

## **Lineage: Living in the Shadows**

By William Holmes

Mira Darsant knelt before her father's sarcophagus sobbing. She was finally alone with the ghosts of her thoughts. It had been a long day representing the family, as those who had known her father paid their respects. It was only two days ago that a terrorist attack on Verkuyal's Imperial Governor ended his life. Ulric Darsant threw his body in front of the energy beam that would have taken Governor Parco Ein. Her father died protecting the life of those in his charge. He died an Imperial hero.

The young dark haired girl, dressed in her formal military dress uniform, was coming to grips with letting go of the single most influential person in her life. Ulric Darsant was the quintessential soldier. He served in both the Republic and Imperial Navies with distinction.

Mira had always wanted to serve as a soldier in her father's footsteps. However, very few women served in frontline combat forces. Most women were delegated to logistical support roles. The irony of the matter, though, was that her father pulled to have her train in the psy-ops division of the Imperial Army, where she studied non-human culture and language. She now found herself in an academic teaching position at the Carrida Academy.

"Now Lt. Darsant. A warrior's death deserves no sorrow. We are here to remember his courage and valor," a calm almost velvet-like voice surprised her. "He knew when he accepted the weight of the uniform that this day would come. A soldier, like your father, would prefer meeting his end on his feet."

Mira turned around, surprised, and a bit ashamed by her emotional outburst. An Imperial officer does not show that kind of emotion. Doing so in front of others shows weakness. She could hear her father's voice. "Mira, a soldier is always in control of their emotions. Your enemies will use your emotions against you."

The tall and well-built blue skinned Chiss stood before her. His impeccably white grand admiral uniform pressed with precision. His red almost glowing eyes met her softer ice blue eyes. She instinctively lowered her eyes in embarrassment for a second, and then snapped to attention and saluted. "Grand Admiral Thrawn...Your excellency. My father

would be honored by your presence.”

Thrawn moved forward, slowly with catlike movements. He stood before the armored body of the old soldier. “Your father served in our forces under my command with distinction. I am just a warrior paying respect to another warrior’s valor. You may dispense with the formalities lieutenant,” the Grand Admiral said.

She had only heard stories of this being standing before her. Her father treated him as a god. He said Thrawn was always a step ahead of his enemies. *It was like he could read their minds*, he had told her.

“Lieutenant?” Thrawn's voice sent chills up her spine. She thought she could almost feel his presence in her mind. She could not find words to respond. He continued almost not expecting her to answer. “Your work has come to my attention. You recently submitted your dissertation for review. I find your work not the normal dribble that comes out of the Academy. Your knowledge of Galactic culture and linguistics is thorough. I really was drawn to your use of cultural pacification methods, rather relying on the Tarkin Doctrine.”

The young girl was amazed he was even aware of her academic work. “Thank you sir.”

“I have a proposition for you Lt. Darsant. I am commissioning a field combat unit that will need your skills. I have read your file and I see you have applied for combat assignment ten times and excelled in heavy weapons. So I see desire and training. The question is, will you take your own destiny, or simply live in your father’s shadow?”