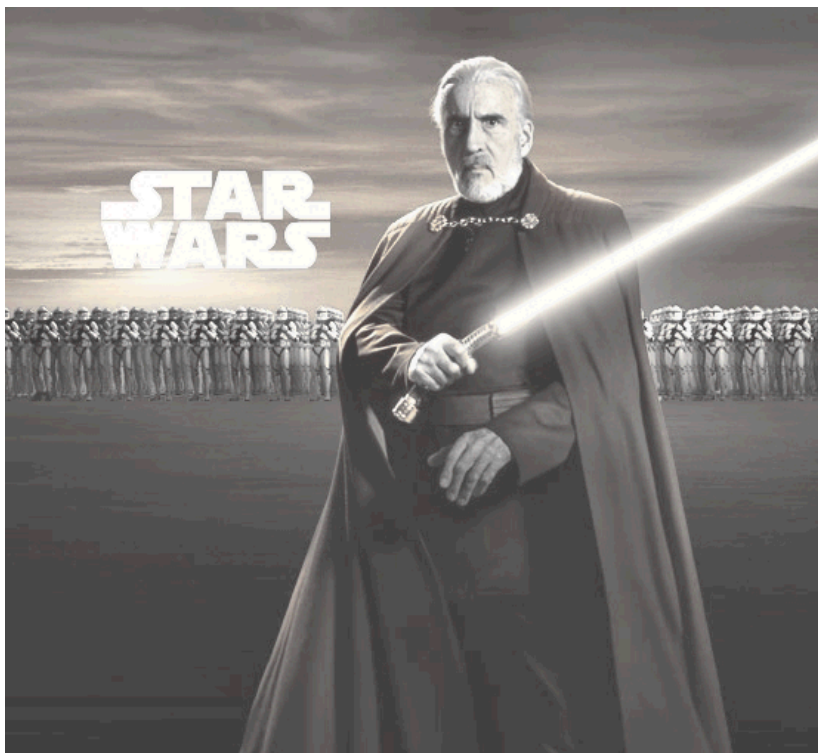


Bound By The Force

May 2002 ~ Issue 102



Issue 102

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Deadlines for Issue 103

Submit to General Section	Sept. 15
Submit Galactic Transmissions	Sept. 15
Submit to Division Section	Sept. 10
Submit Division to Editor	Oct. 2
Go to Press	Oct. 2
Mailing	Oct. 30

*These dates may change at the discretion of the newsletter editor! *

THESE Dates ARE when I NEED THEM!!

Send submissions ASAP IF you can!!!!

ALL Cartoons, artwork, jokes, top ten lists, etc., all contributions gratefully accepted. Email is preferred except for artwork. Snail mail originals – they will be mailed back intact. Thanks!

Attack of the Clones Poster ©Lucasfilms LTD.

(Penstar360@aol.com) Put in subject line for NEWLETTER.

Photo Taken by LV at Toledo Museum of Art.





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Wanted for War Crimes Committed against the New Republic:

Mira Lexor: 60,000 credits

Anelis Palpatine: 60,000 Credits

Wanted by the Allied Armed Forces of the New Republic for questioning:

1. Raven: 50,000

2. Melora Lexor: 40,000

3. Psylocke: 40,000

4. Takara Dunn: 30,000

5. Silver: 20,000

6. Eric Daniels: 20,000

7. Shadow: 20,000

8. Katherine 'Retroy' Darkfyre: 20,000

9. Phoenix: 20,000

10. Kaehlyia: 20,000

CHARACTER BIO

Kaliandra Daroa

Real name: Rebecca Miller

Physical Description:

Age: 17 **Race:** Corellian **Height:** 5'6" **Weight:** 150

Hair Color: Auburn **Eye Color:** Golden

Other Distinguishing Marks: None

Current Status: Padawan Jedi **Current Job:** Padawan Jedi

Former Job: None

Special Abilities:

Trained in the use of the Force

Homeworld: Unknown

Marital Status: Single

Spouse's Name: NA



Siblings: NA
Children: None
Father's Name: Klen Daroa
Race: Corellian
Homeworld: Corelia
Background: Smuggler

Mother's Name: Janela (Koya) Daroa
Race: Human
Homeworld: Coruscant
Background: Daughter of Jedi Master Aaro Koya

Force Training: 17 years of intense training under Master Alida D'med
Master: Alida D'med
Light or Dark: Light.

Psychological Description:

IQ: above average
Temperament: Quiet and contained when it comes to her training, but vivacious and can be hyperactive at times.
Fears: Turning to the Dark Side. Disappointing her Master.
Likes: Music and being around animals and living things
Dislikes: The prevalence of the Dark Side and the up rise of the Sith.
Pet Peeves: Over friendly pilots
Goals in Life: To assist her Master and other in driving the Sith from the galaxy and being a Guardian of Peace and Truth as her Master has taught her

Favorite:

Color: Deep Forest Green and Garnet (color of her lightsaber)
Pastime: Reading, research, practicing lightsaber katas
Hobbies: Meditation, studying new languages.
Food: Correllian Chocolate
Drink: Caffe and Tea
Personal History:

Kaliandra knows very little of her parents just what her Master could remember of them. They were killed when she was an infant when their ship was shot down while bringing supplies to D'med on Almas.

Both of her parents were killed in the crash.

Alida took her in and when she discovered the girl was Force sensitive, she raised her as her Padawan Learner teaching her in the way she herself has been trained. Kaliandra spent the next 17 years on the planet until Alida felt led of the Force to leave, taking the girl with her.





CHARACTER BIO

NAME: Ruaari O'Malley

HOMEWORLD: Corell

RACE: Human

AGE: Looks to be mid to late 20's

HEIGHT: Average

WEIGHT: Average

HAIR: Lt Brown

EYES: Gray

PROFESSION: Smuggler and weapons runner for the Rebel Alliance.

Owner/Captain of the ship The Eniskillen Arrow

MARTIAL STATUS: Single

CHILDREN: None

MOTHER: Orla (deceased)

FATHER: Morgan O'Malley, Clan Righ (Chieftain of The O'Malley Clan)

BROTHERS: Renan, Inish, and Morgan

EDUCATION: Informal, taught by the Bards

IQ: Average

FORCE TRAINING: None

FEARS: The Galaxy going 'dry' and the Empire Winning

TEMPERAMENT: Stubborn, soft spoken, honest, brave

LIKES: Good Corellian Booze, fast ships, good food, and winning when she gambles.

DISLIKES: Being waken up, being boarded

PETPEEVES: Paperwork, shipping manifests, etc

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Excellent pilot, fast and accurate with a blaster and ship's guns, has a fine gift of gab that she can use to talk herself out of trouble much of the time.

Does moderately well at hand combat.

GOALS IN LIFE: To visit every cantina in the galaxy

FAVOURITE FOOD: Roasted woolly breast (lamb)

FAVOURITE DRINK: The cream stouts from the Highlands.

FAVORITE COLOUR: Many

PASTIME: Gambling

MILITARY TRAINING: A member of her clan's army, she has fought in many clan skirmishes and raids.

PERSONAL HISTORY: She is the youngest and wildest child of a Corellian clan Righ. Their holding is a well guarded fortress deep in the wood, very secluded. Her family follows the "Ancient Ways" and it shows in her behavior and thought patterns. Ruairi talks to her ship as though it was a person, she says it is a fine lord that dances with the stars and calls it "My Love".

Her ship, THE ENISKILLEN ARROW, carries herself, and a crew of two (copilot and gunner)



Ruairi is very loyal to her crew, her clan, and the Highlands. She despises the Empire and works for the Rebels at a lower than usual rate for her services. She reports directly to the Rebel Alliance High Council.

There and Back Again

*by Rachel Schmutter, Kevin Triegard, and Pat Betz
(with plot elements by Debbie Casselbury, Dora and Patrick Furlong,
and assorted others)*

The first battle that breaks out on station this year is more intense than usual. I start off leading a group of two of our newer Household members and a pilot who works for us. This is the second year Princess Anelis has put me in charge of a skirmish group, which fills me with pride. We have several run-ins with the enemy—including one in which we capture Serris and bring her to the Emperor.

Metieh stops us. His eyes seem feverishly, unnervingly bright.

“She is a Jedi,” he says. For some reason, he holds up her left hand, the palm facing him.

Weird. Seriously weird. And he isn’t even a Force-user. “Yes,” I say with an outward show of patience.

“A Jedi threw me into a wall earlier,” he murmurs. “It seems only fair that a Jedi should pay for the pain caused by another Jedi.”

Moving almost faster than I can see, he draws a utility knife and slices open her palm. He eyes the blood—or the hand??—with avid hunger. I don’t wait to find out.

“Wait,” I rap out forcefully. Metieh looks at me, startled. “The Emperor wants this one undamaged.”

His fevered gaze meets mine. I draw on the Force to enhance my air of authority. Slowly, he backs off and walks away, flicking occasional backward glances at Serris’s retreating back. (It isn’t until much later that I realize how much he outranks me!)

There is no room in the Force-damped cells for Serris at first, so I stay to guard her. I realize my folly when she insinuates herself into my mind.

(“Why are you doing this?”) Serris asks me telepathically. A dumb question.

(“I have to.”)



“Why?”

“Because it’s my job,” I reply curtly. (“I’m an Imperial.”)

“You don’t have to be,” she replies calmly, gagged and bound on the floor though she is.

“But I am. It’s who I am now.”

“It doesn’t have to be,” she repeats. (“You could come back.”)

I look away from her. (“I can’t.”)

“Of course you can.”

“I can’t go back,” I say tightly. (“It’s too late for me.”)

“It’s never too late,” Serris says firmly. (“You can always come back.”)

“I can’t,” I say tightly, suppressing visions of Karatur. (“I’ve done too much; gone too far. I just *can’t*.”)

Feeling suddenly claustrophobic, I leap to my feet and head for the door, calling out harshly for my team to follow me. They do so. I can sense their curiosity, but none dare to question me.

After several more encounters, I’m finally taken down by an Allied fighter. The dark envelops me. When I wake up, I’m being held standing in a telekinetic grip.

“Miss Summers, please, don’t shoot,” Nik-Vie’s earnest voice says.

I regain my balance as he releases me from his TK, and look around at the mixed crowd of Imperials and Alliance personnel nearby—notably including Jaina Solo. “What do you mean, don’t shoot?” I ask unbelievably. What kind of an idiot does he think I am??

“Please, Miss Summers, just listen to me first,” the young padawan pleads. “I need your help!”

In the milling crowd, I could still probably take both him and Solo—if the Imperial soldier over there would back me; but he looks strangely distracted. “I’m listening,” I say, promising nothing. As Nik-Vie hesitates, looking around, I extend a telepathic hand. He takes the opening, looking and feeling enormously grateful. His sigh of relief spills over into his mental response. Quite a change



from his endless hostility at the party the other night, I reflect. But then, he seemed to be blaming me for his having been captured by Darana, which I was not involved in.

(“There’s some kind of virus loose on the station,”) Nik-Vie explains, stumbling over his words even through the faster and more intuitive medium of telepathic communication. (“It’s affecting everyone, Alliance and Imperials alike. And its making them all homicidal maniacs.”)

He gestures significantly at Lady Kahn, who has a decidedly crazed look in her eye: I wouldn’t turn my back on her in an airlock! The others standing around Nik-Vie have similarly maniacal expressions.

I recall that he was walking down the corridor with Lady Kahn when I was shot. I shoot the image back at him with a query.

He nods. (“They’re only attacking people who don’t have the virus. Since I’m wearing a biohazard suit, the virus isn’t affecting me; but whatever gave them

the virus must have come into contact with me. My best guess is that since the virus is clinging to the suit, it’s making me smell like them; so they’re not attacking me.”)

(“And since you haven’t lost your mind like the rest of them, you can direct them,”) I return, both suspicious and thoughtful.

(“More or less,”) Nik-Vie says worriedly, with an emphasis on the latter. I notice—both through his mind’s eye and through my own observation—that the infected madmen tend to wander, and need lots of attention to keep them in line.

Clearly, Nik-Vie can’t do it alone; and Jaina’s looking pretty loopy, too. (“We have to get all the victims into the medical bay and keep them there, so that no one else will be infected. Hopefully, the doctors there can come up with an antidote.”)

(“And if we don’t keep this virus contained, it’ll spread to the point that it will destroy the entire station and everyone on it,”) I add grimly. Sighing, I acknowledge the need for a truce. Nik’s good; but he’s even younger than I am, though not by much, and I’ve got lots more experience than he does. I know this place and these people. I’ve got good tactical instincts; and our gifts do complement one another. Together, there’s a chance we can do this.

The transport tube opens, and Nik-Vie and I manage to herd the group toward the med bay. We pick up some wanderers along the way. All are wild-eyed, trigger-happy, and completely unaware of any previous allegiances,



acknowledging only the brotherhood of the virus. They're not so sure about me; but Nik-Vie assures them I'm okay. My encouraging them to shoot at illusions, or random station workers, seems to both help them trust me and distract them from shooting me. Nik is less than thrilled at the incidental casualties; but since he needs my help, there's not much he can do about it. I doubt that more than a handful of them will die, anyway: The madmen are very gung-ho, but they're lousy shots.

When we reach the medical bay, the chief medic seems dazed but uninfected. Nik-Vie and I manage to conduct a mixed bag of about thirty people into the facility, one by one. Through a combination of stealth and illusion, I carefully disable the weapons of each of them. Once the vast majority seem to be inside, we close the main doors. Nik tries to keep the madmen occupied off to the side while I reach out telepathically first to the Emperor and then to the now-free Serris.

("There's a virus that's infecting people throughout the station with random homicidal mania, erasing all memory of loyalties,") I transmit to each of them. I rapidly download the range of observed behaviors that characterize the virus carriers. ("We have to get every one of the infected people in here and seal it off, or everyone in the station could die.")

Serris is deeply concerned, and offers to come in and help; but she admits that her healing gifts are useless against viral infections, so I refuse. The Emperor acknowledges the contact and sharply breaks off. Another handful of people are hustled through the doors. While they enter, though, a few of our captives try making a rush for the outside world. Quickly, Nik-Vie and I decide to shut all the doors: Better that a few of the sick people remain outside than risk allowing the majority to escape. He uses his TK to close all the seals. Moments later, we hear the click-hiss of an activated lightsaber outside the chamber. A mental contact from Serris tells me that Lord Taras fused the doors shut with his saber to ensure the virus' containment. Though one or two non-sickees like Takara get stuck inside with us, there seem to be few or none of the infected left outside. I have confidence that the Emperor will deal with them.

The next hour or so is an exercise in frustration. Nik-Vie and I find ourselves the harrassed guardians of a bunch of killer kindergarteners. Though the medics are able to tranquilize a few of the wilder kids, he and I are constantly taking turns to keep our errant wanderers from breaking quarantine.

Takara is no help: In fact, I have to wrestle her power pack out of her blaster. When I finally wrench the weapon out of her grasp, a finely-controlled blast of fire evaporates the power-source.



She howls in complaint. “I’m not sick,” she complains. “I want out of here!”

“If you manage a way out of here, there’ll be a stampede of infected people behind you,” I point out ruthlessly. She is not satisfied, and stomps off in a huff.

But Nik-Vie and I work like the quintessential well-oiled machine. I reestablish our telepathic rapport to increase our efficiency. When I see someone heading toward him, he can TK the person harmlessly away without my losing ground. As one, we struggle to contain the situation long enough for the medics to find a cure, working together to save the lives of everyone on the station...Lives are depending on us....

During the erratic pace of our guardianship, two subtle but strong currents emerge. On the one hand, there is a specialness in the connection between Nik-Vie and myself. I’ve felt it with others: Dani, Octavia, Talia.... With some people, the first time I speak with them, I sort of bond with them—maybe something like what Serris does, or even Darana. Maybe I have some way of sensing a kindred spirit before either one of us even knows it.

Through the strength of our telepathic rapport (and my own expert level of telepathic ability), I am very much aware of Nik-Vie’s profound uncertainty in the face of this crisis. He is only a padawan; moreover, he has only recently awakened to a galaxy that is 300 years ahead of him! Here and now, he must be in charge, and everyone calls him Jedi; yet he is all too aware of how far he is from earning that title. I can’t be sure; but I think that, like Octavia, he has sensed the strength of the connection between us. This is why he selected me to help him in this mission, despite my Dark allegiance.

That’s the other emerging pattern. The more we work together—the more I focus on all that must be done to help people, to keep people calm, to heal—the more I can feel a great tide of surety rising within me. All through the past year and a half, there has been something happening deep inside. I have been true to the Empire, the Household, and Darana; I’ve been a loyal Imperial and a dedicated student of the Dark Side. But on some deep and unfathomable level, beyond my awareness—although not, I realize in a flash of insight, beyond Darana’s—some part of me has been changing, trying to find the way back to the path that was meant for me.

As I struggle now to help and to heal, I’m aware with a certainty that transcends anything I have ever felt that I was meant to be a vessel of the Light. Before, I was so intensely trained for that path that I never really had a chance to think about what I wanted. Now I know with all my heart and soul that only in the Light, helping the Alliance, will I ever be truly happy and



my destiny fulfilled.

After a long and arduous struggle, someone on the outside finds a serum that they think is the antidote to the virus. It's quickly passed through one of the holes that Takara managed to blast through the door. Exhausted, the chief medic tests it, pronounces it the cure, and administers it to one and all. Equally worn out, I abandon my guard post and close my mind's door, slumping on one of the beds in an unthinking daze.

It's at this point that I notice Nik-Vie huddled in the far corner of the medical bay, his head in his arms. He is telekinetically hurling small objects away from him. He practically radiates fear and isolation. I scramble to join Ricia Targen in trying to reach him; but the words and hands we extend to him are promptly shoved away, along with everything in a 10-foot radius. At one point, some fellow wearing one of those strange new Force-null packs tries to rush him. Nik reacts reflexively by using his TK to grab Ricia Targen and I, and crushes the guy between us.

Determined, I pick a sheltered spot along the wall that seems far enough away from Nik to not seem threatening, but close enough to feel near. I reach out my hand to him as to a frightened child—which, I sense, he is. Simultaneously, I reach out with voice and mind alike.

“Nik-Vie, talk to me. You said ‘please’ to me before. I listened to you when you needed me to. I helped you. Now I’m asking you to talk to me...please.”

Finally, the shivering padawan lets me back into his mind. I'm shocked to learn how sharply his fear and desperation have increased in only moments. There is something very, very wrong with his mental state, even for a teenager who has just been through a crisis.

(“Nik-Vie, what is it? What's wrong?”) I keep my tone rock-steady, drawing on the calming techniques I learned from Serris and others before her. (“I'm here. Whatever it is, you're not alone. Talk to me. We'll find a way to handle it.”)

(“No!”) Nik-Vie moans silently, balling up into a fetal position. (“It's too strong. It'll hurt people. Ill hurt people. It's too much!”)

His mind is roiling with terror in the wake of an impending tsunami. I scarcely have to probe to sense the surge of Dark power lurking within that flood, which is just barely held at bay. He is afraid of that Darkness; and he may have good cause: There is a curious strength to it that seems far beyond



Nik's own abilities.

("Then give it to me,") I say suddenly, inspired.

My thoughts fall into an echoing silence.

Everything fades around us—sound, sight, smell. It's like the two of us are the only people in the world.

He blanches. ("But it's too much. You could never handle it!") ("Nik-Vie, look at me,") I coax him. I draw not upon the Force, but upon the subtle bond between us to get through to him. Hesitantly, he does what I ask. ("I...don't like where I am,") I confess haltingly, referring not to my location, but my state of mind—my position with regard to the Force. He understands. ("I don't want to be here,") I continue silently, which is as well since my throat is choked with suppressed tears. ("But I can't leave on my own. I'm going to need your help. So you need to stay where you are: You need to stay Light.") I am trembling as I look at him, my eyes pleading.

Following upon the heels of my healing revelations, I somehow KNOW without any doubt that I am but a hair's-breadth away from returning to the Light. My very concern for Nik-Vie, my struggle to help him overcome his fear and the impossible Darkness within him, is bringing me to the very point of Turning. But he is right to fear that Darkness, for he *cannot* bear it. Neither can I—not if I want to return to the Light that is my true life's path.

If I don't take that Darkness from him, it will consume him...and if I do take it from him, I KNOW, just as profoundly, that I will never find my way back from the Dark. But I cannot let him be destroyed. It would betray everything that I now know I am, everything that I was always meant to be. I have to help him, even if it means I will be lost to the Dark forever.

Privately, I thank the Goddess that my mental shielding is so far superior to most of the Force users I've met here; but then, I've literally been training all my life.

Nik-Vie will never know the cost of my gift to him.

Totally unaware of my own thoughts, Nik shudders and pulls back. ("No—it's too great a risk. I can't be responsible. You can't...")



Burying my despair deep inside me, I meet Nik-Vie's gaze unflinchingly. ("I've been training in the Dark Side for a year and a half,") I rasp, my mental voice as deep and commanding I can make it. ("I've been studying to be a Sith under Darana herself.")

Without warning, I give him a blinding glimpse of that which I bore within me when Darana's soul was torn asunder, and her Light and Dark aspects were in separate bodies. My memory of Darana's pure Darkness—no thought, just the darkest of Dark Power—resonates through our rapport.

Nik-Vie screams.

("Give me your Darkness,") I snarl. ("I CAN TAKE IT!!!")

Reluctant but desperate, in a single, coordinated action, Nik-Vie reaches into the depths of his soul and pours the alien Darkness into my fierce grasp. In the same moment, I sink my talons deep into his essence and rip every trace of that Darkness away from him.

I leap to my feet, shrieking with the impact. With a wave of my hand, I send up a wall of flames, shielding me from all present. A fireball shot into a bulkhead creates an escape route. I run without seeing, utterly lost in the Darkness.

Because I was right about that Darkness being more than that of a young, untrained padawan. The alien imagery which I sensed incompletely was none other than the mental signature of the Emperor himself. Apparently, for most of the last year, the Emperor has held Nik-Vie prisoner. During all that time, the Emperor worked with painstaking attention and care at implanting a secondary personality within the mind of Nik-Vie, one which would emerge at a certain command phrase when uttered by the Emperor. At that point, Nik-Vie would have ceased to be. He would have become a Dark-Side puppet of the Emperor operating within Allied territory, with free access to all the information and personnel the Emperor desired.

The Emperor was so obsessed with this plan of his, and devoted so much of his attention to it, that he did something which he had never done before, and which perhaps no other Force user had ever done: He actually took a tiny piece of his *own* Darkness and implanted it WITHIN Nik-Vie to power that secondary personality!! Through this connection, the Emperor ensured that the second personality would be loyal to him alone; and nothing could ever break that loyalty or turn Nik-Vie back to the Light.



But now his plans are shattered; for that Darkness lives in ME. I run and run, burning, up and down corridors, without meaning. I draw upon the Force, upon the burnished silver threads of Order, to wrap around this power and contain it within me. If I can't contain it, the entire station will be consumed in an explosive reaction to this invasion that I demanded and must now control; for I will never let anyone master my destiny or my Darkness.

Eventually, I realize that I've stopped, and that I am...elsewhere, and not alone. Spent, I fall to my knees. The other reaches out her cupped hand. Reaching out blindly, I place my cupped hand above hers; and all the alien Darkness—all the Emperor's shudderingly hideous Power, all of that which I absorbed from Nik-Vie; all the Darkness that does not belong to me—flows out of me and, through her, into the Beyond to be absorbed back into the great Balance.

"Thank you," I whisper, looking up at the Sybil.

She smiles. "Silly girl," she says in the same light, childish voice that causes nearly everyone who meets her to disregard the pretty young woman as the Emperor's air headed ornament. She looks to be in her mid-20s, and often sports blonde or red hair, depending on her whim. But her hair now looks the way I know it to be, as I saw it when we went to Heal my world—black with three thick streaks of silver, one at the top of her head and one on each side.

I remain sprawled at her feet for a while, slowly learning how to breathe again to my own body's rhythms. It dawns within me that, at the moment I willingly sacrificed my only chance to return to the Light by absorbing Nik-Vie's Darkness, I actually Turned to the Light. Of course, the Darkness that then invaded me would have prevailed, and forced me back down the path of darkness everlasting as I foresaw, if not for Her intervention...but then, far more than Arcturus or I or anyone else, She is the true Keeper of the Balance.

"But why...." I stop short. Of course, I think, gasping in sudden, terrible understanding. *That* was why Darana allowed me to command the mission at Karatur! Darana knew my destiny. That was why she kept pushing me at the Light Siders who came to the Household, drew me into Jedi-killing missions that would make me question my position there, and scarcely ever pushed my Dark Side training. And she, too, is a student of the Sybil.

All my life, I have been haunted by the fear of turning to the Dark Side, as my mother before me did. As a Sith, half-controlled and half-maddened by the sadist who invaded her thoughts, she devastated an entire star system.



Though she eventually turned back to the Light, her guilt over her actions led to her self-destruction.

In Darana's Household initiation, called Hell, she drives people through their most terrible fears in order to force them to face and overcome them. But even her incredibly potent methods would not have given me the experience I needed in order to learn this.

The only way for me to overcome my fears of turning into my mother was for me to become her.

"Did the universe have no better way of teaching me than Darana's?"
I murmur bitterly.

"Why did you go to her?" Sybil returns.

I actually laugh, if wryly. "I was afraid. When I was Dark Side, I thought I had to have people around me to protect me, like I did when I was young."

"And now?"

I smile up at her, letting the last traces of anger flow away with my tears. It has been a long and arduous journey; and I still have a lot to learn. But with everything back where it belongs, including me...

"I am home," I say simply.

The Sybil smiles back in perfect understanding.
~finis~

CHARACTER BIO

Alida D'Med

Player: Dana Terry

Physical Description

Race: Undetermined - a possible mixture of long-lived races

Homeworld: Also unknown...left at the Temple on Coruscant

Age: Over 70, but appears to be no more than 40

Profession: Jedi

Height: 1.6 meters

Weight: 59 kilos

Hair: Brown, kept short

Eyes: Brown

Other: Rather unremarkable, no distinguishing characteristics



Personal Information

Marital Status: Single
Spouse's Name: N/A
Children: N/A
Mother: Unknown
Father: Unknown

Education: Jedi Temple, Old Republic

Force Training: Yes
Master's Name: Aaro Koya
Light or Dark: Light

Psychological Description

IQ: Above Average
Fears: There is no fear.
Temperament: Even
Goals in Life: Determined to assist in bringing down the Emperor
Pasttimes: Meditation

Military History N/A

Personal History:

Left at the Temple at less than one year old, she was discovered to be Force-sensitive. Taken as a Padawan at the age of 11 by Master Aaro Koya, she was Knighted at the age of 22.

Shortly after her Knighting, Master Aaro sent Alida into hiding, believing that a great darkness was about to fall upon the Jedi. Aaro's daughter had married a Corellian smuggler, Klen Daroa, and he had Alida hide with them for a few years, until her identity was firmly established. Once that was accomplished, she went on her own. After almost a decade of hiding in this manner, the day came when her fellow Jedi were cut down during the Purge. After quite a few years had passed, Alida came across a Force-sensitive child and convinced the parents to allow her to take the child to train. She took Togin with her and went to Almas, where a Jedi Academy had once stood. Hiding on the other side of the planet, building shields around them, she trained Togin Conpeq to Knighthood. Shortly after, Togin left Almas with the Daroas, hoping to find another child to train, in order to help the Jedi Order survive.



Each year, the Daroas ran supplies to D'med. About 17 years before the current time, they were fired upon by Imperials and made a crash landing on Almas. Neither Klen nor his wife, Janela, survived, but the infant who was with them did. Alida was surprised to find that the child was also Force-sensitive, and she took her to raise as an initiate and then as a Padawan.

A small shuttlecraft had been found within the deserted city of Forad and Alida moved it to her base on the other side of the planet. When the Force told her that the time was right, she packed up the child, Kaliandra Daroa, their few belongings, and rejoined a galaxy torn apart by war.

Alida's exact heritage is uncertain, but Temple Healers believed that she was a member of one of the longer lived humanoid races, possibly even a mixture of at least two of them.



A LESSON FROM A MASTER

By Geri Kittrell

While the men of her household played at games of chance in the great hall of their keep, Kirienne sat alone in the private chambers she shared with her mate. She was glad for some time to herself. She sat in her elegantly carved chair, noting how nice the thick, purple velvet cushion felt – she had grown quite used to having many comforts, in the last few years. She was looking out one of the green glass windows, which she'd opened in order to have a better view. She was watching some of her 'cousins' practice with quarterstaves just below her window. As she watched the activity in the woods, just outside the keep, she enjoyed the warmth coming from the fire she'd built in the rooms large, circular fire pit. She was nibbling on fresh berries, which she had covered with cream laced with the finest Corellian brandy. Aged at least 40 years. Although the Sidhe count time differently than mortals do, she guessed it was close to three years or so since she'd fought her final battle as a mortal warrior. Even though she was lost deep in her own thoughts. Her finely tuned senses told her that she was no longer alone. She turned to see three figures warming themselves at the fire pit. Her friend and mentor, Gylpyn Cairbre was there along with Yoda and a man she didn't recognize, but knew by his dress that he was a Jedi Master.

She quickly rose to greet her guest and noted the smile, which creased Yoda's face even more than his many wrinkles. She commented on it instantly, "Well now, so yer face can indeed form a smile, Master Yoda -- mayhaps I should note this day in a journal."



Yoda grinned a bit more as he realized she'd just called him Master, a thing she'd never before done. To his knowledge, she'd never even called her teacher Master, and rarely used titles in addressing anyone.

The Jedi Master had a quick retort for her, "Ah, young one, some manners and respect you have learned after all these years. Titles you now use."

Kirienne roared with laughter as she quickly replied, "Dinna get yerself to used tae it laddie, ye know I dinna often use formalities. Aye, lad, much ha I learned here at the court o'Himself. I too much bear a title at formal occasions."

The Jedi Master standing next to Yoda smiled easily at her and she playfully flirted with him. Gylpyn had moved to the window and was watching the combat outside.

"Lady," the smiling knight greeted her, "I am Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn. I am told you now hold a high position in service to your king, as his personal guard."

Yoda interrupted before Kirienne could respond, "Yes, a Master Qui-Gon was, seen your defiance he has."

Qui-Gon added before Yoda could continue, "Lady, your reputation is well known to the Jedi Masters." He smiled mischievously as he spoke to her.

Yoda seemed to be enjoying watching Kirienne struggle to keep her courtly manners though a playful scowl was forming on her face. He spoke, cutting off any comment she might make. "Seen also we have, your steed-fastness and honour. Unwavering courage have you shown young JEDI." Kirienne smiled in true happiness at Yoda's words and humbly responded, "Why, Master Yoda, I am honoured that you would give praise and compliment tae a warrior such as meself."

Yoda continued, jumped up into her chair as he did so, "Wrong about you I was young one, wrong to look only at your defiance. Your heart has always remained true, looked there I should have. Proud of you I am, proud to count you among the Jedi."

Kirienne thought she might faint at all the praise from Yoda, he had always been overly gruff with her and on many occasions had told her how he disapproved of her being trained. Gylpyn moved from the window to her side and draped a brown robe around her shoulders, as she put arms through the sleeves, he handed her a tan bundle. He had just gifted her with the robes worn by the Jedi Knights and Masters of years gone by. She didn't even try to conceal her joy as giggled while holding the tunic up and looking at herself in the mirror.



"Ah," she mumbled. "These be grand, 'twill make a fine addition tae me wardrobe. I do tank ye for this fine fit." She smiled as she hugged her mentor. All traces of her courtly manners were gone suddenly as she grinned mischievously and continued to speak, "Mayhaps these'll come in handy as I go a rovin from time tae time."

She turned her attention back to Qui-Gon, "Lad, I ken ye ha great skill wi' the lightsaber, will e do me the honour of granting me a sparring session w' yerself?"

Qui-Gon looked at her with a puzzled expression then smiled as he saw the twinkle of mischief in her deep eyes. Kirienne ignored the fact that he'd given her no reply and continued on her quest, "Ach, Qui-Gon laddie, why the hesitation? I wish only tae try me skills against a Master such as yerself. We can take no hurts don'tchaknow, for I am Sidhe and ye laddie, be already quite dead."

The ghost of the Jedi Master thought to himself how she was truly living up to her reputation of a cocky Highlander. After a moment's consideration, he agreed to spar with her, intending to do anything he must in order to rid her of some of her smugness. She'd offered him first strike since he was her guest and fully intended to teach her a few things – humility chiefest among them.

When they began to spar, Qui-Gon watched her skills, noting mentally that she was indeed one of the best he'd seen. He took note too, of how she was at times, slightly distracted as if she was suddenly busying her mind with new thoughts of mischief. He toyed with her for a while, not showing his true skill level, then suddenly moved in for final attack. With a quick lunge and leap as he thrust his lightsaber at her unguarded left shoulder, he her down on her arse on the stone floor of her

chambers. As she lay there laughing with great mirth, he stood over her, gazed into her eyes as if making a point to an apprentice. Speaking in a soft, yet firm tone, he scolded her, "Lady. Young Jedi, you seem to have forgotten two important rules if combat; do not let your mind wander from the here and now, stay focused on the task at hand and never get cocky."

At that, the ghosts of Qui-Gon and Yoda disappeared, leaving Kirienne looking around for an opponent, she didn't want to have the last word. Gylpyn sat in a chair, drinking ale and trying with all his might to not laugh. Finally, when he'd regained his composure, he moved to her side and helped her up, commenting as he did so, "Well, that sparring match was certainly short."

The two sat in the chairs laughing as they poured themselves mugs of ale.





Greetings, Fellow Imperials.

I write this section as acting division leader, since James' resignation from the club. I don't (at least for now) want to change too much, since I am only acting as division leader. I think that the real change should come once a new division leader is duly elected and announced. But I would ask that everyone who has an Imperial character email me at kodiakbear.geo@yahoo.com with information about that character, so I can set up some kind of character file system to hand over to the new division leader. In the meantime, all I want to say is, "Back to your regularly scheduled Evil Empire." See you all at Media!

Terri Ruwe
Acting Division Leader

Vengeance

by Rachel Schmitter

"Team Alpha away," the leader of the first TIE-fighter squadron reports on cue. "Acknowledged, Alpha Leader," I say into the comunit. I watch, PLANETFALL like toy gliders bearing death. From my vantage on the deck of the ISD, I can both see and sense that everything is going according to plan. For a moment -knowing that, at this point in the battle, I have a moment to take-I pause to relish the thought. I've been in training as a Dark Lord for only half a year; and already I'm sitting in the command chair of a star destroyer! I know I haven't anywhere earned the position: It's partly Darana's generosity, and partly maybe a test. But when I heard that Eric and Shade were going after the renegade Sith who tore Darana's soul in two, I just had to ask Darana to let me take part in the mission. I wanted to even the scales for what they did to Darana, too.

Besides, the renegades' actions did have some pretty damned far-reaching implications for me! It was about six months ago that the Household and I rescued the dark part of Darana's soul from the renegade Sith. I was a Jedi trainee then, and my cover identity as neutral mercenary Katherine Winter was still intact. At the time, I recall, I was worried that the power-hungry Arcturus would try and absorb Darana's Dark power. I chuckle to myself, now, thinking of it.

How little I knew about Arcturus then, and about the indelible loyalty of Darana's Household! But, naïve and overeager Jedi student that I was, I thought it could happen. So I tricked Arcturus into inviting me along as mercenary backup for the rescue. It's hard to know who was more surprised, the renegades, the Household, or me when,



instead of Arcturus making any moves, Darana's Dark Side leapt into me. I still remember how strange and wonderful it felt to have all that power at once, especially when the impact of Darana's personality on mine triggered my own lightning shift to the Dark Side. Several of the Household, especially Lilith, didn't seem to trust that I was truly Dark. I eventually had to admit, under questioning, that Darana's Darkness hitchhiking a ride in my body was probably the reason I Turned. But once I did Turn to the Dark Side, the blossoming of Dark power inside me was a fantastic awakening. I stayed Dark because I liked where I was; and I stayed with the Household because it felt like the right place to be. It took everyone some time to get used to it, including Darana (after they took her Dark Side out of me and put her back together); but I think most of them have gotten used to it.

Even still, I was overwhelmed when Darana informed me that I would do far more than simply help out with this project that I would actually commandeer the genocide of the people of Karatur, a small world which looks to the renegades' planet for governance. At the same time, Shade would be attacking the homeworld of the renegade Sith in the ISD INTEGRATOR, while Eric would stand ready to back me up in Darana's personal ship, the Royal Star Destroyer TOPAZ.

Since the moment I received my assignment, I've dedicated myself to furiously studying everything I could lay my hands on about the capacity of the ISD and the ships and vehicles it carries, strategies for planetary takeover, even on a hunch, remembering some of my dad's old personnel management tricks, the personnel profiles of the crew. That last proved especially useful, because I was able to spot some of the most intelligent and capable crew members. So whenever anything's come up that I didn't expect, like some of the signals on the control panels, I've been quick to skim the best minds around to find out what it meant.

This has given the crew the impression that I know a lot more than I do, which has helped ease their suspicions of such a young and untried commander. It's also kept my interaction with the ISD's regular commander functioning smoothly, much better than if I'd charged in trying to run everything myself without knowing how.

So far, I haven't needed to skim their minds much. My strategy was fairly straightforward, but it seems to have been wholly effective. The planetoid had only minor flight capabilities and no real defenses at all. We approached from the night side like the predators we are. As soon as the little world was within range of the PLANETFALL's turbolaser cannons, I instructed the crew to target the planet's five biggest cities, the two shipyards, and a largish population cluster in the mountains, as well as one isolated landing in an island chain which seemed the likeliest spot for any Rebel activity. These were targeted in sequence and fired upon simultaneously on my word. The explosions were brilliant fireflowers far, far below, a neat little garden of vengeance. I've already sent out the last of the fighters we brought along, as well as two wings of TIE fighters, to eliminate the planet's tiny flying force. This consisted of nothing more than a couple of garbage scows, 23 pleasure yachts, and a single battered old cruiser which was probably used to ferry tribute



to the motherland. My pilots were disappointed to be cheated out of a decent battle. The fight was over for the larger ships, other than to guard our backs; but I held the TIEs in abeyance to help with part three. They could still accompany our few TIE Interceptors in doing flyovers to check for signs of movement, and making strafing runs on the smaller towns. The final step was to get our troops on the ground to go after any beings that the bombardment left alive; and that's what's happening now. The ST-STs and AT-ATs are being especially useful in the mountain region. "I want that area combed for caves, " I inform the transport vehicle unit commanders. "Use all the resources at your disposal. Not a single living creature on that planet is to get away. Is that clear?" My voice is hard and sharp as diamond.

"Yes, lord," they respond immediately. (I decided it made more sense for them to call me that, since I'm much closer to being a Sith lord than to holding any military rank. Also, that way, the real military commanders don't get their hackles up: Not

that I couldn't deal with the disciplinary problems, but it would slow down the work.) It occurs to me that a couple of cave-ins would work especially well in that area, leaving the cunning mountain dwellers to suffocate in their precious homes. Of course, there may not be any caves; but we'll see what the troops' scans reveal. I intend to do a ~very~ thorough job on this mission! Hmm...and think of the glorious fun of herding a flock of survivors into one of the few temples to the renegades' cult, only to fire upon the building with sufficient strength to bring it crumbling down upon their heads! I relay these orders to the appropriately placed troops. I relax into the command chair, watching the destruction from afar. It's a heady sensation to be directing the deaths of an entire planet. I can almost feel the triumph as each soul leaves its body, devoured by the hungry blasters and cannons of my troops....
...//Abruptly, I am *on* the planet, watching my world crumble to pieces all around me. Someone shakes me and yells at me, and I try to run; but a huge, heavy slab of stone falls across my path. Everywhere is screaming and destruction, blood and madness...//

With a start, I look around me. It was only one of those pesky visions, I think. I grit my teeth, trying to use my sense of vengeance and triumph to stave off the flood; but my visionary talent is my wildest, most uncontrollable gift. I can't always invoke a vision when I want to; but when the visions want to come to me, I can only hold on and try to ride out the tide....

...//I am 12 years old, and the world has gone mad. The ruins of the school complex are teeming with white, buglike, two-legged beasts carrying laser rifles, and there's nowhere to hide. Terrified, I rush to the side of the one person who might possibly be able to protect me. But even as I near him, a massive stone pillar collapses, pinning my teacher's already useless legs; and all his Jedi mastery can't budge it. I huddle by his side, sobbing, as the ceiling falls in...//



Enough! I think forcefully. I tear my mind away from the past and focus all my attention on the now. My past doesn't matter, no matter how much I'm reminded of it by what I'm doing. The person I was is gone. I am a Sith trainee now. It doesn't matter how the people suffer:
It is my right to cause that suffering, and my joy to witness it. NO ONE can be allowed to act against the Household without swift and powerful vengeance, least of all against Darana herself.
As for the precious Balance I was raised to uphold so carefully-the balance between good and evil, Light and Dark, order and chaos, it's not the same anymore. True, I still bear the responsibility for upholding Order to counter Arcturus' and the dark dragons' Chaos; but both of us can serve the Darkness just as well. His destruction is more random and impulsive. But my systematic, well-lanned, orderly annihilation of the inhabitants of Karatur is every bit as Dark, and every bit as true to the Balance. Even the Sybil couldn't deny that!

I chuckle at the thought. As different as my existence with the Household is from my youth, training under Darana instead of the greatest Jedi Master of my homeworld, some things never change. One way or another, the balance is still maintained. I feel a deep satisfaction: Somehow, knowing this makes me all the more certain that I belong here in the Darkness. I relax into the command chair, malevolently content, to oversee the remaining devastation of the world below.

~finis~

WE Interrupt this story for this Breaking * NEWS BULLETIN *

Wanted for Crimes against he Empire:

Luke Skywalker	80,000	credits
Leia Organa-Solo	80,000	
Han Solo	80,000	
Lando Calrissian	80,000	
Admiral Akbar	80,000	
Mon Mothma	80,000	

Wanted for Treason, Espionage and Sabotage:

Prism Nighthawk	30,000	credits
Octavia Syn Jinn	30,000	
Branwyn	30,000	
Malcolm MacDermott	30,000	
Alida D'med	30,000	



Character's Division: Imperial

Your Name: Courtney Kraft

Your Address: 8257 N. Oriole Ave.; Niles, IL 60714-2553

Character's Name: Psylocke Jago Lammasha

Physical Description

Race: Humanoid

Homeworld: Bespin

Age: 22

Profession: Imperial Red Guard

Height: 5'2 Weight: 125 lbs

Hair: Violet Eyes: Green/Gold

Other distinguishing marks: Scar on palm of right hand.

Personal Information

Marital Status: Single

Spouse's Name: N/A

Children: None

Pets: White female cat named George

Mother: Larissa Lammasha (deceased)

Father: Red Lammasha (deceased)

Legal Guardian: "Master" Annan

Education: Private tutoring on Bespin.

Graduate of the Imperial Academy.

Major: Unconventional weaponry and combat. Minor: Qualitative physics.

Force Training: Yes

Master's Name: Briefly trained by Lady Megan Trent until her disappearance.

Currently being trained by Emperor Palpatine.

Light or Dark: Dark

Psychological Description

IQ: 136

Fears: Aeroacrophobia

Temperament: Reserved, otherwise shy until one gets to know her.

Very determined and competitive.

Likes: Clouds, bodies of water, exercise, cats

Dislikes: Karaoke, slackers.

Pet Peeves: Tripping over the little black toaster droids in the hallways of the Death Stars



Goals in life: For most of her life, it was to find true love, but now she aspires to be the greatest Sith champion.

Favorite Color: Purple

Drink: Janx Spirit

Past times: Martial arts, reading, dancing

Food: Musamun (chicken, potatoes, spinach, and peanuts in red curry)

Hobbies: Dancing, tennis, cooking

Military History

Rank: Major

Status: Active (transferred into Red Guard as of SD05262000)

Army: Imperial

Branch: Red Guard

Special Abilities: Unarmed and unconventional combat. Has the ability to channel the dead.

Personal History:

Psylocke Jago Lammshta was raised on Bespin. She has no recollection of her parents, and was raised by her legal guardian, Master Annan. He never disclosed any information about her parents, their lives, or if they were even alive. Psylocke spent most of her early life cooped up in Annan's apartment where she learned how to cook and maintain a household. Annan's title of "Master" came from his status as a Kagura instructor. Kagura is a style of martial arts that includes sparring, forms, and weapons techniques. Annan refused to teach any students under the age of ten, usually due to a lack to discipline. At the age of five, Psylocke's fascination with the art blossomed, and she begged for two years before Annan agreed to teach her.

Psylocke trained under Annan for the next ten years, living most of her life in the confinement of his apartment. This stunted her emotional growth and social abilities, but her physical abilities and talent thrived. She won several tournaments locally, before moving on to intergalactic tournaments at the red, silver, and gold sash levels. After becoming the intergalactic Kagura champion for her third year in a row, she was granted an athletic scholarship to the Imperial Academy where she specialized in unconventional combat and qualitative physics. Currently, she gives demonstrations at the annual Kagura championship.

SD051995-052000: Psylocke joined the Imperial Army just before the destruction of the second Death Star (ROTJ), and worked as a Bothan spy assassin. While on her mission on Yavin IV, she was arrested by civilian authorities and imprisoned on a murder charge. Nine months later, the Imperial forces rescued her. She was later invited to work at the Port Lansing peace talks. Before she even had time to unpack, a skirmish, and then a full-fledged battle



erupted. It was during these battles that she met Vice-Admiral Gija Metieh. Fascinated by him, she took a leave of absence from the Army to work with him privately as a bodyguard and aide for the next four years.

SD051999: Port Lansing; Psylocke met Lon Solo. Not realizing that he was Han Solo's son at first, she started dating him. They saw each other on an off for a year before they realized the escalating conflict of the relationship.

SD012000-052000: During one of her exhibitions at the Intergalactic Kagura Championship, she caught the eye of Emperor Palpatine with her stunning martial art skills. A few months later, he offered her a position in the elite Imperial Red Guard. At first, she was awestruck at the life-changing situation before her, but with Metieh's blessing, she accepted the new job. The same day, the prophet Cybil discovered a connection between Psylocke and Octavia Syn Jinn, but could not define it.

She moved to Coruscant, adopted a cat, and began training for the Red Guard. Just weeks later, Psylocke was abducted (OOC: by S'Lara Solo) and forced to fight in arena battles on Tattooine. During her third fight with Octavia, the Alliance interrupted the confrontation. Tara Alderson Palpatine returned her to the Emperor, and shortly after, Palpatine revealed Psylocke's heritage to her.

(OOC to some characters): Psylocke is the granddaughter of Darth Maul. Maul was Palpatine's protégé forty years before Psylocke was born. Master Annan, Psylocke's guardian and close friend to Larissa Lammashita, had been on the trail of Maul's offspring since his death. Thus far, no others have been found. Psylocke currently has no living relatives. (Read "The Revelation" and "Destiny's Children: Out of the Past" for more information)

SD052001: The Emperor confronted Lon and Psylocke about their relationship at court, but they managed to escape on one piece. Psylocke then broke up with Lon, knowing that she couldn't have a relationship with him if she was to become a Sith. Once Lon, the one truly positive influence on her, was removed, the gates to the dark side opened and Psylocke's frightening new powers were unleashed. In front of the court, Psylocke channeled the spirit of her own grandfather, Darth Maul, leaving a chilling premonition. Throughout her stay at Port Lansing, she experienced several more episodes of possession until they were happening as frequently as twice an hour. Exhausted both physically and emotionally, Psylocke retreated from everyone. Only moments later, she was discovered by Nik-vie Windu and Jaina Solo, with both of her wrists slashed open. She could not recall if one of the spirits had cut her or if she had done it to herself. Nik-vie took her to the rebel base where he and Serriss healed both her mind and body, leaving a psychic link between Nik-vie and Psylocke before returning her to the Imperials.

Since then, Psylocke has forsaken love, and is continuing her training with the Emperor, learning how to control her newfound powers in hope to become the greatest Sith champion ever.





Courtney Kraft as Psylocke Lammashita



photo taken by LV



DEAR AUNTIE
A Question and Answer Forum

Yet Another Kidnapping

By Kila Verron

Dear Auntie:

I just don't know what to do. I've always been the 'odd one' in my family because I have talents that no one else seems to possess. I thought I would never be happy, but then I found my true love. Wonder of wonders, he shares my talents, and we were very happy together while we lived among my people. The problem began when we went to his people. They also (supposedly) share our talents, but it was very obvious that something was wrong when we met. It wasn't just that they did not think I was unsuitable for their beloved son, but more as if they felt I was some sort of abomination. Now we must live with his people, and I am so confused! What should I do?

Confused

Dear Confused,

Ah, love! It can be a wonderful thing. It can lead you all sorts of places. Including the very undesirable place you now inhabit. Who are these people to pass such judgment upon you? My advice to you is this: find out all you can about his people. Find out what they respect, and do that. After all, your purpose in life should be to consolidate as much power as you can. And if his family is so powerful, you must get them on your side. If you find this difficult, dearie, Auntie has just the thing for you: her customized, special, personal power potion, available to you for just 50 credits. Write to me in care of this publication, and Auntie will help.

Auntie

Once again, a Palpatine has been kidnapped. This time, it is Anelis' adopted daughter, Tivea. We fail to understand the popularity of the Palpatine children and grandchildren, that this should have occurred so often in the past. It makes one wonder: do these people need to put tracker collars on their kids? And just where was the vaunted Imperial security and Red Guards charged with keeping these folks safe? Playing sabaac in the barracks? Or were they succumbing to Madame May's wiles once again? While we will not deny that removing impressionable children from the Palpatine influence is a good thing, we do not condone the methods. If anything, this points up the flaws inherent in an authoritarian chain of command that would allow such an event to take place. In the long run, though, all we can say is, "Good for the kidnapers!"

False Charges

By Tarvi Sitorian

The Imperial News Network has made self-righteous claims accusations about their last issue. I would like to state for the record that no one associated with the Galactic Inquirer was responsible for the drivel that appeared in the INN. The INN, parrot for the Empire, is perfectly capable of producing drivel of its own, and usually does, each and every issue. We have no need to sabotage other publications, as we are secure in our readership. The thinking public should be able to tell the difference between true reporting, mass entertainment, **which is what we sell**, and complete propaganda, such as the INN. I am sorry the INN feels their last issue is not to their standards. I believe it calls for a change of editorial staff, but rest assured, the last issue of INN was well below **our** standards as well.

- Tarvi





The News We Want You to Know

Another Palpatine Kidnapping!

By Perry Wyte

In what is certain to be revealed as a Rebel plot, the only daughter of Princess Anelis Palpatine, seven-year-old Princess Tivea has been kidnapped from the Heir's home on Dhiva IV. Despite an increase in security around all the Royal family after a renegade troop of mercenaries destroyed the Palace on Dhiva IV several years ago, the child was spirited out of the Palace without leaving a trace on any security camera or system. That in itself points to a 'sleeper' Alliance agent. At the moment, Imperial security and the Royal Guard are being selective with their information, in an effort not to tip off the kidnapper or kidnappers. They insist, however, that there is no connection of the kidnapping with the theft of the courier *Falcon*, which was discovered drifting in the Barilla sector on the Rim. There has been no indication of why the young Princess has been kidnapped, nor has there been any ransom demand. None of the usual suspects has claimed responsibility thus far. "Our primary concern is for the safety of the child," said Colonel Michael Logan, of the Imperial Guard. "Rest assured that the perpetrators will be brought to justice."

Imperial Security tells us that the child, who is a bit tall for her age, has dark hair and eyes, and may be in the company of a woman pretending to be her mother. Persons matching their descriptions were seen on MallWorld recently.

ArquillaLabs Aids Marginal Colonies

By Karl Kolshack

At a press conference today in Port Kuron, where the Planetary Sciences Division of ArquillaLabs is located, Kevin Duval, publicist, announced the corporation's latest scientific advance. "Our space science experts have come up with a way to improve the environment of marginal colonies," Duval announced, "those with climatic problems and cold temperatures. ArquillaLabs introduces the Space Environment Mirror."

The Mirror, which is technically a reflective satellite, is placed into a geosynchronous orbit around the target planet. Computer controls then allow the Mirror to focus a concentrated beam of sunlight to the surface. The parameters of the program filter out the harmful portions of the spectrum, and merely concentrate the useful infrareds and visible portions.

"In no way is this anything like a laser beam," Duval noted. "It is more like a cosmic 'space heater'. The beam itself, though concentrated, is not of a strength that would cause damage of any sort to either the protective layer of the planet's atmosphere or to the organic tissue of any inhabitants thereof. It will merely raise the incident irradiance to a level that will allow agriculture to prosper... even in places like Hoth." Duval then accepted, on behalf of the company, the award of the Humanitarian Medal from the Imperial Academy of Sciences.



Kahn Expedition

Announced

By Sandra Locke

Lord Oscar Kahn, Commandant of the Imperial Engineer's Academy has announced that his grandfather, Lord Gengiss, has come out of retirement to lead an expedition into the Outer Rim Territories. Lord Gengiss, a retired Captain of the Imperial Star Fleet, and professor of history, is leading an expedition of graduate students and cadets to search for the home world and artifacts of the Krath.

Predating the Jedi by some four thousand years, the Krath were Force users and quite skilled in the Dark Side. Lord Gengiss believes that some artifacts must still exist of this far-flung, extinct race of Dark Siders. He believes that anything that he finds will assist the Sith in dealing with this outbreak of Pre-Empire Jedi, who are suddenly surfacing and spreading their tripe throughout the galaxy, as if the New Republic were not bad enough.

Prince Garrek Wed

By Matthew Brady

His Majesty the Emperor Palpatine issued the announcement of the marriage of Prince Garrek Palpatine. Prince Garrek, who is a Lieutenant in the Imperial Star Fleet was missing in action after a skirmish with Alliance fighters, and disappeared for over nine months. After a top-secret rescue mission, Imperial Special Forces managed to retrieve the young prince. In the process, they found that he had married a woman native to the planet he was stranded on, and had also produced a son. The entire new family was rescued from the backwater world, and brought to the Royal Court on Coruscant. It is expected that Lady Tarea, the Prince's wife will be schooled in proper society and court behaviors, and relieve some of the burden of social duties from her mother-in-law, Princess Anelis.


Last Issue Retraction

By Perry Wyte

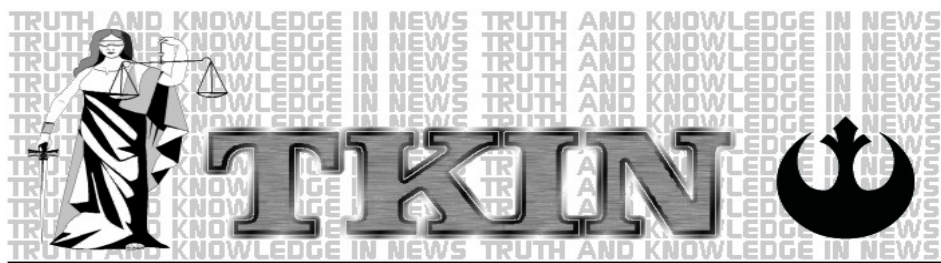
We at the Imperial News Network would like to apologize to our loyal readers for our last edition. *INN* was the victim on industrial sabotage unprecedented in its history. A person or persons unknown managed to slice into the *INN* computers and alter all of the stories intended for the issue. From the content and the tone of the articles which did appear, we can only assume that the mercenary rag, the *Galactic Inquirer*, either hired agents or had its own so-called reporters do the unsavory deed.

Unfortunately at the time, once the content for the issue had been completed, the publication and distribution of the issue were completely automatic and without human supervision. The *INN* would like to assure its readers that our processes are under review at this very moment, with the intention that such an event will never again occur. Our publication enjoys its reputation for integrity among loyal Imperial citizens, and wishes to command their respect. Our embarrassment is exceeded only by our determination that it will never happen again. Therefore, measures are being taken; including better control of the access to the *INN* main computer nexus, and better security within the *INN* offices on Coruscant and Byss.

The talented officers of Imperial security are assisting civilian authorities in the investigation, since as the official voice of the Imperial government, *INN* is considered an important conduit to the people. We never forget that it is our duty to report the news, all the news, to counter the disinformation put out by the Alliance, and the complete rubbish published by the *Galactic Inquirer*.

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TRUTH AND KNOWLEDGE IN NEWS

**ArquillaLabs Mirror New Imperial Weapon Collapses
Weapon Solar System!**

By Sierra Chen

By Misha Rondell

Anyone with an ounce of sense can see that the new "space mirror" satellite developed by ArquillaLabs is a weapon. It is plain even in the news release that the oh-so suave Mr. Duval perpetrated. The release says nothing about impact studies being done. So just how does this device impact the planetary environment, and the life forms that inhabit it? It increases 'incident radiation' and is controlled by computer – an Imperial computer. And on a fool would trust the Imperials. With such a device in place, it would be simplicity itself to control an unruly population, especially on a marginal world: if the people don't toe the line, just turn off the juice. And if that doesn't work, use it as a space-borne weapon, for what can be filtered out by computer can also be enhanced and concentrated by computer. "You say you don't like Imperial grain quotas? Too bad. Oh by the way, how would you like a healthy dose of gamma rays? We have lots of other producers we can use if you don't like us."

It is our fervent hope that no colony, however marginal, will request the installation of this newest, most insidious method of Imperial control. Those who do, we are certain, will live to greatly regret that they had any Imperial "assistance" at all.

The Imperial Weapons Lab has developed a new terror weapon. More threatening than any Death Star, more powerful than the years-old Nova bomb, this weapon can annihilate an entire solar system by collapsing its sun into a black hole. Documents have come into the possession of TKIN indicating that the project was a joint effort by the IWL, with ArquillaLabs as a secret partner, and funded by a grant from Princess Anelis Palpatine herself.

The "Singularity Generator" was recently tested in the Zolaris sector, on the Beta Peises binary star. Once launched into the larger of the stellar pair, it was a mere ten minutes before the star collapsed into a black hole, swallowed its mate, and the entire solar system surrounding them. The Peisean system had two inhabited planets and numerous asteroid habitats. Of course, none of the Peiseans are humanoid, so the Imperials do not care that they have destroyed some four billion intelligent beings, not to mention an unknown number of trading ships operating in the system, or jumping into the system.

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"Plague" on Correll a bio-weapons test

by Sierra Chen

For months now, the planet Correll has been ravaged by a mysterious plague that no one could identify or cure. It struck children first, then adults, and soon became widespread throughout the cities of the planet. Vast amounts of Alliance resources have been poured into trying to find a cause and cure for this disease which has become called "Correllian Fever". The answer, it turns out, was simple. It is not a disease at all. Instead, it is a reaction, specifically tailored for Correllian blood, from a toxin. The toxin, a component of a venom in the furry pets which were such a rage last year, shows gene markers of Gansman Laboratories, an Imperial contractor. How the "furry pets" came to be on Correll is now under investigation. The whole incident is believed to have been a bioweaponry experiment by the Imperial military.

TKIN to become a mobile publication

By Sierra Chen

TKIN has become a mobile publication, thanks to the attentions of the Imperial forces on Khanalar, where we were based. The raid on our offices resulted in loss of some computer equipment and maintenance droids, but no real loss of data, and no loss of personnel. So much for crack Imperial troops. In view of this situation, however, we have decided that we will no longer have a fixed base of operations, not even on New Alderaan. Our purpose is to bring you the truth of what is happening out there, which we really cannot do while safely insulated within Alliance territory. It is necessary to be out among you, our readers, so that we may bring you the latest and most accurate news in the galaxy. Distribution of TKIN will not be affected by these changes.

Imperials Accuse Alliance of Kidnapping

By Kevin Crystal

Well, here we go again. There has been another royal kidnapping, and once again, the Imperials are crying foul and pointing the finger at the New Republic. This is getting old, folks. What stands are the facts: the adopted daughter of Princess Anelis has been whisked away from her home, and no one is admitting who did it. However, the disappearance of Anelis Palpatine's chief body guard, and the theft of the Imperial courier *Falcon* at the same time make mighty suspicious coincidences.

Spokesmen for the New Republic have denounced the kidnapping and deny any involvement with this incident, and are themselves investigating to see who actually is responsible. The checkered background of Daravik Kotewa, Anelis's body guard is enough to make one suspicious right off the bat. However, there is no current evidence that either Kotewa or the child is anywhere near New Republic space. Both Alliance and Imperial security have tracked the pair to Mall World, but from there, they could have gone anywhere in the galaxy. We suggest that the Imperials start looking on Windhaven, which is where the Palpatine children turned up the last time they were kidnapped. Another possibility could be the corporate sector, where there is a lucrative market for adoptable human children.

The one thing we are really tired of, though, is the Imperial tendency to blame everything on the Alliance. It is not as if the Empire has no other enemies in the galaxy, or even within the Empire itself; most Imperials are not above reproach. We deplore any action separating a mother and child, though, and our best suggestion, however, is that the New Republic throw all its resources into finding out the truth about this thing, so that the perpetual Imperial accusers end up wearing the egg on their face.



As always I'm still looking for submissions.

AD: an interested party is looking to hire mercs for a one time only job the pay offered is 30,000cr per member plus expenses contact the mercenary guild if you are interested at box XXXXXX (OOO get in touch with Leslie at Minorchaos@aol.com)

RESCUE AND REVELATIONS

by Debbie Casselbury, Alan Falkowski, Season Irwin and Rachel Schmutter

The comm beeped softly in the Emperor's throne room.

"Vader is here," the voice of the aide reported. The Emperor's throne pivoted as the double doors swished open. Vader strode in, his cape flowing behind him, and came to a halt at a reasonable distance from his master.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Lord Vader."

"Majesty, I heard that Dani of Zeltros would arrive here soon."

The Emperor leaned forward and smiled at the Dark Lord. "Did you now? And why would you want to get involved with this... Zeltron?"

"Let's just say that I have an interest in her," Vader answered evasively.

Palpatine chuckled at his champion Dark Lord. "So the rumors are true.... your interest in this red-skinned tart is a great deal more than meets the eye.

"Suddenly the Emperor's amused smile turned downward into a nasty frown.

"Such things are beneath you, Lord Vader. Remember who you are!" The Emperor leaned back into the shadowy recesses of his throne and stared down the Dark Lord of the Sith.

"I know who I am. And you are not involved in my interests," Vader rumbled softly but dangerously.

"Is that so? I think I am very much involved with your 'interests', Lord Vader...I am still your Master, and my power exceeds your own. If this Zeltron continues to stir you up, I suggest you adjust your emotions and act like the Sith Lord you are! Your Dani is not in danger...at the moment. If she completes the mission I set her on, she will be left alone. If she tries to trick me, she will pay the consequences. She knows that; I know that; and you know that." The Emperor looked at Vader, standing before him, and chuckled softly to himself.

Vader did not move. "I am a Sith Lord, and I have always done your bidding, with no questions. But my time and interests are mine."

"So, you are in love with her! Well, now.... This certainly is a side of you I hadn't seen before, Vader." Palpatine's pale finger pushed a button on the armrest console. "Bring in the female Zeltron, the one waiting in the wings. Now."



The doors whooshed open, and Dani's lovely silhouette could be seen between two Red Guards as they roughly dragged her inside. Vader stared at the Emperor and then at Dani.

"Ah, yes," the Emperor said. "Here she is, Vader." He paused. "Well, aren't you going to give Dani a kiss hello, or some such nonsense?" Dani wrenched free of the guards and smoothed her hair, and then looked up at Vader, stunned to see him there.

"You look lovely, Dani of Zeltros," the Emperor said with a snort. "I have been expecting you."

Vader rounded on his Master. "Why is she brought here like this?"

"It wasn't on my agenda, I assure you, Vader. You gave me the idea with your ridiculously romantic plea."

"Why are you doing this to her?!" Vader repeated.

"I've brought Rachel here, as you insisted. I have done what you required of me," Dani stated coldly, her chin raised high despite her distraction of Lord Vader's presence and his outburst of anger.

The Emperor rose from the throne and slowly moved toward the guarded Dani. Then he lifted her chin with his pale fingers. "They told me you had delivered Rachel. I know she is down in the detention block somewhere. I'm sure the cameras have followed her every move. But let us concentrate on you--" Palpatine turned toward Vader with a scowl-- "and him."

"You will let her go! She has done what you asked. Let her go!" Lord Vader demanded.

"No, Vader, I will not leave," Dani said. "Not until I have Khevyn and Trehvor at my side again." Her eyes lingered on Vader distractedly, her feelings for the Dark Lord close to the surface.

"All in good time, Vader. You know, it's curious to me, your emotions for Dani. Why don't you tell me more about it? How you came together in the first place...and if it's something to worry about? I can't imagine how Azarra, your own daughter, would react knowing you were consorting with this...Zeltron." Dani's eyes blazed at the insinuated insult in the Emperor's voice.

"How we met is no concern of yours," Vader replied. "Azarra will not worry about what I do."

"You see, Vader? Dani came because she wants to free her friends. That is the lure, and that is the cure. I used her, and now she is using you."

"No!" Dani cried out. "That's not true!!" She backed toward the doors a few steps, confused and alarmed.

"Dani, wait," Vader said. "I need to speak with you." Turning his attention back to Palpatine, the Dark Lord said evenly, "You are mistaken, Majesty, about many things."

"Then enlighten me, Lord Vader. With the truth."

"The truth? You don't know the truth. You're always twisting it to



suit your plans!"

Dani looked from the Emperor to Vader, torn. She needed at all costs to get her men freed! But Vader's presence distracted her so much; and the heat in the argument between the two men frightened her. She knew what they were both capable of.

"In some cases 'twisting' is required; but in this matter, I have an open mind. Having Dani as your mistress in court would be interesting, to say the least. Her Zeltron male friends could become Imperial citizens if they chose to serve. And we could all become one big happy 'family' now, couldn't we?"

"Why not simply put her in my hands and let me deal with her?"

Vader's voice was soft.

"No, NO!" Dani protested. "Your Majesty, you made a deal with me to release my men!"

"Yes, Your Majesty; why don't you keep your word to her?" Vader rumbled. Dani looked hopefully at Vader, wondering if his words would have any effect on the Emperor's decision. "Why don't you keep your so-called word, and release them and Dani to myself?"

Palpatine and Darth Vader locked gazes with one another for a long moment. Dani slowly inched her way over to stand just behind Vader.

The Emperor emitted a loud, evil laugh. "In your hands, Vader?"

He hobbled away from the two of them as they exchanged concerned looks, then returned to the throne. Vader stood his ground, seeking to determine whether his actions were enough to gain Dani's freedom.

Palpatine continued to speak. "I am most certain one already has escaped. Rachel is running away with him now." The Emperor cast a wary yellow eye upon his Dark Lord. "Dani has never really been my prisoner. So you may have custody of her, if you wish. She has no knowledge of what Rachel Summers is and what she is capable of. I merely wished to confront her for myself. This was not accomplished; so we will table that matter for the future."

Dani's heart leaped at both statements. One of her men was almost free! And so, apparently, was Rachel. She tried not to think about all that she really did know about her friend while so close to the Emperor.

"But," the Emperor added, "I intend to keep Trehvor in Imperial hands for a while longer. I assure you, he will be moved to a better facility and will not be harmed." Palpatine stared at Vader intensely. "You have my word on that, Vader."

Lord Vader took two menacing steps toward his Master. "No. I will take Dani now, and her friends also!"

"You do this, Vader and you will regret it." The Master bristled with the Dark Side of the Force, furious at such a confrontation from his Servant.

Dani's gloved hands gripped Vader's cloak from behind him. Trehvor-he was going to keep Trehvor!! What more would they do to him??

"Why do you need him? What does he have that you want?" asked Vader carefully.

The Emperor smiled thinly. "Research is being done to discover more



about male Zeltrons. Lt. Colonel Lexor is doing an excellent work on this project. No harm is done to the men, Vader."

Dani gritted her teeth in despair. She knew that the experiments would leave a lasting impression on her poor men. If only Vader could convince Palpatine to let him go!

"Why do you need to research the Zeltrons?" Vader pressed him, sensing the anguish radiating from Dani. "What do you want from them?"

The Emperor ignored Vader's questions about the research. "I sense your mistrust in this situation, Dani of Zeltros. If you are so bent on releasing your friend, perhaps you would like to trade places with him? We could place you in Vader's care here in the palace. You would have certain freedoms, except you would need to report to the lab every day..." The Emperor was laughing to himself. He thought how, if that happened, maybe he'd like to visit the lab a bit more often...

Dani shuddered at the thought of taking Trehvor's place. Dani knew Trehvor had committed a crime in trying to destroy the Death Star, but the Emperor had led her to believe that he would let him go after she brought Rachel to him. "No, Your Majesty...I will trust you will let Trehvor go soon. Very soon. What of Rachel, Your Majesty? Is she free to go?" She was gripped now with fear for her friend...and for herself.

"Oh yes, Dani of Zeltros. Rachel has managed to infiltrate her way in and out of the detention area with Kheyn, and left you and Trehvor behind. That is the kind of 'friend' she is, my dear...yes, I see her sneaking out of the palace this very moment, free as a bird."

At that precise moment, another red-haired young woman-this one with a lightsaber at her side-breezed into the audience chamber, pursued by two Red Guards.

"Rachel, you're safe! Where's Kheyn?" Dani spoke up immediately. She couldn't quite let her feelings of relief come in yet, though, as they were still all in the clutches of the Emperor.

"Guards! I have this covered. Leave." The Emperor stood and approached Rachel. "Well, well...what have we here?"

"Good afternoon, Emperor Palpatine," Rachel said smoothly, bowing courteously. "That will be all," she added to the guards with a playful arrogance. She nodded at Lord Vader respectfully.

"Lord Vader, let me introduce to you, Rachel Summers-the reason behind all of this trouble Dani is in."

Dani stared at the Emperor, lips pressed together. What was he trying to do??

"Rachel Summers, member of the Cairnfall household, student of Darana Surragar Cairnfall, at your service," Rachel said with another sweeping, graceful bow. Vader bowed to Rachel silently. Rachel looked at Dani briefly. "I have no idea where Kheyn and Trehvor are; but I'm certain His Majesty does," she said.

"Student, bah," the Emperor scoffed. Rachel stiffened, rage flaring



within her. She was very proud of the progress she had made as a Sith. "Who she really is seems a mystery, to be frank," Palpatine continued. "But she is nothing but trouble to me - and, most likely, to Darana herself." Dani came out from behind Vader a little, listening with interest.

With exquisite self-control, Rachel merely raised an eyebrow. "I'm afraid I don't quite understand, Your Majesty," she said with deceptive mildness. "But," she added, her tone a trifle sharper, "I should have thought that you knew the Lady Darana well enough to realize that she does not suffer fools lightly. Nor would she take on as a Sith trainee anyone who she thought was unworthy."

"There are many fools in the galaxy. I intend to discover whether you are one of them."

Rachel's emerald eyes flash with suppressed anger. "Very well, then," she said, putting her hands on her hips. "Suppose you tell me just what this is all about, and why you have schemed so for me to be here today? Why didn't you simply request my presence? I am a loyal member of an Imperial household!"

"Is that so, Rachel Summers? It appears you are part of an Imperial household, but you are not always acting upon the interest of my Empire. And there are other matters that puzzle me, such as....your role with Arcturus. What is your game, my dear?"

Rachel just stared at him, bewildered. "Arcturus is dead," she stated flatly. "He was judged guilty of treason by Lady Darana and executed back in June."

"I'm quite aware of that. Darana herself told me. What I want you to tell me is what part you had in why he was executed." The Emperor gave her an evil grin. He had waited a long time to ask her this question.

With a slight start, Dani heard the method and reason behind Arcturus's death. Before she could think it over, she repeated the Emperor's question, "Yes, why??" She was staring at Rachel. What could Rachel have had to do with Arcturus's death?

Rachel had made sure her mind-shields were at their strongest well before she'd entered the room. Still, this was the last thing she'd expected to hear! The shock of the Emperor's accusation-which was far too close to certain very necessary secrets-was nearly enough to break her concentration. But the deadly danger involved gave her the strength she needed to hold firm, so that her disturbance was scarcely noticeable. She drew upon all of the fury banked inside her with which she'd reacted to the Zeltrons' imprisonment and allowed its power to work for her, as Darana had taught her. *Anger is your ally, * she thought to herself. *The Dark Force flows from it. *

"Dani, why are you so concerned for Arcturus?" Vader asked her.

"I...was...once extremely fond of him," she answered quietly.

Rachel's eyes flickered to Dani. "I'm sorry, Dani," she said softly. "I forgot you didn't know." She looked away.

"So then, the Zeltron tart has this 'thing' for Sith Lords...first Arcturus, then



Vader? My, my!"

Dani returned her gaze to Rachel. She could think of nothing to say. And she did not even grace the Emperor with a glance. She knew now that he was trying to work them all against one another.

"Dani, I'm sorry for your loss," Darth Vader told her.

Dani met his gaze mutely and nodded. Then she whispered to him, "Thank you, darling." To the Emperor she finally stated: "Zeltrons are very friendly, if that's what you mean."

"Friendly is good. I can see you've really made an impression on Skywalker...as well as his father." Palpatine looked at Vader with an amused grin.

"Weak fools," the Emperor snorted. "Well, let us all not stand around acting like a bunch of lovesick Jedi."

Rachel privately shared the Emperor's amusement; but she didn't want to hurt her friend's feelings. However, while she welcomed the diversion, she knew she had to satisfy the Emperor's curiosity about her somehow, or it would follow her forever. Turning back to the Emperor, Rachel faced him with composure.

"As I said, Arcturus was found guilty of treason against the Empire," Rachel said, her chin high. "I had nothing to do with it." There was a hint of fire in her eyes as she spoke.

She paused. Then, gathering her courage around her like a cloak, she finished: "...I did, however, carry out the sentence, as Darana ordered." She looked at the Emperor steadily, trying to steel herself for whatever he might do.

Dani could only stare at the cold stone floor in disbelief. Rachel focused on her memory of surprise and scorn at Arcturus' behavior, and how not a single member of the eminently loyal Household could trust him before it was over. Rachel's eyes flickered to Dani. "I'm sorry, Dani," she said softly. "I forgot you didn't know." She looked away.

Palpatine suddenly turned toward Dani. "As promised, Rachel is here. You have truly completed your mission." The old man turned around, then paused. He looked back at Dani with a hateful stare. "Take your Zeltron friends and leave. Vader will stay!" Vader could sense the anger that was building in his Dark Master.

Dani hesitated only a moment, long enough to look up into the faceplate of Vader and put her black gloved hand on his armored chest wordlessly. Then she turned back to the Emperor and said quickly, "Thank you, Your Majesty!" She quickly exited the throne room. She wanted to retrieve her friends before Palpatine changed his mind again. Her thoughts were with Vader as well as with her crewmen. And she knew that Vader was the better of the two to survive the anger of the Emperor.

When the Emperor's attention was fully on Vader, Rachel reached out and established a light telepathic link with Dani.

The doors closed as Rachel stepped back to leave. "You and I are not through yet, dear," the Emperor hissed, emphasizing the last word sarcastically.

("I'm going to keep watch until I know you and the boys are safe,") Rachel whispered telepathically to Dani. ("We'll meet up later.")



Outwardly, she turned back to the Emperor, looking composed. "Yes?" There was an edge to her manner that was difficult to put a finger on.

"How touching...aren't we the guardian angel, Regina! Or Rachel? Or is it Katherine? Which are you today, my dear?" the Emperor sneered.

Rachel sighed to herself, realizing that her message to Dani had been overheard. At Palpatine's last words, though, she gave him a strange look.

"No, no...you are dealing with me now. And you know my powers exceed your own, he said, having read her mind link message to Dani. So, tell me: Who are you?"

Rachel bowed her head in ironic acknowledgment; but she was still perplexed. "Why in the stars would I call myself Katherine at this point?"

"Yes, why **would** you? Answer that, if you can."

"I wouldn't," she answered, shrugging. "Katherine Winter was a good disguise and cover identity for me to use when I first arrived in this galaxy.

I didn't know enough about the place. I knew if I was to be of any use here whatsoever, I'd have to know a lot more about where I was and

how things worked. After meeting Sonya, I figured being a neutral merc would give me the best possible view of all sides involved. And it did." She sighed a little. "It was a very useful disguise, while it lasted. But I knew it couldn't last forever." She actually smiled a bit. "Really, I'm surprised it lasted as long as it did."

Abruptly, her manner shifted, becoming both more formal and wholly respectful. "I am Rachel Summers, Your Imperial Majesty," she said, standing straight and tall before the Emperor. "That is who I was born, and that is who I continue to be. You ask who I am. That is the answer."

"You speak the truth," Palpatine said, with a hint of a smile on his lips. "So...now I know about Katherine. And I already know of Regina. You, Rachel Summers, are the focus here. Whom do you serve?"

-TO BE CONTINUED -



PIRATES OF THE BLACK ARROW

Part 1: Outlawed

by Geri Kittrell

(Takes place 910501)

Rhiannon and the members of her crew stood bound to wooden pillars in the hall of her Clan Righ (chief). While her crew members stood, struggling in their bonds and calling curses down on the headmen of the clan, Rhiannon stood still, glaring at the members of her clan who had betrayed her. She stood with a calm composure she would not have thought possible but was determined to, one way or another, be victorious over the lies.



Rhiannon and her crew had been brought up on false charges of betraying the clan. An appropriate number of witnesses had been well paid to sully their reputations and do anything necessary to turn the clan against them. All this was done by order of Barclay, Clan Tanist (second in command) who had sworn by all the deities of the galaxy to get revenge on them for their refusal of his offer of monetary support in their adventures if they would fly under his banner. He also wanted to be rid of Rhiannon herself, the woman some called the 'pirate queen', who had 'insulted' him by refusing his lusty advances.

Young Barclay was the eldest son of the Righ. He like his father, was a pompous, peacock of a man who prided himself on the way he'd been able to 'con' the clan into thinking that he was the epitome of benevolence and always had their best interest at heart. In truth however, that best interest was the interest to fill his own coffers with all the credits he could amass. He'd hoped to use the skills of Rhiannon and her crew to achieve that goal.

"For the crime of betraying this clan", growled Siseal, the Righ of the clan, "I now name you all outlaw. You are now exiled."

As the men of the crew were removed from the pillars, some tried to fight while others spat at the guards holding them. However, as Rhiannon was removed from the pillar, her hands tightly bound in front of her, she spoke quietly though she knew none would listen, "I swear by the Thunderer, I never did these things. When we meet again, be well prepared to do battle."

Rhiannon and the rest of the crew of the BLACK ARROW was led by armed guard, under the cover of darkness, through the clan holdings and surrounding villages. They were taken to the docking bay, to their ship -- new home. As they were roughly pushed up the boarding ramp, they were given one final command from the Righ, "Go now, leave this place. See that you never return for I'll not be so lenient next time."

The ramp raised and the hatch closed as Rhiannon hit the control panel with her still bound hands. She used a dagger, propped up on a table to cut the ropes securing her hands and was thankful for her perfect aim, she didn't so much as nick herself with the blade. When she'd finished, she saw to cutting the bonds of her loyal and faithful crew.

As they raised the ship wondering where on the rim they'd go first, Rhiannon had a plan already formulating about what she'd do. An hour or so later, the ship safely on 'automatics' and in the comfort of hyperspace, she retired to her cabin. As she entered her personal quarters, she was greeted by Finvar O'Cillinan - her long time friend and sometimes lover. She heard him long before she saw him. He was laying in her bed, singing a snippet of a well known pirate song "SO HAUL AWAY LADS, HAUL AWAY. DEVIL TAKE US ALL TO AN EARLY GRAVE, I'LL LIVE MY LIFE IN MY OWN WAY BY BLASTER AND CANNON'S THUNDER." He had seen them arrested, knew what the sentence would be, and had secretly boarded the ship and made it ready. He had stocked it with all the supplies they would need for some time. He had also, moved himself in.

As Finvar wrapped his strong arms around her, she relaxed in his hold



but he could tell her mind was reeling. "Oh, Finvar," she sighed as she relaxed, "I'm glad ta see ya just now, but if they should know ya be here, they'll name ya outlaw as well."

Finvar grinned mischievously as he handed her a glass of brandy with the hand not occupied holding her. "Tis too late for that lassie. I am already named outlaw by more than one Righ of this place."

As he pulled her down next to him on the bunk she announced, "Finvar, me bonny laddie, and the dearest friend I could have, I am Rhiannon Rua of the ship BLACK ARROW, will ya join me lad? Ya know the crew loves and respects ya as much as I do."

He cut her off in mid sentence to reply, "Aye, me captain lassie, I'll not leave yer side. We'll wed this very night if ya wish it. We can have us a grand time out on the rims. The starry sea of space will be our lands and this ship our home. The space lanes are full of ships heavily laden, just waitin for us."

The two made their way to the ship's lounge, where they joined the crew and finished their planning over a fresh, hot, and plentiful meal. As Rhiannon gazed out the viewscreen she reached for another crust of sourbread and calmly stated, "We can find the somewhat lightly guarded supply ships of both Imperial and New Republic, we'll track them, attack and exact a 'toll'".

"Aye lass, with this crew, we can do it. Those ships'll not be impossible ta find with careful watching. And don'tya be forgettin alla pleasure yachts full of the rich tourists."

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Within a few months, Rhiannon and Finvar and the rest of the crew began attacking and raiding small Imperial and New Republic cargo ships as well as numerous pleasure yachts. The BLACK ARROW used stealth and cunning to hide and then suddenly 'come out of nowhere' to attack. Rhiannon, herself, was always part of the boarding party demanding her prey to 'pay the toll'.

Rhiannon Rua and her band of outlaws became known throughout the galaxy. Though in exile, their exploits were sung about and romantacised by the bards in the Corellian Highlands. They moved from rim world to rim world, never staying in one place long enough for either the Imperials or New Republic authorities to get a real fix on their whereabouts.

Over the years, Rhiannon Rua has gained quite a reputation for herself. She has somehow known just where to find the less guarded supply craft. Although her raids were sometimes carried out with very little bloodshed, it was widely known that the pirates of the BLACK ARROW were indeed ruthless if they were cornered. They were known to be deadly shots with a blaster.

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Epilogue: for about eight years now, the pirates of the BLACK ARROW have been plundering supply ships and pleasure yachts. They have somehow, to date, been able to avoid capture although there have been many very close calls. These bold pirates appear to be fearless as they sail the starry seas waiting for opportunities to raid ships heavily laden with cargo 'ripe for the taking'



Consular Communique

Begin Transmission--

Attention all Bounty Hunters and Mercs:

A bounty has been placed on Cmd. Mira Lexor's head for 100,000 credits, dead, and the body must be presented for verification to collect bounty.

If interested, contact 9MMBKSC for further details.

End Transmission--





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