



OBI-WAN KENOBI

RESOLVE

How much can one Jedi take before he breaks?



QWAE29

I neither own these characters or the literary universe in which they live, though there are a few new faces and places that are of my own design. I neither make nor intend to make any profit off of this writing, but indeed I expect die poor, clutching a legal pad and pen to my chest, a half-written chapter scribbled on the fading yellow page.

Author's Note: So, this is a repost (from a different site) of my first fan fic and though part of me wants to rip it from the screen and set it on fire, the more reasonable part of me has chosen to leave it up with the warning that this is probably the worst of all the fictions I have thus written. Someday, I suspect it will receive a massive rewrite, but until then read at your own risk...

*In this storyline, Master Obi-Wan Kenobi and Capitan Rex spent months on Kadavo, not days. During that time, torture of the slaves in Kenobi's name continued under the direction of Keeper Agruss. With the above exception, the story of Obi-Wan's time on Kadavo is unchanged. (Season 4 episodes 12 "Slaves of the Republic" and 13 "Escape from Kadavo")

**This story picks up immediately after Darth Maul has murdered Satine, Duchess of Mandalore, and had commanded that Master Kenobi be taken to his cell. Instead of escaping with the help of the Bo-Katan and her Nite Owls alone, this story has Master Skywalker and Padawan Tano assist in the rescue. From this departure, the story below takes place. (Season 5 episode 16 "The Lawless")

~RESOLVE~

Chapter 1: Cauterizing the Wound

“You should have chosen the dark side, Master Jedi,” Darth Maul said, a sneer creeping across his tattooed lips. He lifted his hand and Satine was hoisted by the invisible hand of the Force into the air. She was gasping, but Maul wasn’t completely suffocating her, at least not yet. He moved slowly towards his prize. Maul had Kenobi right where he wanted him and now he was simply toying with him. “Your emotions betray you. Your fear and... yes, your anger... Let your anger deepen your hatred.”

“Don’t listen to him, Obi,” Satine managed before Maul tightened his grasp.

“Quiet,” growled Savage, but his brother raised a hand silencing him as well. Kenobi took in a calming breath, choosing to focus on the floor rather than a choking Satine.

“You can kill me,” Kenobi started, “but you will never destroy me.” Obi-Wan raised his eyes and looked directly at Darth Maul. “It takes strength to resist the dark side. Only the weak embrace it.”

“It is more powerful than you know.”

“And those who oppose it are more powerful than you’ll ever be,” snapped Kenobi. Maul growled. “I know where you’re from,” Kenobi continued, “I’ve been to your village. I know the decision to join the dark side wasn’t yours. The Nightsisters made it for you,”

“Silence!” hissed Maul, his anger growing with every breath. “You think you know me! It was I who languished for years thinking of nothing but YOU! Nothing, but this moment! And now...,” he continued, his voice suddenly eerily calm, “the perfect tool for my vengeance is in front of us. I never planned on killing you, but I will make you share my pain, Kenobi...”

It happened so fast. Too fast. A guard slammed the back of Kenobi’s knee with the butt of his blaster knocking him to the ground. He looked up and reached out for Satine, but the other guard butted him in the head sending his gaze to the floor. It was only a moment, but it was enough. Kenobi looked up only to see Maul’s hand move slightly and Satine lurched forward. Maul lifted his saber and... it was done. Satine’s body fell to the floor and, in an instant, Kenobi was by her side, his face awash with more emotion, more pain than he thought one being could ever feel. Such was the agony of holding her and yet watching her slip away from him.

“Satine,” he whimpered. At that moment, Kenobi was forced to admit to himself exactly how much he did love her. He had tried, struggled so hard not to form an attachment, but now, knowing that he had only deluded himself into thinking he had

succeeded, his regret and remorse bore into him like a dagger in his heart. He looked upon her, that face which he had loved for so long; that face he would have, should have left the Order for... He looked upon her now and was helpless. Satine's ragged breathing steadied as she settled upon his gaze. Her eyes softened and her hand reached up to touch his face.

"Remember, my dear Obi-Wan... I've loved you always... I always will..." she whispered and then she was gone. Obi-Wan held her close, tucking her hand to his heart and kissing her fingers. Darth Maul sat back on his throne, a satisfying smile playing across his face.

"Do we kill him now, brother?" Savage asked.

"No," Maul replied, "imprison him below. Let him drown in his misery. Take him to his cell... to rot."

Kenobi gently laid Satine's body on the floor. He felt the rough hands of the Death Watch Mandalorians upon him and allowed himself to be taken. It didn't matter. Nothing mattered. Everything that had mattered now grew cold on the floor.

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Kenobi offered no resistance when they led him on to the chariot speeder to escort him to his new prison home. Why fight? What was worth fighting for anymore? His mission was to rescue the Duchess, to save Satine... and at that he had failed, miserably. Satine... He had failed her... failed...

One of the Mandalorian guards pushed into Kenobi's shoulder indicating that he should get off his knees and on to the landing platform. Kenobi stepped on to the platform followed by all four guards. Anakin lowered his scopes and turned to Ahsoka and Bo-Katan.

"There are four guards with him, but I sense there are more nearby," Anakin said. "Remember, our priority is to get Master Obi-wan."

Ahsoka, Bo-Katan and the renegade Mandalorians, now called Nite Owls, all nodded. Anakin turned his attention back to the speeder platform.

"Go!" he yelled and soon the entire rescue party was descending onto the platform. Immediately, a fire fight erupted and, just as expected, more Death Watch guards flew in from hidden positions above the dock. Anakin scanned the fight looking for Obi-Wan and was surprised to find him kneeling in the same spot. Anakin could not tell whether it was his bonds or some injury that kept Obi-Wan from either assisting in his rescue or taking cover, but it worried him greatly. Obi-Wan simply kneeled there seemingly without a care for the fight around him.

"Snips, get Obi-Wan out of here!" Anakin yelled as he deflected several shots from Mandalorian blasters. Ahsoka leapt and landed where Obi-Wan was kneeling. She put her arm around him and forced him to his feet.

"Time to go, Master," she said. After she got him standing, she released his binders and strapped a jet pack to his back. Ahsoka was putting on her own pack when Anakin knocked out the last of the guards.

"You okay?"

Obi-Wan said nothing, just nodded quietly. Anakin was about to ask again, but was interrupted by Bo-Katan.

"There are more on the way," she said pointing to incoming Death Watch commandos. "We must hurry!" and with that she took to the skies. All three Jedi followed straight behind her. The fire fight continued in the sky their pursuers gaining on them bit by bit. The rescue party finally reached their destination, several commandos still on their trail. The team landed and continued their fight on the ground. Everyone was blasting or blocking blasts except Obi-Wan. He remained beside Ahsoka, but he did not have his lightsaber out. Ahsoka continued to protect him, but soon she found herself overwhelmed. Anakin saw it too. Two Death Watch commandos had out flanked her position.

"Ahsoka, behind you!" he yelled. She turned around and managed to block several shots from one of the incoming commando's blasts, but the second made it through. He let loose a volley of shots toward Kenobi, three of which found their mark. Kenobi let out a sharp gasp as the shots ripped through his armor. He hit the ground in a crumpled heap.

"On to the ship!" Anakin yelled. He and Bo-Katan covered Ahsoka as she struggled to carry Obi-Wan up the ramp. Once they were on board Anakin jumped on to the ramp himself.

"Go back to your Republic and tell them what has happened."

"I will," Anakin said. He gave Bo-Katan a quick parting nod before running into the ship.

"Snips, get us out of here," he said.

"Way ahead of you, Master," Ahsoka replied as the ship launched forward, deftly avoiding several blasts from the ground. Once clear of the atmosphere, Ahsoka plotted the jump to hyperspace and soon the three of them were on their way to Coruscant. Ahsoka hopped out of the pilot seat and raced to the back of the shuttle where Anakin was securing his former Master on a stretcher. Kenobi grimaced and muttered softly.

"What is he saying?" Ahsoka asked. Anakin leaned in closer to Obi-Wan. He sat back up and looked at his Padawan.

“He said, ‘Jedi only make things worse.’”

“What... What does that mean? Is he going to be ok?” she asked, stepping closer.

“I don’t know, Snips,” Anakin said shaking his head. “Something has been... different about Obi-Wan for awhile...”

“I know, ever since he went undercover with those bounty hunters,” Ahsoka offered. Anakin shook his head.

“No, it started before that... like with the Zygerrians. Yes,” Anakin said more sure of himself, “it started with Kadavo.”

Anakin injected Obi-Wan with a painkiller and tranquilizer combination. Obi-Wan’s face relaxed as he lapsed into unconsciousness.

“Something must have happened there. Something we missed,” Anakin said to his Padawan, but even as he said it, part of him of didn’t believe it. That something could have gotten to Obi-Wan, affected him somehow seemed impossible. His former Master had always seemed all but invincible to him. Ahsoka frowned.

“If that’s true and Master Kenobi has been compromised, shouldn’t we tell the Council?”

“We can’t report what we don’t know, Snips. Right now, our job is to get Obi-Wan to the Jedi Temple before it’s too late.”

* * * * *

“Satine...?”

“Master, it’s me, Anakin. You’re safe now. You’re in the Jedi Temple medical facility.”

“Anakin?” a groggy Kenobi muttered as he struggled to focus on his surroundings.

“Yes, it’s me. Looks like I had to save you again old man,” Anakin answered a smile spreading across his face.

“I... was on Mandalore,” Kenobi continued still trying to sort his thoughts out. Anakin’s smile faded and a far more serious expression took its place.

“Yes. You went to rescue the Duchess, but...”

“Satine... she’s dead...,” he whispered closing his eyes. “Darth Maul...”

“We know,” Anakin said softly. “You just rest now, there will be plenty of time to talk later,” Anakin said as he stood up to leave. Obi-Wan suddenly grabbed his wrist. The act was full of intent, but his grip lacked any strength. He began to push himself up into a seated position.

“I must speak with the Council,” he said. Anakin tried to gently push him back down to the bed.

“You can later. You are in no condition to,”

“No,” Kenobi said, his voice strained from the effort of compelling his complaining body into action. “Now, Anakin. I will speak to the Council now.”

At this point, Kenobi was half way out of the medical bed and preparing to stand up. Anakin mentally kicked himself for what he was about to do, but he resigned himself to do it. He placed Obi-Wan’s arm over his shoulders and put his own arm around Obi-Wan’s waist to give him the support he needed.

“Obi-Wan, are you sure this can’t wait?”

“Please, Anakin, I need your help,” was Kenobi’s only reply. Anakin nodded.

“Of course,” he answered. Anakin tapped his Jedi communicator. “Ahsoka, I need you to ask the Council to gather. Master Obi-Wan needs to speak with them.”

“Master, I don’t understand. Isn’t Master Kenobi,”

“Snips, just do it!”

“Yes, Master,” Ahsoka replied reluctantly. Anakin could hear the retreat in her voice and instantly he regretted snapping at her. He would apologize later, after this was done; whatever this was. Slowly, Anakin helped his former Master hobble down the long corridors of the Temple. By the time they reached the Council chambers, the members had assembled either in person or by holo-transmission. Even Ahsoka was there standing by the door trying her best to be invisible. Anakin walked Obi-Wan to the center of the floor. Once there Obi-Wan took his arm off of Anakin’s shoulders and forced himself to stand on his own. Anakin prepared to stay by his side, but Kenobi waved him off. He wanted to stand there alone. Anakin understood that. He didn’t like it, but he understood it. He backed away and joined his Padawan by the door. It was Master Yoda who spoke first.

“Resting you should be, Master Kenobi. What you have to tell the Council important it is,” the old Jedi posited. Kenobi nodded, wincing ever so slightly.

“Masters, you know I have done my best to follow the ways of the Jedi, to serve the Republic, to keep the peace in the galaxy...”

“Yes,” interrupted Master Windu, “you have served the Order with wisdom and distinction, but I sense... in these matters you feel differently.”

“We understand that your mission to Mandalore did not go as you had hoped,” Master Plo Koon continued. “But failure is what we all risk by acting. To not risk failure is to never take action.”

“Oh, I understand failure, Master Plo,” Kenobi answered a hint of sarcasm in his voice. Master Yoda shook his head and closed his eyes.

“Deep conflict in you I sense. Anger, doubt... despair... into these things you must not give or lose yourself you will,” Yoda finished. Obi-Wan sighed, his head falling and his eyes closing.

“I fear it is already too late,” he said then he raised his head again and looked at Master Yoda directly. “That is why I am resigning from the Jedi Order.”

“No! You can’t accept it!” Anakin yelled from the back of the room, but Master Yoda raised his hand silencing the young Skywalker.

“Sure of this you are, Obi-Wan?”

“Yes, Master,” Obi-Wan answered. Yoda looked to the Masters at his left and his right. He then turned back to Kenobi.

“Accept it we can. Accept it we will.”

“Thank you, Masters,” Kenobi said as he managed a small bow. With his bow, every member of the Council rose from their chairs and bowed to him.

“May the Force be with you, Master Kenobi,” said Windu.

“Goodbye, my friends,” Obi-Wan replied. He turned around and before he could take his first step, Anakin was by his side. Together, and at Obi-Wan’s direction, the duo limped to the front of the Temple to the speeder platform where a summoned taxi speeder was waiting. Ahsoka, who had been quietly following behind, finally spoke as Anakin and Obi-Wan approached the edge of the platform.

“Master Kenobi, where will you go?” she asked. Kenobi looked back at the young Togruta.

“I have always kept a place here in the city,” Kenobi said, his breath a bit labored. “I suppose I will stay there for a while.”

“And then what?” Anakin demanded as he helped Obi-Wan into the taxi. “Master,” he said his voice softening, “don’t do this.”

Obi-Wan could see the plaintive plea in his former Padawan’s eyes. He felt it tug at the special bond shared between Masters and their Padawan learners, but Obi-Wan simply shook his head.

“I’m sorry, Anakin, but I must,” he replied. Anakin backed away and allowed the taxi’s door to close. Even as the speeder pulled away he tried to hold Kenobi’s gaze, but Obi-Wan just turned away. In moments, the speeder was gone. Ahsoka reached out for her Master’s hand, but as she watched it clench into a fist, she found herself stopping short. Even inexperienced as she was with the depth of the Force she could sense the rolling anger stirring deep within her Master. Anakin, feeling his anger and frustration taking hold, steadied himself. He focused on his breathing and began to settle his mind as he had been trained to do by Kenobi himself. Once the initial wave of frustration passed, Anakin felt he had calmed enough to speak to his learner.

“Something is not right, Ahsoka. Something had to have happened on Kadavo or Mandalore.”

“We know what happened on Mandalore. He failed a mission, but... Master Kenobi has failed missions before,” Ahsoka said in obvious confusion.

“That wasn’t a mission from the Council. It was... personal,” Anakin answered finally. He felt he couldn’t say more; luckily Ahsoka seemed to understand enough to let it go. Anakin shook his head still frustrated. “There must be something. Something happened... something I missed... something I don’t know...” Anakin stopped and looked straight at Ahsoka. “I need to talk to Rex.”

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No longer a Jedi. He was no longer a Jedi. Not a Jedi. Obi-Wan wasn’t sure he understood what that meant even as he thought it. He had always been a Jedi. For as long as he had memory... He had been a youngling, a Padawan learner, a Master, but always a Jedi. Even during that misguided time on Melida/Daan he still considered himself a Jedi... Always he was a Jedi... always making things worse.

“No,” Obi-Wan said aloud to himself. “I must not allow myself to,” he stopped, stood still and took in a deep breath. He exhaled slowly then entered the access code to his tiny apartment. The room was dark and stale from being uninhabited for so long. Obi-Wan didn’t care. His singular thought was one of rest. From his shoulder to his ribcage to his thigh, all along his right side throbbed with agonizing pain as he continued to slowly limp

his way to the bedroom. The sheets were old, but clean not that it mattered. He staggered to the side of the bed and, resisting the urge to collapse entirely, slowly lowered himself to a seated position on its edge.

“I must not give in to these feelings,” he whispered. He lay back onto the bed, wincing as his muscles settled into a comfortable position. “Satine...” he whispered breathlessly and then Kenobi did something he hadn’t done since he was a Padawan. Not since he watched his Master fall. He cried.

Chapter 2: Gaining the High Ground

Anakin paced back and forth on the roof. Patience had always been something he struggled with and now he felt that weakness acutely. He had contacted Captain Rex and asked to meet with him here, a random rooftop in the capitol city of Coruscant. It seemed clandestine, but Anakin didn't feel that the Temple or the barracks were appropriate venues for this conversation. He had insisted Ahsoka remain at the Temple over her numerous protestations, but again he was afraid that whatever it was he was looking for would be awfully... personal to Obi-Wan. Anakin knew his former Master was a... private man and Anakin would never try to pry into matters Obi-Wan clearly wanted to keep private, but these were extraordinary circumstances. So, Anakin did his best to balance helping his former Master and protecting his former Master's privacy. Anakin heard a speeder approach his roof top. He saw Rex park his speeder, climb out and head toward him. Rex was still in uniform. Come to think of it, Anakin wasn't sure if he had ever seen Rex out of uniform.

"General Skywalker, you sent for me?" Rex asked in way of a greeting. Rex was a great leader, a great soldier and great man, but he wasn't all that great at small talk. In the past, that trait had often stymied Anakin's attempt at levity with his captain, but today this suited Anakin's purpose just fine.

"Yes, Rex. I need your help."

"Of course, sir, anything."

"I knew I could count on you," Anakin said placing a hand on Rex's shoulder. Rex nodded his receipt of the compliment.

"General Skywalker, why are we meeting here?"

"What I want to talk about is..." Anakin paused as he searched for the right word, "delicate. I don't need others overhearing."

"I understand, sir," Rex replied. Truthfully, he wasn't sure that he did. There were few places more secure in the galaxy than the Jedi Temple or the military bases on Coruscant, but Rex quickly decided that General must have had his reasons and that was good enough for him. "What do you need, sir?"

"I need to know what happened on Kadavo," Anakin said plainly. For a moment, Rex seemed confused.

"I turned in a report of everything that happened during the mission with the Zygerrians."

"Everything that happened?"

"I... I don't know what you mean, sir," Rex stammered uncharacteristically. Anakin stepped in closer and lowered his voice.

"Rex, I know something happened to Obi-Wan during that mission. Something that changed him somehow... something you didn't report. I need you to tell me what that thing was," Anakin said. "It's not like you to hide things from me, Rex."

"General," Rex began, but one could tell he was clearly uncomfortable. Every word out of his mouth seemed subject to checking and double-checking before it was cleared for utterance. "If I left anything out of the report it was because... some things should just stay between soldiers, sir. I would never intentionally hide anything from the Jedi or the Republic," he said. Anakin's expression lightened.

"I know, Rex, and normally I would leave it to your discretion, but the truth is whatever happened on Kadavo I think affected Master Kenobi in some way and now..." Anakin paused, "Master Kenobi has withdrawn from the Jedi Order."

"I..." Rex began in clear disbelief. "Sir, even if... even if something happened back at the mining camp, that was months ago."

"That's true, Rex," Anakin said as he began pacing again. "And his last mission also weighed heavily on him, but my instincts tell me it didn't start here. It started with the Zygerrians," Anakin said as he stopped pacing and turned to face his captain. "Rex, when we rescued Obi-Wan from Mandalore... he didn't fight. He just allowed himself to be shot and in the ship he kept repeating, 'Jedi only make things worse.' Does that mean anything to you?" Anakin asked desperately. Rex's eyes widened. He looked at the ground, his head nodding slowly.

"Yes, sir," Rex replied. Anakin found himself taken aback for a second. He hadn't actually expected Rex would recognize it.

"Where did you hear it? Who said it? What does it mean?" Anakin asked, the questions tumbling frantically out of his mouth.

"Back on Kadavo, in the slave mines, General Kenobi broke one of the Keeper's 'rules.' He was caught speaking and, per Agruss's instructions, one of the colonists was punished in his place," Rex paused. When Anakin didn't say anything, he continued. "The General asked the slavers to stop, to leave the man alone, but that just made them angrier. They whipped the colonist more viciously and demanded that the General beg them to stop which he did. When the slavers walked away, General Kenobi tried to help the Togruta, but he wouldn't have it. He told him that Jedi only,"

"Only make things worse," Anakin finished for him. Rex nodded.

"It was like that for months, the whole time we were there. Togruta were tortured and even killed because he would break a rule. Sometimes, Agruss would kill a group of

Togruta just because they were near the General. After awhile, I think the General just gave up.”

“No,” Anakin said angrily walking away from Rex. “Obi-Wan would not just give up. It’s not who he is. He would have tried to do something.”

“He did try, sir,” Rex answered. “We attempted to escape once, but we were caught. Agruss offered to let us both go, but if we left he would kill all the colonists. General Kenobi couldn’t let that happen, so we stayed. A few weeks later, I came up with another escape plan, but he didn’t want to hear it. He said it was too dangerous for the colonists,” Rex said with a sigh. “Didn’t matter though, because a couple of Zygerrian guards heard us. They took me into another room, tortured me for hours I think. They made the General watch. After that... he did whatever he could to keep his head down; anything to make it easier on the colonists. It helped, but the Zygerrians would always find a reason to punish me or a colonist, and every reason they blamed on him.” Rex shook his head. “Frankly, sir, I don’t know how he lasted as long as he did. You Jedi are just made up of sterner stuff than most...”

“You were there for months...” Anakin whispered. He looked up at Rex. “And this happened the whole time?”

“Yes, sir,” Rex replied evenly. “With all do respect, sir, the General seemed fine when went back into action; like old times. I just figured he had put it behind him.”

“Why didn’t he say something?” Anakin asked to no one in particular.

“Sir,” Rex began, “I don’t know General Kenobi as well as you do, but I do know something about nightmares and a soldier’s nightmares are his own. You carry the nightmares with you and you just keep going. That’s what a soldier does, that’s what the General did,” Rex said. Anakin nodded, partly because he understood what Rex was saying and partly because he really didn’t know what to say in response.

“Captain,”

“Yes, General,” Rex answered standing at attention.

“I need you to continue your discretion regarding events on Kadavo; including this conversation. Do you understand?”

“Of course, General,” Rex responded crisply. He saluted Anakin then turned on the ball of his foot. He climbed on to his speeder and placed on his helmet.

“Rex,” Anakin shouted, “thank you.”

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“Master Plo!” Ahsoka yelled as she ran to catch Jedi Master Plo Koon. Master Plo did not break his slow, but steady pace down the corridor, though when Ahsoka finally reached his side, he acknowledged her presence.

“Hello, little Soka,” he said, his voice distorted slightly by his antiox breathing mask. “I sense you are deeply troubled regarding Master Kenobi.”

“Yes, Master,” Ahsoka said as her gait slowed to match his pace. “I was wondering if... well...”

Master Plo came to a stop and turned to a slightly fidgety Padawan. She had gone back inside the temple shortly after Master Kenobi departed. Anakin had made it clear she was not to come along when he met with Rex. She had of course protested, but he ordered her to remain behind. At first she just stood there, pouting on the platform not knowing what she should do next. That’s when she thought of Master Plo Koon. Outside of Masters Skywalker and Kenobi, Master Plo was the Jedi to whom she was closest. After all, it was Master Plo who had discovered her as a child and brought her to the temple for training. She looked to him with a somewhat father-like admiration and he returned that affection by sharing his wisdom and thru his nickname for her, little Soka.

“You can not get answers if you fail to ask questions,” Plo said serenely. Ahsoka nodded and quieted her thoughts.

“Why won’t the Council help Master Kenobi? I mean, he’s one of us. We should be there for him.”

“We are there for him, little Soka, but we can not force upon him help he does not want. Most find it far more difficult to accept help than to give it.”

“But Master,” Ahsoka persisted, “what if Master Kenobi doesn’t know he needs our help?”

Master Plo sighed and rested a gloved hand on Ahsoka’s shoulder.

“We must trust in the Force. When the time is right, a solution will present itself.”

* * * * *

Torment. Torment and pain. So much suffering. The screams. The pleas. The silence. No! Stop! It's my mistake. Leave him alone. Torment. Agony. No, please forgive me, Master. The suffering remains. Everything about this place is designed to shatter the will. It has already begun to affect these poor people. Jedi only make things worse. It has already begun to affect me. They die because of me. I can not help anyone around me. Trying only makes things worse. No escape. No rescue is coming. Rex! No! Screaming. Agony. I can not act. To act would make things worse. Suffering. So much suffering. I must comply. I must... They suffer because of me. Jedi only make things worse. The screaming. The screaming!

"No!" Obi-Wan shouted as he violently awoke from his sleep. He was covered in sweat. The nightmare had returned. In fact it never left. It haunted his waking moments and terrorized his restless nights. There was no escape. Obi-Wan cupped his head in hands. It had been almost a week since he left the Order. Almost a week and he had scarcely eaten, never truly slept and absolutely never went outside.

"There is no emotion, there is peace. There is no ignorance, there is knowledge," Obi-Wan whispered. It was the ancient Jedi mantra Qui-Gon Jinn had taught him as a padawan. Obi-Wan always went back to it when he needed centering; when he needed calm. "There is no passion, there is serenity. There is no chaos, there is," Obi-Wan stopped his chanting at the sudden presence outside his door. Even in his bedraggled state he could easily sense who it was.

"Come in, Anakin," he called out. The door slid open and Anakin stepped in side. The door closed and Anakin stood still for a moment waiting for his eyes to adjust to the darkness of the apartment.

"Master?" he called out.

"In here, Anakin," Obi-Wan answered. Anakin turned to his right, his eyes finally able to sort out things in the low light. He entered the bedroom to find his friend seated cross legged in his bed. He wore a simple pair of pants and tunic as if he were preparing for bed, but Anakin could tell by Kenobi's face that he hadn't slept in quite awhile perhaps even days.

"Am I disturbing you?"

"No," Obi-Wan said, and then he smiled. "Sit. I'd be grateful for the company."

Anakin took a seat across from Kenobi on the bed.

"I see you haven't done much with the place."

"No, I should do something about it, but I don't really have a hand for decorating," Kenobi joked. He smiled, but Anakin could tell his heart wasn't in it.

"Obi-Wan, you don't look so good."

“Thank you, Anakin. I can always count on you for a compliment.”

“I’m serious, Master,” Anakin said quickly brushing aside Kenobi’s attempt at levity. “I’m worried about you. We all are.”

“I’m fine, Anakin. Truly,” Kenobi replied, doing his best to assuage Anakin’s concerns. Anakin heard the words, but what he saw before him told him otherwise. Obi-Wan’s face was sallow and sunken. He had obviously lost weight and hadn’t seen any sunlight. Dark circles hung low under his eyes and his hair was a mess. This wasn’t the Obi-Wan Anakin knew. The man that sat before him seemed a stranger; a shade of his former Master. Even his eyes seemed different. Those brilliant blue eyes that had charmed and ensorcelled so many women had lost their luster. Instead, they sat, recessed and dull, two lifeless orbs on a pale face. Anakin looked at his former Master and steeled himself for what was to come.

“Obi-Wan, I spoke to Rex. I know what happened on Kadavo,” he said, but Obi-Wan said nothing. He just looked at Anakin through those lifeless orbs, so Anakin pressed on. “I can only imagine what you went through... all that time... and then when Satine,”

“Stop,” Obi-Wan said flatly. Anakin tried to regroup.

“I only meant that,”

“I want you to leave now, Anakin.”

“Obi-Wan,”

“Leave,” Obi-Wan said evenly. Anakin slowly got up and walked to the door. He opened it, but before stepping through he paused.

“You’re wrong you know. Jedi don’t make things worse. We make things better for everyone. You made things better once and you can do it again, but you can’t do it from in here,” Anakin pleaded, but Kenobi gave no response. Defeated, Anakin left the apartment, the door sliding shut behind him.

“Urgh!” Anakin roared as he slammed his fists on the hallway wall. “I don’t know what to do!” he yelled. Anakin rested his head on the wall and closed his eyes. He racked his brain in search of a solution, but none came to him. His thoughts were... clouded. He was angry. Of course he was angry. He SHOULD be angry. The Order had allowed him to leave. They did nothing. If they could see him now, maybe they would... Anakin opened his eyes. His thoughts were clearer now; he knew what he had to do. He touched his Jedi communicator.

“Ahsoka, where are you? You know what, it doesn’t matter. Meet me at the front of the temple.”

“What’s going on, Master?”

“I’ll explain later. Just be there,” Anakin said then he ended the transmission. He walked back to Kenobi’s door. This time he was not beckoned inside, in fact the door had been locked. Anakin waved his hand over the locking mechanism, using the Force to disengage it.

“You’re going to have to do better than that, old man,” he said as he stepped inside and once again found himself in near total darkness. He looked down the short passage through to Obi-Wan’s open bedroom. Obi-Wan was sitting on the edge of his bed. He wasn’t looking at Anakin. He wasn’t looking at anything.

“I told you to leave.”

“And I will, but you’re coming with me,” Anakin replied. At that Obi-Wan finally looked at his former Padawan.

“Don’t do this, Anakin. It will not end well.”

“I will take you by force if you make me,” Anakin said as he lit his lightsaber. Kenobi stood up from his bed and pulled his own lightsaber to him from across the room. He lit it and transitioned into his typical Soresu fighting stance; two fingers from his left hand pointing squarely at Anakin.

“You can try,” Kenobi said his eyes narrowly set on Anakin. Suddenly, Kenobi leapt toward Anakin’s position, lightsaber above his head. Anakin easily moved back, but as he did so he used his Force telekinesis to switch on the overhead lights.

“Agh!” Kenobi groaned as he was temporarily blinded. He landed disoriented which was exactly what Anakin had been counting on. He violently Force pushed his former Master into the hallway, slamming him against a wall. Kenobi sunk to the floor, his lightsaber falling from his hand. Anakin immediately pulled it to him and placed it on his belt. He walked up to his old friend.

“Sorry about this, Obi-Wan,” he said. Obi-Wan lifted his eyes just in time to see Anakin’s boot coming directly toward his head and then there was nothing.

Chapter 3: Shadow Boxing

“Oh no! What happened?” Ahsoka yelled as she ran to meet her Master. Anakin was stepping off a speeder carrying an unconscious Obi-Wan over his shoulder. Ahsoka’s eyes went wide.

“He’s not,”

“No,” Anakin answered quickly. Ahsoka relaxed slightly, but she still had no clue as to what was going on.

“Why is he unconscious?”

“I kicked him in the head,” Anakin said as he readjusted Obi-Wan’s limp frame on his shoulder.

“But why did,”

“Not now, Ahsoka.”

“But,”

“Not now!”

The three of them headed into the Temple.

“So...” Ahsoka started again, “are you going to tell me the plan here?”

“Simple. We are going to make the Council help Obi-Wan.”

“But how? Master Plo said,”

“I don’t care what Master Plo said,” Anakin snapped. “They WILL help him... They have no choice...” he finished, his voice trailing off. Ahsoka bit her lip and followed silently behind her Master. The two entered the Council chambers to find Masters Yoda, Mace Windu, Ky-Adi-Mundi, Plo Koon, Saesee Tiin, and Kit Fisto already engaged in some business. All conversation stopped, however, at Anakin’s abrupt entrance.

“What is the meaning of this, Master Skywalker?” Master Tiin asked. Anakin walked to the center of the room and gently laid Kenobi on the floor. Even Padawan Ahsoka could feel the collectively gasp in the room when they saw the emaciated condition of their once fellow Council member. Master Yoda was the first to break the silence.

“Disturbing it is to see our friend this way.”

Master Windu nodded and looked to Anakin.

“What has caused this?”

“We did. We caused this, Masters,” Anakin replied. “By not helping him in the first place.”

“Master Kenobi chose to leave the Order, young Skywalker,” Master Mundi stated. “We could not refuse his request.”

“You could and you should have,” Anakin countered. “His request alone should have been enough to tell us something was wrong.”

“And do you know what is wrong with our friend?” Plo Koon asked. Anakin nodded.

“I do, but...”

“Yes,” prompted Master Fisto. Anakin shook his head.

“Master Kenobi suffered some... trauma while on Kadavo. He never really got over it and then Mandalore...”

“Jedi are specifically trained to resist such trauma,” Fisto answered.

“Yes, but there still is a limit to what any one man can take,” Anakin countered. Several Council members exchanged glances as if they were communicating somehow without words. Master Windu turned his attention back to Anakin.

“What would you have the Council do, Master Skywalker?”

“I don’t know,” Anakin said in clear exasperation. “The Order has existed since ancient times, surely the Jedi have faced this problem before.”

For several seconds the Council was silent. Then finally Master Plo interlaced his fingers and spoke.

“There is... something that can be done,” he said. Master Yoda shook his head.

“Know of what you mean I do, Master Plo. Very dangerous to Master Kenobi it would be.”

“Whatever it is we have to try,” Anakin pleaded.

“Very dangerous as well to you, Master Skywalker,” Yoda added. Anakin looked down at his longtime friend and mentor.

"I don't care. I will do whatever it takes."

Yoda turned to Master Plo who nodded. Master Plo got up from his seat and approached Anakin and Obi-Wan.

"Bring him to the medical bay," he said to Anakin then he continued toward the door. He stopped and looked at Ahsoka. "You too, little Soka. Your Master will need you," he said and then walked out of the Council chambers, Skywalker and Kenobi in tow. Ahsoka fell in line behind.

"What is to be done, Master?" Anakin asked as the four made their way down the long corridors and many steps to the Temple's medical bay. Master Plo interlaced his fingers once again.

"There is an ancient practice known to certain Jedi that allows one to enter the mind of another."

"Like a Jedi mind trick?" Ahsoka asked. Plo shook his head.

"No, it is very different and far more dangerous," he answered as he and the others stepped into the bay. Anakin carried Obi-Wan to a medical bed and carefully placed him down upon it. He then turned to Master Plo.

"Just tell me what I need to do."

"I will help you go into Master Kenobi's mind," Master Plo started as he gestured for Anakin to lie down on a medical bed beside Obi-Wan. "Once there you must find a way to free him from the shadows of his trauma."

"How do I do that?" Anakin asked as he lay back on the bed. Master Plo stepped in between the two supine Jedi.

"That I do not know," he answered. Anakin just nodded and fixed his gaze upon the ceiling.

"I'm ready," he said.

"Ahsoka," Plo called, directing her to stand at Anakin's head. "You will be Master Skywalker's anchor," he began, then he looked at Anakin. "While inside Master Kenobi's mind you must be careful not to forget your purpose or you will be lost as well. Listen for your Padawan's voice. She will help keep you on your path."

"Don't worry, Master. I'll keep you from getting lost," Ahsoka smiled.

"I know you will, Snips."

“Let us begin,” Master Plo Koon said. He placed a clawed hand on Anakin’s left shoulder, the other on Kenobi’s right. He began chanting something low, under his breath, so low that neither Ahsoka nor Anakin could make out his words. Suddenly, Anakin felt dizzy as a strong wave of sleepiness washed over him. He struggled to keep his eyes open, but in mere moments all was dark around him. For a moment, Anakin found himself completely disoriented. He felt both in and out of his own body, but gradually he began to feel the weight of his limbs as he settled down, standing on... something in the vast nothingness before him.

“Hello, Anakin.”

Anakin spun around and found Obi-Wan standing behind him. The “world” around them was still dark. There was no sky, no ground, no nothing. Everything was a void except for their two figures standing within the darkness.

“Obi-Wan?”

“You’re not supposed to be here, Anakin,” Obi-Wan said as he began to pace around Anakin, his hand under his chin. “No, you’re definitely not supposed to be here at all.”

“I needed to find you,” Anakin said. “I needed to make sure you were all right.”

“As you can see I’m perfectly fine. There’s no reason for you to stay any longer,” Kenobi said matter-of-factly. Anakin crossed his arms over his chest.

“I’m not going anywhere, Master,” he said. Obi-Wan stopped pacing.

“Anakin, I order you to leave this place.”

“I’m not your Padawan anymore. You can’t order me anywhere.”

“That’s no way to talk to your, Master,” a new voice stated. Anakin turned and found himself facing the Zygerrian Queen.

“This isn’t real. You’re dead.”

“Oh I assure you, Jedi, this is very real,” she said, her voice as lyrical as Anakin remembered. “But if this is not real,” she said as she walked around him, her clawed fingers lightly brushing his face, “then there is no need to try to save your friend.”

Suddenly, a light shown from an unknown place above illuminating a small circle in the darkness and in that circle knelt Kenobi. His tunic was tattered and dirty and there was the unmistakable glow of a slave collar around his neck. A chorus of non-corporeal voices rang out.

Whip the Jedi! Whip the Jedi!

The Queen sauntered in front of Anakin. She placed her hand on his chest.

“Now is your chance, Jedi. Save him, if you can. Whip the Jedi.”

“Anakin,” spoke the kneeling Kenobi, “I knew you’d have a backup plan.” Anakin pushed the Queen out of the way and moved toward Kenobi.

“This isn’t the slave auction, Obi-Wan. You’re not here. You’re free.”

“Is he?” the Queen laughed. “You failed to save him the first time. All of this,” she said gesturing to their entire world, “is because of you! But, perhaps this time you will save him...”

Anakin looked at the Queen, then back to Obi-Wan. She was partly right. If he had been able to save Obi-Wan at the auction, Kadavo never would have happened. Anakin turned back to the Queen.

“How? How do I save him?”

“You know what you have to do,” she purred. At first, Anakin was puzzled, then he looked to his belt. His lightsaber wasn’t there; instead he found a shock whip hanging in its place. Anakin shot a furious look to the Queen.

“I will not whip him,” he growled. The Queen smiled.

“Of course you will if you want to save him. Besides,” she said as she removed the whip and placed it in Anakin’s hand. “You want to do it.”

“That’s a lie,” Anakin snapped. The Queen continued to circle around him seductively, her hand moving lightly across his shoulders as she spoke.

“Come now, Anakin. Let us speak true... you have grown very powerful and you will grow more powerful yet—from a boy, to a Jedi Knight—from a slave to a Master. Use your power. Use it freely like you dream every night. Use your power to save your friend...”

Again, Anakin looked down at his hand and the tool he held within it. He looked to his old master. He found himself thinking of terrible things. He could see himself with the whip, wielding it, unmercifully... and he was enjoying it.

MASTER! Can you hear me!

“Ahsoka?” Anakin said, his mind in a daze.

Master, you need to focus. Don't forget your purpose.

Ahsoka's disembodied voice called from nowhere and everywhere at once. Anakin closed his eyes.

"Thank you, Snips," he whispered. Anakin turned back to the Queen and threw the shock whip at her. She caught it, a scowl upon her face.

"I will save Master Kenobi, but not your way."

"You fool," she hissed, "you weak fool. There is only my way," she said and suddenly Anakin felt himself seized by several unseen hands. They rooted his feet and held his arms. He tried to wrest himself from their grip, but to no success. The Queen walked behind Obi-Wan. She stopped a few feet behind his kneeling frame. She turned to Anakin as she lit the shock whip.

"He wouldn't be here, if not for you. Jedi only make things worse," she sneered then she turned and unleashed the torturous power of her whip.

"Argggh!" Obi-Wan groaned.

"No!" Anakin yelled as he double his efforts to free himself. The Queen's whip rang out again.

"Ugghh!"

"You can not save him. This Jedi is mine," the Queen smirked. She unleashed the whip again. Even on his knees Kenobi was struggling to keep from collapsing into a heap on the floor.

"Ahhggh!"

Focus, Anakin!

"Yes," Anakin whispered to his unseen Padawan. He ceased his struggles against the shades that held him. He closed his eyes and slowed his breathing. He focused on quelling the roiling ball of rage burning in his chest. Yet each strike of the whip seemed to stoke the dark fire that Anakin was so desperately trying to douse.

"It's not real. These are illusions sent to distract me." Anakin took a deep cleansing breath as the last vestiges of his ire retreated from his mind. "I will remain focused on my purpose. I will find you, Obi-Wan."

Everything was quiet when Anakin opened his eyes. Both the Queen and Kenobi were gone. In the darkness, far ahead Anakin could see what looked to be an open door. No

longer hampered by the invisible hands, Anakin made his way to the portal and stepped through. Once on the other side, Anakin found himself in a plush, but familiar apartment.

“This won’t work, Obi-Wan. I won’t let you distract me. Show yourself!” he yelled, but there was no response and certainly no grand revelation.

“Anakin! Well, this is certainly a surprise,” came a soft voice from behind. Anakin knew the voice, he knew its purpose and he knew turning to face it, to face her, risked losing his resolve... and yet...

“No,” he said keeping his back to her. “You’re not real.”

“Ani, who are you talking to?” the voice persisted.

“Stop this, Obi-Wan!” Anakin yelled, his hands tightening into fists. Padmé stepped in front of him and put her hands on his chest.

“Anakin,” she whispered, “no one else is here. We can finally be together.”

“No,” Anakin said, his eyes squeezed shut. Padmé reached out and gently stroked his face. She rose up on her toes and kissed Anakin lightly on the lips. Anakin raised his hands to grasp her, but stop himself just short. Padmé pulled away from their kiss and stared at him in confusion.

“Ani, what’s wrong? I know you have feelings for me,” she said, her hands pressing into his chest. Anakin opened his eyes and looked upon this shade of his wife. He closed his right hand over her two hands.

“I am so sorry,” he whispered, and then he took a moment to steel himself. “But you’re not Padmé.”

“Anakin... you’re hurting me,” Padmé said, but Anakin only squeezed harder, his mechanical hand like a vice around hers. “Anakin!”

“I grow tired of these games!” he yelled as he threw a howling Padmé to the floor. “Show yourself!”

Suddenly, the room, Coruscant and Padmé all disappeared and Anakin was once again plunged into a visible darkness. Anakin spun around to the sound of gloved hands clapping slowly behind him. Obi-Wan appeared to be sitting on a column, though it had no real form. It was a pillar of pure darkness.

“Impressive, young one,” he sneered, which in and of itself threw Anakin. Obi-Wan never sneered.

“Another game,” Anakin growled. Obi-Wan hopped off his platform and landed a few feet in front of Anakin. He smiled and as he did so his eyes shown brightly with a disconcerting red hue.

“No, no more games. You wanted us, we’re here.”

“Us?” Anakin repeated. The Kenobi-but-not-Kenobi made a sweeping gesture to his left. Anakin followed with his eyes and found a second Kenobi bound, hands and feet, floating in a stun field some twenty feet away.

“Obi-Wan!”

“Oh, I wouldn't bother talking to him. I'm the one in control here,” Not-Kenobi said. Anakin ignored him and ran to right below where Obi-Wan hovered.

“Obi-Wan? Can you hear me?” Anakin said as he looked up at his old friend. This Obi-Wan was sullen and bruised; his tunic in rags and his eyes... familiar.

“Obi-Wan,” he repeated. This time Obi-Wan looked down at his former pupil, confusion clearly spread across his wrinkled brow.

“Anakin? I don't understand... How can you,”

“I can explain later,” Anakin started as he surveyed Obi-Wan's bonds. “First we've got to get you down from here.”

“No, Anakin. You don't understand. You're... too late,” Obi-Wan sighed. “But there is still time for you to save yourself. I'm not getting out of this one.”

“You should listen to him, young one,” the Not-Kenobi sang.

“You be quiet!” Anakin snapped through clenched teeth. Anakin searched for a panel, a switch, some sort of mechanized something that was capable of generating the power that held Obi-Wan in his bonds, but he could find nothing.

“Anakin,” Obi-Wan said softly. Anakin looked up at his friend. “You can't help me this time, but you can still help yourself. Leave this place,” he paused, “please.”

“I can't.”

“You never did listen to us,” chimed the Not-Kenobi. “Always so arrogant, always so reckless, always so dangerous. You still haven't learned your place, Padawan.”

Anakin spun around his lightsaber lit.

“How are you holding him?”

“Me? I’m doing no such thing,” Not-Kenobi replied. He began walking in a large slow circle around the two, his face ghoulishly lit by the stun field. “I only tell the truth. It is the truth that holds it him here.”

Anakin advanced on the Not-Kenobi and brought his lightsaber to his neck.

“Stop talking in riddles!”

Not-Kenobi looked up at Obi-Wan.

“For the Chosen One he isn’t very bright, is he?” He directed his attention back to Anakin and the lightsaber at his throat. “You know the truth that holds him here.”

“Jedi only make things worse,” Anakin supplied. “But it’s not the truth and Obi-Wan knows it!”

“Isn’t it,” laughed Not-Kenobi. “Let’s review shall we,” he began. “Siri Tachi dead. Qui-Gon Jinn dead. How many Togruta? A dozen in just the first day if I recall. And then what, one hundred, five hundred? With so many dead it’s hard to keep track. And then of course there’s Satine. Poor Satine and poor all the others, dead because of one Obi-Wan Kenobi, Jedi Knight.”

Anakin turned off his lightsaber and stepped back from Not-Kenobi.

“Those were tragedies,” Anakin admitted, “but they were not his fault. And how many millions have you saved, Master,” Anakin said pleading directly to Obi-Wan. “You did not cause these things to happen, Obi-Wan. You know that. Somewhere inside I know you do. Master, Qui-Gon Jinn was a good man and he taught you everything he knew and you taught me what he taught you and you’ve made me a good man. I’ve been able to help so many people as a Jedi because of your guidance. So, if you don’t trust yourself,” Anakin begged, “then trust me. You are better than this.”

“Anakin,” Obi-Wan started, but Anakin cut him off.

“Trust me.”

For a moment, it seemed to Anakin that Obi-wan would continue to protest, but then his facial expression relaxed and his eyes closed. Slowly, the bonds around him began to dematerialize. The field began to weaken then disappear. Obi-Wan descended to the ground. Anakin helped his friend to his feet.

“Well, this has taken an interesting turn,” the Not-Kenobi said.

“Why are you still here?”

“Don’t you get it, young Skywalker,” he smirked. “I belong here. I never leave.”

“You won’t stop us from leaving.”

“I wouldn’t dream of trying,” he answered with a bow.

“Anakin,” Obi-Wan said weakly, “let’s get out of here.”

“Right,” Anakin started as he looked around. Obi-Wan sighed.

“You do know how to get out?”

“I figured I’d come up with something,” Anakin replied. Obi-Wan smiled.

“Splendid.”

Before Anakin could respond to Obi-Wan’s less than enthusiastic endorsement, he felt a wave of nausea pass over him. The ground under him began to pitch and lean to the point he could no longer walk with Kenobi and both Jedi fell to their knees. Soon the darkness around them was replaced by a more complete darkness that clouded all their senses and just when the disorientation reached its peak, it vanished. Anakin found himself blinking back the brightness above him.

“Master Plo, they’re waking up.”

Anakin finally was able to open his eyes. Above him he saw a beaming Padawan.

“Hey, Snips,” he said, his body feeling more connected to the world with every passing second. Master Plo was helping Obi-Wan sit up.

“Welcome back, Masters.”

“Glad to be back,” Obi-Wan started then he winced in pain. He touched the side of his head and felt a large, painful lump. “At least, I think I’m glad. Anakin, do I want to know why my head is throbbing?”

“That’s a long story...”

“Anakin kicked you in the head,” Ahsoka grinned.

“Ah, I remember now...,” Obi-Wan said as he rubbed his head. “And this is usually how I feel after an Anakin rescue plan.”

“What Master Skywalker has done is not done easily. You should be very proud of your former Padawan,” Master Plo Koon said.

“Indeed I am,” said Kenobi.

Chapter 4: Epilogue

“Nervous?”

“Strangely, yes. I feel like I’m a Padawan again approaching my last trial.”

“Well, Master Windu says if it makes you a better Jedi it is your trial,” Anakin said as he patted Obi-Wan on his shoulder.

“Anakin,” Obi-Wan began his tone serious. “We haven’t really talked yet about... what you did for me. The things I said... the things you saw... I,”

“Nothing’s changed. It’s already forgotten,” Anakin interrupted, waving off Obi-Wan’s concern. Obi-Wan gave a curt nod.

“Thank you,” he said then both Jedi turned their attention to the grand doors in front of them. They stepped forward and the doors slid open revealing a full assembly of the Jedi High Council, though some Masters attended via holo-transmission. Anakin remained in the back of the room while Obi-Wan walked to the center of the floor, his Jedi cloak wafting slightly behind. He bowed.

“Masters.”

“Good it is to see you, Obi-Wan,” Master Yoda opened. Master Windu leaned forward.

“Master Kenobi, do you stand before us seeking re-admittance into the Jedi Order?”

“I do, Master Windu,” Obi-Wan said graciously. “With your permission, there is something I would like to say before the Council.”

Master Windu leaned back in his seat.

“Of course.”

“Masters,” Obi-Wan began, “as you know I try to live by the Jedi Code, though it has not always been easy... but I believe that the choices I’ve made I have always done for the Order.” Obi-Wan paused, clearly uncomfortable. “After my experience on Kadavo, I thought I was in control, that it was best to suppress any remnants of my time there. I worked hard to deceive myself,” Obi-Wan said, his gaze falling to the floor, “and to deceive you... After the loss of the Duchess... I realized... my mistake. My thoughts became... more than clouded... they were muddled and... dark. I honestly began to believe that it was the Order that caused the suffering I had seen. I felt my only choice was to leave.”

“Dangerous it is when self-doubt takes over,” Master Yoda commented. “Dangerous indeed.”

“Yes, and were it not for the faith of this Council and the extraordinary efforts of Masters Plo, Skywalker and Padawan Tano, I fear my errors in judgment would have had more... permanent results.”

“I still sense a great deal of conflict in you,” said Master Mundi. Obi-Wan nodded.

“Yes, I don’t deny it, but with time and patience I believe I will find a resolution.”

“I think this experience has made you a wiser man,” Master Fisto interjected, “and a stronger Jedi. I see no reason why he should not be returned to our ranks.”

“Agreed then we are,” said Master Yoda. Master Windu nodded.

“Obi-Wan Kenobi, this Council hereby reinstates your status as a Jedi Knight of our Order. You are given back all of the rank and privileges afforded to you by that title. May the Force be with you.”

Again, Kenobi bowed and then he and Anakin left the Council chambers.

“Well, that wasn’t so bad,” Anakin said as the two walked down the corridor. “Of course, some anxiety would only be natural, after all, it’s not like you’ve had to beg to get back in to the Order before.”

“Actually...” Obi-Wan said with a half smile. “The situation may have come up before...”

Anakin stopped in his tracks and grabbed Obi-Wan by the arm.

“Wait, are you telling me you’ve left the Order before?” he asked. Obi-Wan gave a slightly bashful, yet confirming look. Anakin shook his head. “I have got to hear this story,” he said as they resumed their walk.

“First of all, I was much younger. I had just begun serving as Master Qui-Gon’s Padawan. We had been sent to a planet in the midst of a civil war...”

FIN.