them, including Han moved their heads between their legs. Then, he heard

a giant boom. They had hit the trees. But, the ship fell even further. Han felt it, as part of the ship broke off from the remainder of her. He felt it, like it was part of him being broken off. Then, another boom, and it was over.

Han looked out of his window port, and saw that dirt covered the window. He looked back at his friends. "Is everybody okay?" he whispered. He looked at them, and they nodded, Chewie merely growled.

The ship was apparently at an angle. Han stood up, and grabbed his chair, and pulled his wife off the ground. Chewie stood up, and grabbed Lando and Jordan. Jordan nodded saying, "I'm all right, buddy, thanks." Chewie growled in content.

The six moved to the back of the ship. There was a huge breach. Beyond the recreation room, the ship had broken.

Han laughed, "It's going to take me a while to fix this." He nodded.

Leia looked around, "Where are Artoo and Threepio?"

The others looked around. Han shook his head. He moved to the loading ramp, and pushed it open. The six slid out of the wreckage of the ship.

Han looked at the other part of his ship. It was lying on the ground. He knew it could be salvaged. But, it might take them a little while. Then, he saw what he was really looking for, Artoo lay on top of Threepio, who was completely covered with dirt. He looked at them, and laughed.

Threepio squirmed around. "General Solo," he said, "I believe this is your fault."

He smiled, "You know, Goldenrod, you might be right this time." Then his smile faded, and he looked at both parts of the Millennium Falcon. He shook his head, and looked down. The others moved around him.

Leia put her hand on his shoulder. Han turned to her, and started crying. The two embraced.

"It's okay," Leia said reassuringly. "I know how much she meant to you."

"We'd been through a lot together," he said, "This ship and me. It's not going to be the same."

They turned toward the city. Han looked back one last time. Leia turned too, and hugged him, and they walked away.

Ceara and Anakin tried to activate the main power systems. "I don't get this," Anakin said, "This wire should do it." As he said that, the console sparked. "Then again, maybe not."

"Anakin! Ceara!" a voice echoed from the entrance. It was Han's.

"Dad?" Anakin asked, as he saw the eight run into the room. He knew it was them, "Mom! Dad!"

"Mom!" Ceara cried.

The two young people ran to meet the older, wiser people. They embraced in the middle of the throne room. They stayed there for a long time. Then, seeing Jordan, Ceara spoke up, "What are you doing here?" she asked.

Jordan shrugged, "They needed me." He looked at the floor, where the wiring was. "I guess you need me, too." He walked toward the wiring, and sat down. "Oh god," Anakin said. "You guys look terrible, what happened?"

Han looked down, "The Falcon's been in an accident. I hope I can repair it."

"I'll give you a hand," Anakin said.

"I don't think so," another voice said, one that none of them recognized. They all turned toward the door, and saw a man standing in the shadows. A red beam of light emanated from something he was holding. He stepped out from the shadows. It was an older Imperial officer, he looked directly at Han. "Well, General, it looks like you ruined another fine ship."

Han glared at him. "Dey," he whispered.

"Dey?" Ceara whispered, looking down. She knew that name meant something. But she wasn't sure of what. She shook her head, trying to put the facts together.

"That's right," he smiled. "And I'm afraid it's all over, for all of us. In less than ten minutes this system will be destroyed."

"Not if we have anything to do about it," Han said, trying to sound brave.

Dey laughed, "With what? Your ship." His face turned from humor, to an exaggerated sorrow, "Oh, I'm sorry, General. I forgot, your ship was damaged. Well, Han, your ship's not the only thing." He walked forward, and swung the lightsaber at Han, who fell to the ground, and ducked out of the way. Lando and Chewie ran to his side. Ceara, Anakin and Leia stood on the other side, watching helplessly. The droids moved near Jordan, back far enough so they were out of reach. Again, the Imperial laughed, Han thought it was disgusting.

The Palpatine and the Independence had cleared the system. But, still Ferest knew he needed to be less than thirty thousand kilometers from the star so it would work. "Engage thermal shielding," he ordered.

On the Independence, Wedge and the others worked furiously to get the controls to work. "Lieutenant," he called.

"Aye sir," the tactical officer said, out of breath.

"Are we ready?" Wedge asked as he pointed toward the Imperial vessel.

"Let me run one more simulation to be sure," he put his index finger up.

"Hurry up," Wedge said.

"Aye sir," the officer nodded.

"Here we go," Ferest said.

Officers were standing at their posts, looking at their Admiral for final orders. "Distance from the star?" he asked.

"Fifty thousand kilometers," the helm officer said.

"Give me the controls," he said.

An officer ran up to him, and gave him a switch. "I've been waiting for this my whole life," he said.

"We're at thirty thousand kilometers," the helm officer said.

"Full stop. Begin targeting sequence," the Admiral said.

The tactical officer turned, "Targeting sequence...initiated."

"Sir!" the Independence tactical officer yelled.

"What is it?" Wedge asked.

"They've begun their targeting sequence," he yelled.

"How long?" Wedge asked.

"Estimated seven minutes 'til they're ready."

"Are we ready?"

He nodded, "Yes sir, we are."

Wedge stuck out his hand, and the tactical officer handed him the switch.

Dey inched his way toward Ceara.

"Who are you?" he asked, "You're not a Solo, you're not a Calrissian, so who are you?"

Ceara did not answer. Anakin took a deep breath. He reached behind him, and pulled out his lightsaber, slowly, he moved it to his side.

"Well," Dey said, "Since you won't answer, I guess I'll find out for myself." He moved swiftly toward her. Anakin lit the saber, and took the blow meant for Ceara.

Dey smiled, "Oh, a Jedi, eh?"

"That's right," Anakin said.

Anakin moved toward Dey's right, swinging as he did. Dey blocked. "Well," Dey said, "You're going to have to do a little bit better than that, Jedi."

Anakin moved the lightsaber around, and hit left, right and left again, just to be blocked.

The two locked in the center. Dey whispered to Anakin, "Who is the girl?"

Anakin became angry, "That's for me to know, and you to never find out."

"Don't become angry." Ceara tried to tell him through the Force.

Dey broke from the lock, and swung a deadly stroke toward the young man. Again, it was blocked. Anakin moved around, and Dey moved to strike him. It was like it was perfectly choreographed, every blow was received, and every hit was blocked. It was a great little battle. (Really it was millions of dollars worth of special effects just kidding, Ryan.) (Yeah, yeah, cool!) Then, Anakin became tired.

Dey saw this weakness, "Little boy, are you tired?"

"Hell no," he breathed.

Then, Dey made several strikes. The first two, Anakin blocked. The third hit him square in the arm. He flew back, and screamed. Ceara fingered her lightsaber.

Dey moved in for the kill. But, something stopped him. He looked around, and then to the door.

"Skywalker!!!" Dey yelled.

Skywalker came out of the shadows, Dey lit his saber, Luke said, "Dey, you can still change, do it for the Force!"

Dey took a swing, Luke ducked out of it's way. "No, it's too late, you and friends will die! Fight!!!"

"I won't do that," Luke said.

Then, Dey felt something, a feeling he hadn't felt in years. He looked toward the door, and saw three figures standing in the doorway. They stepped out into the light. One was Lieutenant Burke, or was it? The next was a female, who looked like the one who he thought was Burke, he looked at the third, and recognized the face. It was Mara.

He breathed in, "Mara," he cried.

Ceara looked at Mara, then at Dey. That was her father. She knew this wasn't happening. It couldn't, it wouldn't. She looked again at the tired, old face that belonged to Mara Jade. It was beautiful. In one day, she met her entire real family. It was an unbelievable sensation.

Dey kneeled. He dropped his lightsaber, it rolled off near the girl. "Mara," he cried again. "You came to me!"

"No," Mara said, "I came here for a different reason." She looked at Ceara, then at Luke.

He cried again, then looked at Skywalker, "Kill me, Skywalker. Kill me. I don't deserve to be here."

"I'm not going to do that," Luke said. He turned toward Mara.

Dey looked toward his fallen lightsaber. He looked at it, and in his mind grabbed it. It ended up in his hand. He leapt up and ran for Luke. Luke drew his lightsaber, and deflected the first punch. Dey backed off, and Luke moved in silently, trying to remove the saber from Dey's hand.

Dey saw Luke coming, and moved his hand up, Luke flew up against the wall.

Jacen and Jaina nodded to each other. They pulled out their lightsabers and moved toward Dey. Dey felt them, and sent them off in another direction.

Ceara saw this happen, and realized she couldn't watch her friends and family die. She pulled out her lightsaber, and yelled, "Father!"

Dey turned. He noticed Ceara, with her lightsaber lit, ready to strike. "Who are you talking to, girl?"

"You," Ceara breathed. "Father."

Dey's eyes narrowed. "You're my daughter."

"Yes," she said, trying to control her frustration. "My name is Ceara. Ceara Jade. I'm a Jedi. Like you, and my mother."

"You wouldn't kill your father." he said.

"You're not my father," she said. "I don't have a father who kills my friends, and who is on the wrong side. The dark side. You can still change. It's not too late, and if you do, I will call you father."

He looked down. Thoughts of all sorts entered his mind, then one final one did: "No."

He moved to hit Ceara. She brushed the blows off, very easily.

"Ceara!!" Mara yelled.

Ceara heard her cries , but tried to concentrate on the battle.

The Independence hung just in range of the Palpatine. Its shield's had been damaged, so Wedge had decided that it was time to withdraw.

Wedge glanced back at his tactical officer. "Are they in position?"

"They're almost there," he said. "I've got thirty seconds until they hit position."

Ferest looked out onto what would be his death. The star, which hung ever so beautifully was about to be destroyed. He looked at the timer: twenty seven seconds. He looked at his sensor scan, the Independence was still sitting there, waiting for them to come out. Either they didn't know they had the superlaser, or they had no idea of its capabilities. He lifted the safety. He looked at the timer. Fifteen seconds... Ten seconds... five... three... he makes a choice... two.... one, he hits the switch.

"Firing sequence initiated," the computer screamed.

Wedge looked at the screen. The Independence began to produce energy. He glanced back at the tactical officer.

"Now?" he asked.

The tactical officer nodded quickly, "Now!"

Wedge removed the safety, and hit the switch. Nothing happened.

Ferest smiled as the energy buildup continued. Sixty-five percent...Eighty...ninety-eight...full power! He smiled. Then, the energy build-up came in front of the ship-- The lights went dead on the bridge. "What the--?" Ferest asked. They should be watching the complete annihilation of the system, not total darkness. People began to panic, as they ran around, making checks on the dead computer systems.

"Lieutenant," Ferest said, "What the hell is going on?"

"I don't know!" the Lieutenant yelled, desperately trying to reactivate the superlaser. "Our energy reserves have been depleted. I think we've got an overload."

"Confirm it!" Ferest yelled.

The Lieutenant finally found something working. "Sir," he said, "It's confirmed. I've got a total-system failure in thirty seconds, followed by a core overload."

Ferest ran to the Lieutenant. "Can we stop it?"

The Lieutenant shook his head.

Ferest became angry. Then, the total-systems failure went into effect. Gravity dissipated, the crew began to float and the air became thinner. The crew became silent, looking to Ferest for help. He looked at the Lieutenant. "All hands, prepare to evacuate."

The silent bridge broke out into total chaos. Ferest flew over to his chair, and sat down. The Lieutenant moved the crew off of the deck, "Let's move it," he yelled, "We've got a core explosion in a few minutes. Move it! Move it! Move it!"

The bridge crew had all gone down the staircase, minus the Lieutenant and the Colonel. The Lieutenant took one final look around the bridge, making sure that all of them were gone. He saw the Ferest, "Admiral, are you coming?"

"I think I'll risk it," Ferest whispered.

"No," he said, "I'm not leaving without you."

"Then stay," he smiled, "There's going to be some beautiful fireworks."

The Lieutenant looked back at the Colonel, this time without the respect he had for the man. "Pardon me, sir, but the hell with you, then. You're a fool. Good bye... sir." And, the Lieutenant climbed down the ladder.

"What the hell is going on over there?" Wedge asked, looking surprised at what he thought was a failed mission.

"I don't know sir," the tactical officer said, "But, I think that there might be a core failure."

"A breach?" he asked.

"No," he shook his head, "An explosion."

Wedge knew what would happen next. "Reverse full thrusters! Take us out of orbit!"

The helm officer acknowledged, and the ship broke orbit.

Ferest looked around the bridge.

Small explosions had already started on the lower decks. By now, the crew that he knew were weak were already in the hands of the Rebels. He didn't care. He heard the explosions come up the ship. He felt the ship die around him, a spirit with him. He didn't care. He ran up to his office, to spend the final seconds in a more private surrounding.

"Sir," the sensor officer said, "the Palpatine is beginning to break up. The core's already going."

"Are there any survivors?" Wedge asked.

The sensor officer looked at the scan. "I'm picking up a few thousand life pods. It looks like most of them survived."

"As soon as this thing is over," Wedge said, "Send rescue transports to pick them up...if they survive the explosion." Wedge looked back to the Palpatine. He saw a large explosion. The core erupted. A shock wave emanated from the ship. In seconds, the Independence got part of it. Wedge braced himself, and then saw the Palpatine descend into the star. Soon, nothing was left.

Wedge took a deep breath. "Lieutenant," he said, looking toward the sensor officer, "I want that information to be sent immediately to Dantooine, for the eyes of the council only."

"Understood," he said. He began packing the data package. He looked down, and glanced toward Antilles. "Sir, at the last second, I think I saw a ship, an old Imperial Transport come from the ship, it entered hyperspace very quickly. But, the sensors don't register anything. Should I include that in the report?"

"It depends," Wedge said. "Can you calculate it's entry to hyperspace?"

"That's just it," he said, "It was a very odd angle, I don't know where it went."

"Include it, telling them everything you told me," he said, and tell them that it is safe to return to Corsucaunt." Then, he looked forward, "Set a return course for Corsucaunt."

He sat in his chair, knowing that once again, the universe was safe from the Empire.

Ceara and Dey circled the throne room.

This fight had been extremely furious, and extremely deadly. Ceara couldn't understand why her father would try to kill her. She moved in, and tried to strike the saber out of his hand. He blocked the thrust, and sent one back, which Ceara quickly reversed. The blows went back and forth, with neither one saying a word. Dey made a hard blow, which sent Ceara to the ground.

Then, Dey broke the silence: "I hope you had a good life, because it's about to end."

He brought the lightsaber above his head. Ceara saw the maneuver, and moved to intercept. Dey slammed the sword down. Ceara's lightsaber caught the blow.

"Well, Ceara," he said, "You're a better Jedi than I thought."

She took a deep breath, "I had a good teacher."

He smiled, "Who, Skywalker?" He moved away, and looked at Luke, who was still forced against the wall, with the twins. He was struggling to get loose. "I guess we're just going to have to take that from you."

Dey lifted his lightsaber, and raised it above his head, he was ready to strike him, when Ceara jumped up, with a rejuvenation of strength, and a growth of anger. She leaped in front of Luke, as the lightsaber came down, slicing her arm. She screamed, and grabbed the bleeding arm. She shook, and looked him in the eye. She got up.

Dey said, "This is where it ends."

"For who?" Ceara asked, still holding to her wound, using the Force to curb the pain.

Dey stood for a second. "If you win, it's over for me. If I win, all of you die."

Dey moved, and began to strike at Ceara. Ceara quickly took the blows. The lightsabers locked again. Ceara leaned in, "You're not going to kill these people."

"Then you'll have to kill me," Dey said.

"I'm not going to do that," Ceara said, "At least, not purposely."

"What about me," Dey asked, "if my blade should cross your throat, you won't have to worry about it."

Again, Ceara felt the rejuvenation, it was as if she had the power of all the ancient Jedi. She knew how to use their power, too. She pushed Dey down. Dey landed on the ground.

"You aren't going to hurt my friends," she said. Then, she stuck out her hand, and bolts of green light exited her hands, directly at Dey. For a second, it looked like they were doing their job, Dey began to faint, but he regained consciousness. He stood up, as the bolts continued to enter his body. He walked forward, and pushed the hand away. Ceara stopped producing the bolts. The duel began again. Ceara and Dey were at full strength. But, Ceara was stronger. She pushed him up the stairs that led to the walkway above the palace.

They continued the duel above. After several lefts from Ceara, Dey moved in for the kill, a low right hit. But, Ceara felt it, and blocked. Then, she hit the edge of Dey's lightsaber. Dey fell to the ground, against the rail. The lightsaber flew from his hand, and landed on the ground below.

Dey put his arms up. "I'm beaten. I have no weapon. Strike me down."

Ceara shook her head, "There's a limit to what I'll do. Your death would be the easy way out. You don't want to live, and watch me and my mother live out our lives. You can't stand it, it's killing you, a lightsaber through the heart would be too easy for you. I'm not going to be the one who makes it easy." She turned toward the stairs, and began her walk down.

Dey looked at her walk away in anger. Then his eyes narrowed, "You may be right about one thing, girl." He reached under his tunic, and pulled out his blaster. He raised it to shoot Ceara, who was still only an arm's length away.

Anakin, who was watching all of this from the ground below, saw Dey pull the weapon. He had to do something. He yelled, "Ceara!" Ceara turned, and saw the gun, her lightsaber was already in her hand. She armed it, and cut the nozzle of Dey's gun. It sparked, and Dey fell back further into the rail. The railing broke, and he tumbled to the ground below, he screamed one horrible final scream. He hit the ground, making a horrendous thud.

Ceara still was clinging to her lightsaber. She looked down to the floor below. She saw the railing, lying several feet from the bloody body of Sal Dey.

Luke, Jacen and Jaina pulled themselves from the wall. They walked away slowly toward the others, who closed in on Dey. Mara cut her way through Jordan and Han. Anakin slowly came to his feet, and stayed away from the others. He looked confused, like he didn't understand what was happening. He looked up to Ceara, who was standing there, also wondering about what happened.

Ceara looked at her lightsaber, which was still armed. She held it with both hands, and disabled it. She ran down the stairs, toward the others. She slowly walked around the others, and saw Mara who was kneeling down by Dey. She was crying. Ceara walked toward them. She knelt down near Dey's head.

Dey was still alive. But he had heavy bleeding. He looked at Mara and Ceara. He looked the longest at Ceara. He smiled, and whispered to her, "You're going to do good, kid. Go make your old man proud... be the best Jedi you couldbe..." His voice trailed off.

He looked at Mara.

Han looked at Dey, as he whispered something to Mara. He couldn't make it out.

Mara cried harder after Dey finished what he said. Then, she saw Dey raise his head, and take a breath, then he looked back at Mara. But, there was no life in that look, no feeling. His eyes were wide open, staring at the love of his life, but not. Colonel Sal Dey was gone.

Anakin was still back behind the rest of them. He felt terrible for Mara and Ceara. He took a deep breath, and decided to walk up. He stood to the left of his father, who looked at Anakin, trying to give him a reassuring nod. Anakin returned it, unsure of himself.

Luke looked at the two most important women in his life. He walked forward, and knelt down between the two, trying to help calm them. He put his left arm around Mara, who looked back at him. Luke put his other arm around Ceara. For the first time, mother and daughter looked into each other's eyes. Ceara brought her arm around to Mara. Mara saw the arm, and gladly took it. The three shared a silent embrace. The others in the room looked on at a family united for the first time.

Then the circle broke apart and Ceara stood a little ways back from the others as Han offered his arm to a still weeping Mara and led her away. Luke started to follow when he turned back to look at Ceara. Anakin was still standing as if rooted to the spot looking at her.

She lit her lightsaber and saluted the dead man.

She turned to Luke, "Go on, look after my mother. She needs you more than I need you right now."

Luke said, "If that's what you want."

"It is and Luke, will you help me with the funeral pyre?"

"Of course, are you going ..."

His voice trailed off as Ceara turned to Anakin and fell into his arms.

"I guess not." he smiled and quickly went out the door.

Epilogue

A few hours later, Ceara and Luke stood over the funeral pyre of Sal Dey. Luke standing on one side a little farther back than Ceara who stood across from him staring down at her biological father. The flames reflected off of her eyes and her hair was redder than he had ever seen it. He was worried about her. She hadn't cried not once and Luke remembered when he had done this very thing when his own father died that he had cried. He knew that Ceara didn't even know the man and he had tried to kill her but the emotions she must be experiencing should lead her to cry. He looked at the pain in her eyes as she looked down at Dey and realized that for the first time he saw his daughter as a woman and

not as his little girl. The thought was troubling. Then when the flames had consumed all of what had been the material part of Sal Dey, Ceara picked up the bucket of water.

"Goodbye, Sal Dey and may the Force bring you the peace you couldn't find on this side." she whispered and then extinguished the flames.

She turned to Luke and silently put her arms around him. Then she began to weep. In her sobs, Luke found his little girl again. He said nothing just let her cry. When her sobs had subsided he lead her away.

A week had passed since the incident in the throne room. It had taken some time to get everyone moved back on to the planet and to get things somewhat back to normal. Leia and the Council had their hands full with the notion of making overtures to the formerly Imperial planets. Luke Skywalker had finally managed to get away from the Council meetings and was taking some time out to meditate in his quarters. He looked at the door, she was coming he could feel it.

"Come in, Mara, I've been expecting you."

Mara walked in, "Hello Luke."

"Sit down Mara I was wondering when you'd come."

"It's been difficult to find you." she said sitting down next to him.

"Mara, why?" was the only thing he could say.

"Why did I leave her with you? Because she was so strong in the Force, I figured you would give her the training she needed. Then I saw how you two bonded. I kept track of her all of these years but I couldn't come forward I knew that if I did Sal would find out. I wasn't strong enough to face him but Ceara was. Luke thank you so much. You really are her father in all of the ways that count."

"So where does that leave the three of us?" he asked not really sure he wanted to know what the answer was.

"I want to try to be a part of her life. I know I haven't been there for her. But other than that I don't know where that leaves us." she shrugged and for the first time in her life actually felt herself blush, she looked down at the floor.

"Mara, about Dey?" Luke asked his voice trembling yet hopeful, "Did you love him?"

"No," she said looking him in the eye deciding she was too old to keep playing this game with him, "He loved me, we knew each other as children, I needed him that's all," she stopped and put her arms around him, "It's always been you, damnit I tried to fight it but twenty years is too long to hold a grudge, I loved you from the first time I saw you..."

Her voice trailed off as Luke pulled her closer. It was strange being as old as he was and never having held a woman other than Leia and Ceara.

"I love you too." was all he said as their lips met.

After what seemed like an eternity they pulled apart.

"Marry me." Luke said turning to her.

"What?" asked a slightly stunned Mara.

"Marry me. Why wait? We love each other and we're already a family. Marry me."

"Alright I'll marry you," Mara smiled, "But not right away. We need some courtship time."

"Fine with me, we'll set a wedding date for a couple of months from now how about that?"

"Wonderful, now come over here and kiss me before you have to go back to that Council meeting."

"I think I'll just skip out for the rest of the afternoon."

"Oh my I've already corrupted the Jedi Master."

"Mara." he said silencing her with a kiss.

Meanwhile, Anakin and Jaina were helping their father with the Falcon. They had managed to get the wreckage into a hanger and were carefully putting it back together. Jaina was in her element. Even as a small girl she had been a mechanical genius and nothing pleased her more than working on her father's prized ship. Anakin was looking at her in awe as they worked. He could see through the machinery but he never could fix it as well as his sister. They worked as a team, he pointing out what was wrong and she fixing it. Han looked upon both of them with pride. Anakin was alot like him in personality but his girl had inherited his knack with machines. Heck, he could have her do it all and it would be better than it was before. He wondered why he didn't have her help the last time they did a major overhaul. She was busy doing something then he couldn't remember what. What mattered was that she was doing a good job. Anakin was sitting back watching Jaina tackle some difficult wiring when he noticed Ceara stick her head in the hanger door.

"Dad," he called, "I'm taking a break."

"Okay, give Ceara a kiss for me." Han said without turning around.

"How did you know?"

Han laughed, "I know you son now go have a good time."

"Thanks, Dad." he said and ran out to Ceara.

Ceara and Anakin walked in silence for several minutes. Anakin wondered what was bothering Ceara but he figured she'd tell him when she was ready. They finally came to a public park and Ceara found a spot in the grass.

"What's up?" Anakin asked as he flopped down next to her.

"I haven't seen you much since the throne room." she said.

"I know things have been hectic around here lately. I've been busy helping Dad and Jaina. What have you been up to?"

"Not much. I've been thinking mostly."

"About?"

"Everything. My parents, you, my future."

"You've been thinking about Dey haven't you? You know his death was not your fault it was an accident."

"I know that but it was just so weird for a moment all of my parents were there and then the next moment it was gone."

"Are you okay?"

"Yeah, I'm okay. I just don't know."

"Don't know what?"

"I haven't figured that out yet all I know is that the prophecy came true."

"You mean something the Holocron said?"

"Yes," she said closing her eyes and searching her memory for the prophecy, "it said, the Jade of the Sky would rule the new Jedi, with the solo twins and their skywalking relatives, one would come to claim her throne, but, only one would be standing, the Jedi so strong, would come to her aid, and the loner Jedi would be that one who would save her."

"So what does that mean that you will be a ruler or something?"

"No. It means that I'm destined to lead the new Jedi, you know kind of like Luke."

"I get it but what about the other stuff other than Jacen, Jaina, Mom, and Luke get to help you."

"Well the one was Dey and the Jedi coming to her aid was when I made those bolts appear."

"That was neat. How did you do that?"

"I have no idea I just suddenly felt all of the Jedi and their powers running through me and I could do that."

"What about the loner Jedi?" he asked even though he knew.

"That's you, Anakin," she smiled at him, "You saved me when you warned me about the blaster. I didn't even feel it. I must have been preoccupied or something. By the way thank you."

"Don't mention it. I love you, you know."

"I know." she laughed and kissed him.

They laid there holding each other for a long time then Anakin looked at Ceara.

"You know we never did go on that date."

"No we didn't."

"Do you like to dance?"

"Are you kidding? I love to dance. One of Luke's students gave me lessons when I was little and I was teaching a dance class at the Academy as part of our fitness program."

"Well, there's this new group playing at Patengt's End and they're supposed to be a great dance band. Want to go tomorrow night?"

"I'd love too. What should I wear?"

"Um, you don't want me to answer that. Ask Jaina she goes there to play sabacc sometimes. Oh I almost forgot, Mom wants me to invite you to dinner tonight. Everyone is supposed to be there, you know one of those family bonding events. She invited Mara Jade too just to warn you."

"It's okay. It's time I got to know her better. I'll be there, the usual time?"

"Yep, I got to get back to the hanger so I'll meet you there okay?"

"Sure, I love you."

"I love you too." he kissed her goodbye and then headed off.

Ceara sat in the grass meditating. She felt the warmth of the Imperial Star on her face and smiled. She felt peace for the first time in a week. Rest in peace, Sal Dey, she thought, I can't call you father because that title belongs to the man that raised me. She sat on the grass and thought about her future.

It was seven o'clock and Leia Organa Solo was standing in her living room waiting for her brood to arrive. So far only Winter and Chewbacca, who had been giving Leia a hand with some household repairs where there.

"Honestly Winter," Leia said, "You would think that they could manage to show up on time especially when there's food involved."

"I quite agree your highness." said Winter.

Chewbacca growled indicating that he was hungry.

"I know, we have to wait though." said Leia.

Then Anakin and Jacen strolled in the room. Ceara came in next and gave Anakin a quick kiss.

"So I made it before you." he teased.

"Yeah, for the first time." she retorted.

Then Lando and Jordan came into the room.

"How are you doing Jordan?" asked Anakin.

"Pretty good. The trial's next week and I'll probably get prison time but General Solo said he'd try to put a good word in for me and I might get into NR when I get out which will be wonderful."

"Good for you, kid." Anakin said, it would be a long time before he could trust Jordan again but he did like the kid and Ceara had forgiven him so he thought he'd give him a chance.

Then Han and his daughter came into the room.

"I'm telling you Dad, I think I can build that part myself. Zeek thinks he has a blueprint and if not I can probably still cobble something to together. We don't need to go to Greenworld."

"Well if you think so. I don't want to go to Zeek's workshop and the place has probably been robbed blind by now anyway. You might as well go for it."

Leia rolled her eyes and exchanged a glance with her one child who was not caught up in machines.

"You know them and their machinery." Jacen laughed.

"I know where you're coming from." commented Ceara.

"You're just jealous." laughed Han.

Then they turned as Luke and Mara entered the room, holding hands and looking years younger. The whole room looked confused except for

Lando Calrissian who seemed to take it in stride as he took most everything.

"Um, Luke, Mara, What's going on?" asked Ceara.

Luke beamed, "We've decided to get married."

A wave of shock went through the room, even to Lando this time. Ceara gave a squeal of delight and hugged her parents tightly.

"We're going to be a real family now." she said.

Luke looked over his obviously joyful daughter at his twin sister.

"If you're happy then I'm happy." she smiled.

"I am." Luke said pulling Mara and Ceara closer.

"I guess you forgave me then Ceara." said Mara.

"Of course, I did what's to forgive. You gave me to Luke who couldn't have loved me anymore if I was his own. What would we have done spent our lives running from Sal Dey that's no life and I'm sorry you had to lead it for my sake."

"It was worth it, I love you Ceara."

"I love you too Mom." Ceara said and hugged her mother again.

There wasn't a dry eye in the room even Han and Lando had to wipe the mist from their eyes. Chewbacca howled, he too was moved but with a Wookie food came first.

"Of course, Chewie," Leia wiped her eyes, "It's dinner time."

After dinner everyone congregated in the living area. There was lots of laughing and talking. Jordan, Jacen, and Jaina found themselves standing off to one side.

"I don't know about you but I'm starting to feel really lonely," laughed Jacen as he looked around the room, Mara and Luke were sitting together oblivious to everyone but each other, Anakin and Ceara were embracing, and Han and Leia stood together looking around at their family, "I think I'm going to look up that pretty new science officer on the Independence."

"Yeah, I know how you feel." said Jaina.

"Well, Jaina when I get out of prison and I convince you that I'm not a world class jerk and you can get over the age gap, maybe you and me." said Jordan.

"Maybe," Jaina laughed and gave him a peck on the cheek, "Who knows anything could happen. The Empire is finally dead anything could happen in this new galaxy."

"Yes," said Jacen as he looked at Jordan, at Chewbacca who was having an after dinner snack, at Winter, at his parents, at Lando, at Luke and Mara and Ceara and Anakin, and back at his sister, "Anything could happen."

The End