

Tatooine, The Outer Rim

Mos Eisley

The man gazed up from his seat outside the Methane Fix Cantina on Dune Street.

It was his favourite spot, in the shadow of the *Dowager Queen* wreckage. It was a good location for viewing the starships as they came into Mos Eisley. A few hours after dawn, a very familiar shape appeared over the spaceport and headed for one of the myriad of Docking Bays scattered around the bustling facility.

He smiled as he finished off his drink and pondered paying a visit on a very close friend.

Docking Bay 92

I was with Mindy, preparing the speeders when a voice echoed up the ramp.

“Ahoy, *Sentinel!*”

I saw Mindy brace up for a moment and her eyes went wide. Then the most enormous grin appeared on her face.

“Rex!”

She bolted out of the Main Hold and over to the ramp as fast as she could move. I followed and saw a large man appear at the top of the ramp.

“Got a hug for an old warhorse?” The man asked and Mindy dived into his arms. “Wow – you have grown, girl!”

After a minute, Mindy finally let go of the man who had a white beard and seemed old. The man looked Mindy up and down for a moment, then scowled.

“Who taught you to dress yourself, girl?” He grumbled, casting an expert eye over her armour. “This should be tighter... and this should be further up your body – as for the condition...!”

The man roughly manoeuvred and adjusted Mindy’s armour and tightened several straps enough to make Mindy wince, but Mindy never complained or stopped the man.

“You are a damn mess, Hit-Girl!” The man finished.

“Yes, Sir, Captain Rex, Sir!” Mindy replied with a grin and a mock salute.

Rex looked me up and down as he walked past me, towards the Lounge. He took in my armour and how I was wearing it. He nodded approvingly.

“At least, *this* young man can dress himself!” Rex said with a chuckle and a wink.

Mindy smiled sweetly and was about to respond, but then she turned on Rex, suddenly looking angry.

“Did you know?” She demanded.

“Yeah, I did,” Rex replied with a tone that showed he knew exactly what Mindy was talking about. Then he looked over at me. “Is he safe?”

“Yeah, Rex – Dave, this is Rex, an old family friend. Rex, this is Dave – a new family friend.”

“Good to meet you, Dave.”

“You too, Rex.”

“Well?” Mindy went on.

“Did I know that you were a Jedi youngling? Yeah. Did I hide that fact from you? Yeah. Was I right to do that? Yeah.”

“A young what?” I asked.

Rex sat down and turned to both of us.

“Mindy was born, thirteen years ago, to a pair of Jedi. Her parents were in hiding after Order 66 all but wiped out the Jedi. Mindy was found to be Force-sensitive and she was protected by her parents. However, Darth Vader soon tracked down her parents and he killed them – I rescued Mindy and took her away to safety. I’ve checked in on her, every few years since...”

The BARC speeders were long, over four and a half metres.

Manoeuvring them out of the *Sentinel* was not easy, but we managed. Once they were hovering alongside, Rex gave Dave a thorough grounding on riding the repulsorcraft. Both of the speeders were painted in a dark blue colour scheme and appeared to be unarmed, civilian variants to the untrained eye. Rex, an expert on the speeders, provided tuition which would help Dave to stay alive.

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Within half an hour, we had left Mos Eisley behind and we were speeding across the desert at over two-hundred kilometres per hour. A little over an hour later, we stopped beside the wreck of an old freighter, the *Spice Siren* which was located in the Xelric Draw, to the north of the Jundland Wastes. There was not much left of the old freighter; the wreckage had mostly been picked clean by Jawas, many years previously.

I climbed off my speeder and walked around a bit to get the blood flowing in my limbs again. The area around us was very flat and we could see for many kilometres and we could see nothing – for many kilometres. I unwrapped the scarf from around my helmet and removed it. Kick-Ass did the same. The helmets filtered out the sand and kept us cool when speeding across the loose sands of the desert. We both drank some water, careful of how much we drank as supplies were not easy to obtain where we were.

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I drew a blaster and sent several red plasma bolts into the wreckage, concentrating on one of the few remaining hull plates.

“Try and hit that same plate...” I suggested to Kick-Ass.

Kick-Ass pulled out one of his Westar-35 blasters and aimed it. He squeezed the trigger, sending a compressed, focused, high-energy particle beam towards the wreckage. The red plasma bolt impacted the wreckage a little to the right of where I had directed.

“Not bad – try again...”

The second bolt struck very close to where mine had. I was impressed with his marksmanship; as I said, it was not too bad.

“What was it that you said your parents did?” I asked.

Kick-Ass looked at me hesitantly before replying.

“They were stormtroopers...”

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I immediately turned my blaster on Kick-Ass, aiming at his head. He was the enemy – I tried to squeeze the trigger, but I could not do it.

“I am *not* a supporter of the Empire; you must believe me... My parents were killed when they tried to leave... Unfortunately, the Empire doesn’t like people leaving.”

I lowered my blaster, noticing that Kick-Ass had made no attempt at defending himself. It also occurred to me that he had not hidden the fact that he was the son of stormtroopers, only I had never asked. My instincts told me *not* to trust him, but something else deep inside me said that I *should* trust him.

“Sorry – just a habit of mine when I come across a stormtrooper – or somebody related to them...” I said with a smile.

“No harm done – I trust you.”

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I was considering some more blaster practice when the sensors on my speeder alerted me to something approaching. I grabbed a set of macrobinoculars and focussed them in the correct direction, off to the north. It was a Bantha-II cargo skiff and I recognised the markings as belonging to Jabba the Hutt – it was time to leave. Jabba was bad news and I had no desire to get myself involved with that crime lord, or any of his lackeys.

I refused to work for scum like Jabba – he was the very definition of what was wrong with the galaxy. I knew that Han often worked for Jabba – I had tried to dissuade him, but for Han it was easy money – so he said!

One day, Han was going to screw up and Jabba would hunt him down...

We returned to the *Sentinel* that afternoon.

Once we were aboard, we settled down to a very late lunch. Dave seemed a little uneasy as we ate and I soon found out why.

“Rex seemed to think that you are a Jedi...”

I took a chance.

“I’ve only just found out – back on Coruscant a few days ago... back in a minute,” I said as I got up and headed for my cabin. “Kate – secure the ramp.”

I returned to the Lounge with the container in my hands. I placed it a table and pulled out one of the two lightsabers. I triggered the purple blade and held it up before me.

“A lightsaber!” Dave breathed, awe in his voice. “I thought they were illegal?”

“They are!”

“Well, you seem to be able to control the Force...”

“Control – not really; accidentally use – yeah!”

Dave looked at me and then he stared at my lightsabre for a minute. He held out his hand, as if reaching for the weapon. What was he doing? The lightsabre actually moved and then after a moment’s hesitation, it flew out of my hand and into Dave’s outstretched hand.

Dave was so shocked that he dropped the lightsabre onto the couch. We both sat there staring at each other in shock. We were finally snapped out of it by Kate.

“I have a very bad feeling about this!” The droid commented.

Ignoring the fact that droids don’t really have feelings, we ignored him and settled down to cleaning our armour from the morning’s ride.

The fine sand had got into everything, as usual. We both showered to remove the final traces of sand and by the time we had stowed the BARC speeders, it was evening. We were very tired, so after a short meal, we both headed our separate ways for an early night as I wanted to be up early in the morning.

We both had a lot to think about.

Early the next morning

I awoke with a start and found myself on my bunk, in my cabin, on the *Sentinel*.

That was a weird dream, I thought, and damn scary too.

I had to think hard to remember what I had dreamt about.

There had been a temple, skeletons, Darth Vader... and a pair of lightsabers. My mind was full of strange stuff that refused to make sense. I got up and splashed some cold water on my face. Then I went for a walk around the Doughnut.

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After about fifteen minutes, I managed to get my mind into some semblance of order.

I had been walking on a planet – the planet had a temperate climate, plenty of trees and green areas, plus some streams and lakes. There was a single yellow sun in the sky, the rays of which felt warm on my skin.

I was walking across a large open plain with nothing in sight except for some large fat, presumably domesticated, creatures that ate the grass. In the distance were some mountains and over to the right a large lake. With nothing else to do, I had continued walking in the same direction, eventually leaving the lake behind, and then after a few hours I had found myself approaching a rocky area – except it did not seem natural.

On closer inspection it was the site of something enormous, something that had been demolished quite some years before. Ominously, there were signs of blaster fire on the remaining, visible stonework – everything else seemed to have been blasted apart. Whatever the building had been, it must have been huge. Somebody had also taken a lot of effort to level it, too.

I found myself walking across the remains, stopping at a certain point and gazing into the ground. Why, I had no idea. Something told me that I had to go down there, something was pulling me – no, ‘pulling’ was not the correct word; ‘calling’ was better. Something was calling me into those ruins – I had to get there.

I had turned to leave the site and there, about a dozen metres away was the Sith Lord, himself, Darth Vader... He advanced towards me, reaching under his black cloak – his lightsaber activated in a burst of red light and...

I awoke.

I went back to my bunk and just lay there until I heard Mindy moving about.

Over breakfast I explained my dream to Mindy, expecting her to laugh at me... but no; she seemed pensive as she replied, somewhat uneasily.

“I followed a similar ‘dream’ and I ended up with my parents’ lightsabers, not to mention you...”

“So you think that I..., I mean we, should follow my dream?”

“Definitely – I’m keen to find out if you are really a Jedi, though. I’ve heard people say that the Force works in mysterious ways – maybe *this* is one of those ways.”

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“One catch – I have no idea what the planet’s name was...”

“Could you find it on a star map?” Mindy asked, pulling me into the Lounge and putting up a star map of the galaxy on a large screen mounted on the forward bulkhead.

“I’ll try...”

Two minutes later, I was certain and I planted my finger firmly on the Mid Rim, near to Bothan Space.

“There’s nothing there,” Mindy complained.

“I believe that there is...”

“It’s a long way to go – we’ll need to get some serious credits to buy enough fuel; it’ll take eighteen days to get there...”

“I’m sure something will turn up.”