*22 February 2016* **| A Phantom Dissonance** *Paul Cupido*

“The success of our secret mission on Mygeeto, which we completed right under Jedi Master Ki-Adi-Mundi’s nose, was something of a revelation to the men of the 501st legion. Suddenly we realized that the Jedi could be fooled, and if they could be fooled then they could be killed.”

**Clone Trooper on the rise of the Empire**

As he stood in excess of 2 meters tall, the stranger in the black cloak had had to duck his head upon entering the shack. He continued to hunch over as he made his way to the center of the room. The stranger could see a worn-out mattress lying in the corner, a half-broken rucksack next to it and sort of kitchen area lying opposite to that. The cloaked man drew a sharp breath as he saw the only piece of modern technology in the entire place. With a black gloved on his hand, he picked up a miniature disk. It was probably 3 inches in diameter and had a series of buttons on the one side.

The man smiled – as best as he could smile - and examined the holocron for a moment. It was an older model but it seemed to be operational. He hit the play button and a figure of a young man appeared in the center of the disk. The stranger increased the volume to hear what the tiny apparition was saying.

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“Greetings, I am Tale Avery, former apprentice-keeper of the Jedi Archives. I am currently in exile, hiding right under the emperor’s nose in the capital. I can’t go into specifics but the mass of people here should mask my presence in The Force from all but the most powerful of Jedi and Sith. I have had no mandate to compile the report that I have but I’m doing it anyway - the one good this about this is that I get to keep my own council about what I do now.

From the time of Darth Bane, Sith teachings have encouraged every Dark Lord to make a holocron to order to pass on their knowledge to future generations. Consider this as me learning from our dark counter parts.”

The image flickered for a second and the stranger in the black cloak could hear what sounded like blaster fire. After a few seconds, the image stabilized and the Jedi returned. This time his face bore a cut and his robes were slightly burned. He had a lightsaber in his hands but put the thing away before starting again.

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“I suppose that I should get straight to the point here: The Jedi Temple has fallen. The entire Jedi Order has fallen. We were ravaged by the might of the Sith – now revealed to be former Supreme Chancellor Palpatine and his attack dog in shining armor, Darth Vader. Our enemies, it seems, grew under our noses for decades before finally taking their revenge on us for our victory in the Great Hyperspace War. But how does it happen that the great defenders of the Republic fall alongside the democracy for which we fought? How does it happen that such a shift in the Force happens without us knowing the cause? Were we truly that blind that we could not see the menace behind the veil? Surely there was some kind of phantom dissonance that prohibited us from seeing the truth.”

“The more I muse on the fall of the Order, the more I realize that it wasn’t only the Sith that our situation should be attributed to. Even though I was but an apprentice-keeper, I am still well versed in Jedi practices and I can say that it was our commitment to our creed (which was turned to dogma by our fanatical adherence to it) that broke us.

*There is no emotion, there is peace.*

*There is no ignorance, there is knowledge.*

*There is no passion, there is serenity.*

*There is no chaos, there is harmony.*

*There is no death, there is the Force.*

These words are supposed to help Jedi achieve oneness with the Force but under the previous regime, all they did was strangle us until we lost sight of what we lived for. We lost sight of the Living Force. We lost sight of the ebb and flow of life around us. We were lost amid our rules and dogma. We drove our own members away from the order with draconian practices and we weakened our own connection to the Force. That is why we were blind to the workings of the darkside because all we cared about was rules. That is why we never saw it coming.

“I apologize for the interruption. A patrol of stormtroopers found my hide out by accident and I had to take care of them. I fear that I will have to leave this place soon, before I draw the Emperor’s attention.

Anyway, my dislike for the previous Jedi Order being stated, I think that we can build a new one out of the remains. If there is one thing that I have learned from my research as assistant-keeper of the archives, it is this: The Force is balance. I have seen it happen too many times to ignore. The Great Hyperspace War, the Jedi Civil War, the wars with Exar Kunn - the fact remains that the Force will always find balance.

The Jedi, and the light, will thrive but that period will always end. Our dark brothers may rule for a time as well, but that too will come to an end.

For now, we remaining Jedi will hide in the shadows and seek an opportunity to usher in a new hope for the galaxy. Until that day comes, my friends, I say this: May the Force be with you.”

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The stranger crushed the holocron in his hand. One could hear nothing but the automated sound of the machine that assisted his breathing. He let his mind go quiet and searched for his target through The Force. He tried to feel the Jedi’s residual presence in this shack and use that to search for him.

“Commander” he said after fifteen minutes of searching.

“Yes, Lord Vader?” A stormtrooper said, entering the hovel.

“I have the location of the Jedi. Prepare my shuttle immediately.”