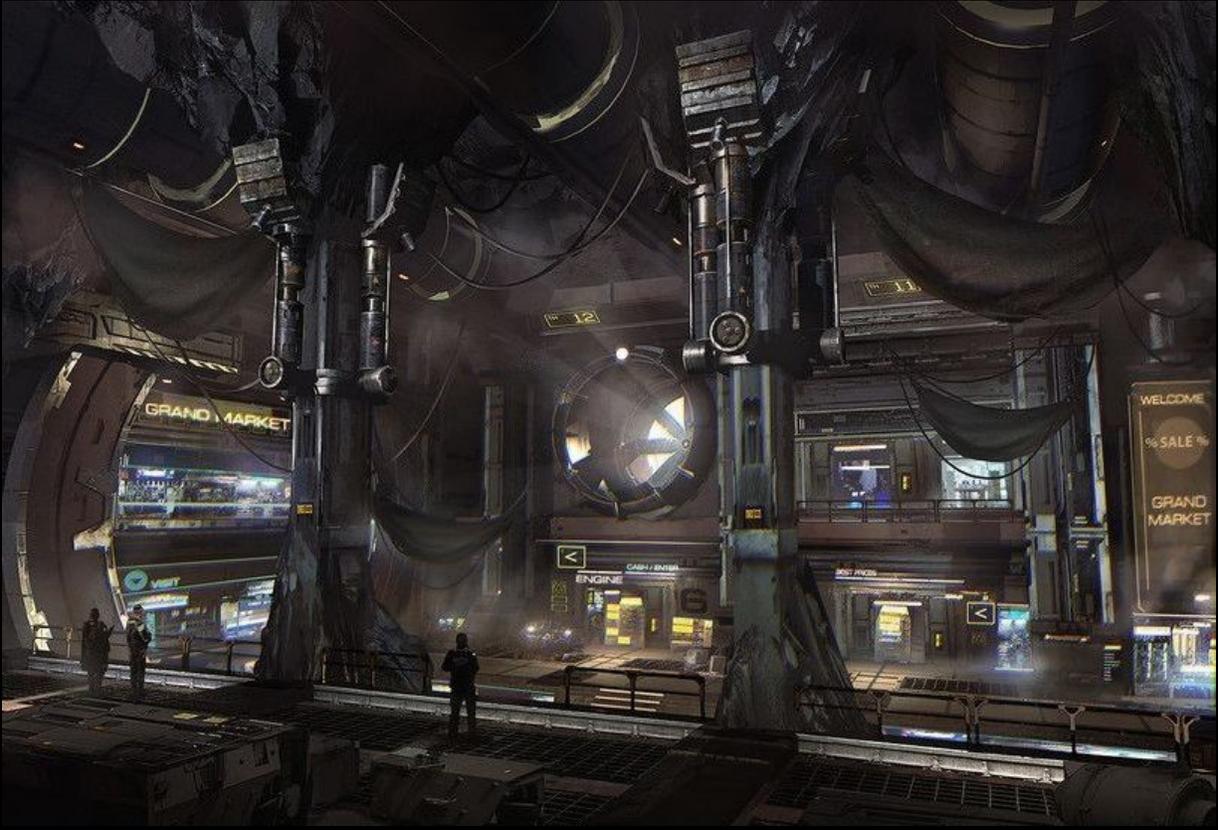


Public Trading Hub- Upper Levels  
Meridian Space Station  
Wild Space



It was fascinating to watch her work. The Force swirled like a twisting current around the minds Lucine manipulated. She easily convinced the docking officials to overlook inspections on the *GX1 War Table*<sup>1</sup>. She had the support of Walsh's Code Replicator before landing, and Jael Chira's Mechu-deru on the droids. However, that support seemed unnecessary with the story she gave and how it was presented. The Force wasn't even used in some occurrences, only to help push those who seemed to be overly cautious or skeptical.

Subtlety was key, at least until they entered the correctional facility past the upper levels. There were too many civilians. Instead, they posed as high security armed escorts of the Liberation Front. The story is they were sent to retrieve and escort Kendra Icasta to Daggio Mouk. Of course this wouldn't hold up for long, as when Kendra is informed of the escorts

<sup>1</sup> Creon's personal ship. See Snapshot for details.

she'll deny getting word. If the team can at least get to the correctional facility before they are exposed, then the O.T.F.<sup>2</sup> can go loud and do their work.

"We never received word of an armed escort."

"Darling, I need you to turn on your brain. Icasta's presence here is classified. Your leadership is aware, but that doesn't always trickle down. We have our clearance codes, let's not waste anymore time," Lucine replied. She was addressing the control point head security guard. Past the control point was the turbolift that led to the Correctional facility. There was a civilian turbolift for civilians, but it went straight to the lower level hub. The civilian turbolift remained as an alternate route with a bottom up insertion, but it would be less covert.

"Of course ma'am. Just let us make a quick check with up top, and we'll get you and your team on their way."

"That won't be necessary," she says with a dismissing wave of her hand, "You don't want to hold up a priority task for superiors."

"You're right, I don't want to hold up a priority task for superiors."

"You **will** give us access to the turbolift."

The security guard nodded and made a hand sign to the others. They deactivated a hologram shield that held the entrance to the turbolift. Lucine smiled and thanked the soldier before addressing the rest of the team to start moving.



<sup>2</sup> Odanite Task Force. See Optional Links for details.



The turbolift screeched on its brakes. The sudden impact made everyone in it tremble and refocus their balance.

“Guess they figured us out,” Tarvitz commented.

“Took them long enough,” Falgorth said with a grunt.

“Walsh, Jael, can you get us going?” Creon asked.

There was a droid access port next to a small console displaying the elevation level they stopped on. Jael’s BB unit connected to it, and relayed a series of beeps and whistles.

"It's gonna be some work," Jael translated. Both he and Walsh knelt down next to the BB Unit. Jetsam pulled out a datapad and computer probe and linked it with the BB Unit, whereas Jael reached out with the Force to forge a similar link.

"Everyone else, keep your head on a swivel. Someone will be waiting for us," Creon ordered. Those who had blasters drew them and kept them at the low-ready. Those who didn't have blasters had lightsabers, and kept them pointed downward in their palms.

"Can you- Oh no, you just did that. Nice," Walsh said while staring at a collage of software programs on his datapad screen. Shortly after, the hum of the turbolift started up again and they were back in motion.

"They're already starting to install a different administration program," Jael notified. It seemed that the messages the BB was reading was also clear in the half-sephi's mind. The droid moved irregularly. It's probe twist and turned in high speeds with short stops. The movement seemed random on the outside, but the team knew Jael was using his droid as the middle-man for taking over control of the turbolift.

"I can't fight that. If they use alternate software, then we will have to hit that one with a different virus," Walsh replied.

"They'll likely use a third and so on, keeping us in a stalled loop until someone comes to blow us up."

"All right, different plan. Dral, cut me a hole in the floor. Big enough to fall through," Creon said. "We need Walsh's Id9 to descend and find us an opening. Tarvitz and I will follow, secure a platform, and use the Force to pull you guys to us safely."

"His name is Goddard," Walsh spat.

"I'm not calling it that," Creon responded.

The large dark-skinned medic shivered at the plan, "Ooo. Terry don't like falling when there's nothing to hang on to."

"You can always hang on to me," Lucine replied with a wink.

"Uhgn uhgn, little red. Terry's wife is handy with a vibro knife, and Terry likes to sleep without fear at night."

After Dral finished creating a hole in the turbolift floor with his plasma cutter, Goddard slowly descended in the vast darkness of the turbolift shaft. There was a brief pause before Jetsam

confirmed that it found a door to the level of the correctional facility. Tarvtiz and Creon both hopped down in the hole and activated their boot thrusters for a safe descent. They stopped when they found footing along a thin floorboard landing that is used to connect to the turboshaft upon arrival. The two then pried open the door with a joined effort of telekinesis. The hallway opened up to an immediate security force making their way towards them. The armed men and security droids took positions and immediately opened fire.

Creon drew out his blade and called for Tarvtiz to stand ready. "Lucine's first," he relayed in his helmet, "We've got contact. Steady but quick!"

Lucine twirled in the hole of the turbolift and was falling freely until Tarvtiz' grip on her slowed it only enough to make the descent upon the same platform safe. The Arconan woman thanked him and then joined Creon in deflecting blaster fire with her saber. Next was Dral, who's heavy repeater changed the enemy focus to taking cover. He activated his personal shield generator and set up his repeater's tripod in a way to where the barrel extended slightly past the shield's wall.

As the rest of the team made their way in, the hallway was clear of Collective troops. Those who weren't taken in the fight retreated around a corner hallway shortly after taking fire from a heavy repeater. The hallway itself was a tunnel that split into two directions in a "T" shape.

Jael's curious BB wheeled itself towards the openings with the team following slowly behind. Once it reached the end, a lockdown alarm system went off, with flashing red lights that came from the roof. The BB peered it's head and yanked it back just as a blaster shot went off towards it. The unit gave agitated noises and drew out multiple tiny mechanical limbs, each contained a small defense weapon such as a taser and small torch.

"Calm down, buddy. Did you capture numbers and positions?" Jael asked.

Everyone took a step back as the hallway opening projected a energy-based blast door from wall to wall.

"They're trying to trap us," Creon noted and looked back to see a similar wall projection at the door to the turbolift shaft.

"You're up little buddy," Jetsam said to his ID9. The droid hovered its way to the roof and cut its way in. There was no droid terminal access in their immediate vicinity. Their main hope of continuing relied on Goddard's success. Its owner monitored its photoreceptors while the rest of the team gathered to analyze the BB's hologram snapshot.

"By the time Walsh's Id9 does its thing-," Creon began.

"Ah ah, Goddard!" Jetsam interrupted. Terry bumped him in the back of the head and brought a finger to his lips to "Shh" the demolition specialist.

"By the time these barriers are down, we can expect reinforcements on both ends. We need an access terminal to get a proper map to upload to Mia, for now we stay together. I want heavy support on the left flank while we execute *Jetstream* on the right."

Both Tarvitz and Jetsam grinned at Creon's plan. It wasn't the most effective strategy, but it was flashy and fun. They both rehearsed it many times, and they were excited at the first chance to see it in a real fight.

The first barrier flickered out. Two more still remained in the openings to each hall. The team slowly made their way to the middle opening between the two. Creon's prediction had been correct, there were reinforcements on both sides.

"Get ready," Creon growled as he loaded a grenade launcher magazine in his WESTAR-M5 and set it on the ground next to him. He looked to Walsh and gave him his personal shield generator. Walsh proceeded to activate it and grabbed a handful of cut detonation tape strips he kept in his pocket, as well as his detonator. The rest drew sabers and aimed their respective weapons in both directions according to their ordered destination.

"Goddard, buddy, if you can, only deactivate the rightmost hall. Good copy?" He said while checking the commlink at his wrist. Text on the display screen confirmed the droids orders.

"It can do that?" Tarvitz asked.

Jetsam replied with a shrug, "Maybe. He thinks he can. I think."

The shield dropped followed with a mass wave of incoming fire. Creon threw his hands up to project a barrier with the Force. The heavy brunt of the bolts brought Creon to his knees and the barrier broke. It took the first wave, with the second wave of cover fire coming from Dral, Fletcher, and Creon's M5. Tarvitz pulled Walsh into the air with the Force, and threw him down the hall overhead. As he flew, he released his fistful of detonation tape. They fluttered in a spread line down the hall like leaflets from an aircraft. Jetsam landed with a roll and pressed a button on his detonator that sent a daisy chain of explosions down the hall and a trail of smoke like a jetstream. The sound of blaster fire continued along with the moving humms of lightsabers. As the smoke began to clear, however, silence filled the hallway with the presence of the team approaching Walsh.

"That was awesome!" He cried out with a high-five to Tarvitz.

"Terminal!" Jael called out with his BB unit rolling up.

"Leave the left side on, if possible," Creon called. "Stack up in case they activate it themselves. We'll stay as long as we can to get the map, then let them chase us guerilla style."

"Uploading now," Jael called.

"Mia<sup>3</sup>, you copy?" Creon asked.

"Yes boss," the droid called from back inside the *GX1 War Table*. Once the download had completed, the analysis droid opened it in the Electronic Warfare Suite terminal and programmed the schematics data to be uploaded to each of the O.T.F.'s HUD helmets and comlink displays. After the upload started, the droid turned to the vessel's main door at the sound of aggressive knocks with a voice demanding to open up. Mia's emergency protocol was to insure all O.T.F. intelligence was not to be compromised. The shuttle's doors wouldn't remain locked for long unless she answered, and the warfare suite system was impossible to avoid.

"Sir, I have company. What are your orders?"

Creon cursed to himself as he watched the Collective security forces calling in on comlinks and setting up to engage. The maps were uploaded, and everyone but Creon looked to it to get a picture of where they were and where they need to go. They needed to move, else they will be crunched up again and eventually taken out.

"Creon," Lucine said as she looked up from her comlink display.

"Yes?"

"I need to go down that hallway," she said and pointed to the shielded direction filled with Collective soldiers.

"Negative, that fight is too heavy for us. We need to get moving."

"Boss, orders?" Mia called again.

"Let me split off then, I have something important for Arcona I need to get in that direction."

"Didn't you tell me you only needed Kendra?!" Creon replied with stress in his tone.

<sup>3</sup> Creon's droid. See Snapshot.

“Sir?!” Mia called in again.

“Take off, Mia!” Creon shouted, “Do **NOT** let the War Table be compromised. Call for the *Black Harbinger*<sup>4</sup>, we’ll manage.”

“It will be quick, Creon, I promise. Besides, you’ll always know where I am,” Lucine said as she lightly shook the shepherd chip attached to her armor.

Creon didn’t like this. This entire mission was *for* her and supporting Arcona. If she were to be compromised, everyone knew Creon wouldn’t leave without her. She was both a mission priority and Creon cared for her personally. There would be no arguing, and it would only waste more time. Creon assembled the rest of his team and took off down their hallway. Lucine waved slowly as her body slowly began to fade out of sight through the Force within the small hase of smoke residue.



“I’m not 100%, but the armor setup is familiar. Best bet is they are the same team that took Kordall on Formos,” Kendra Icasta stated while looking at a camera display screen. The screen revealed the O.T.F. forces moving down a hallway and engaging with the Technocratic soldiers. The Shikari leader was alongside Rutgar-4, the prison warden of the Meridian. There was also a hologram display of an umbaran female on a console terminal just under the screen.

“I have claims that they posed as escorts to retrieve you. If they intend to release the prisoners, our upper market is going to run into some trouble. Do you require support?” the hologram woman asked.

“Negative,” Rutgar-4 reported, “No one has escaped the Meridian correctional facility, and no one ever will.”

“Kendra?”

“I’ve got my Shikari Huntresses forming an ambush at a choke point, but i’ve lost a few of my girls to them before. Just to be sure, having your support, Sencara, would be helpful.”

<sup>4</sup> Main vessel for the O.T.F. See Optional Links for details.

“Say no more,” Sencara replied with a growing smile before ending transmission.



Lucine came around the corner into another hallway of inmates behind energy-based blast doors. Their pet calls were silent, but their looming eyes screamed with desire and approval. She ignored them, and kept an eye out for another technocratic soldier or droid that could pop its way out of a corner at any moment.

*Not that way...*

Those words were in her mind but not her own. Although not audible, the “voice” still registered as familiar to her. She ignored it. Many of these prisoners were Force Users, and would try to reach out for the chance at freedom.

*Not that way, Lucine...*

Hearing her name made her stop in her stop. She didn't like it being well known. If someone was able to call out to her by name, then it was worth investigating. Lucine reached out in the Force to search for who had spoken to her. The familiar presence came, and was a massive beacon in comparison to the many others within this prison. She followed it, turning around in various corridors and hallways. She stopped short of a corner leading to another hallway due to an incoming patrol. The presence she was following was close. She peered over out of the corner to just slightly get a count. A good five soldiers with security droids. She would have to retreat. Engaging that many soldiers to satisfy her curiosity wasn't worth the risk.

The sound of blaster fire filled the hall as she turned to leave. She stopped and looked again, and saw only one soldier standing. The soldier then turned his blaster rifle to aim at himself and fired. Lucine couldn't believe her eyes. It wasn't the fact that the patrol went randomly on a suicide pact. She knew that the one who was calling to her did this, and had a great mastery over minds through the Force. She cautiously came down the corner. The trail in her senses grew closer to a specific holding cell.

“Hello, Lucine. You're looking as radiant as ever,” he said.

Areticus Altainatus, a colleague of hers within the Inquisitorius. He was a holocron hunter, and a professor at the Shadow Academy. Now he was a prisoner of the Collective. His eyes didn't look directly at hers as he stood. He kept a straight and formal posture, befitting of the fallen aristocrat. His eyes, however, were something of note to her. Normally they were blue, but now a milky silver cloud has washed over them.

"You're blind," she states.

"I disagree. Of course the Collective took my physical sight, but I see better than I ever have before thanks to the Force. As I said, you look radiant."

She couldn't tell if he was complimenting her or not with the word 'radiant'.

*I need for you to release me, if you would be so kind.*

*I'm a little busy at the moment, perhaps we could arrange this meeting later time. You have my office holonet number, don't you?*

*If you don't, Creon's life could be in great danger...*



"Hold up, we have a problem," Walsh called out from looking at his wrist link.

"Defensive positions," Creon directed to his movement formation. Each of the team scanned their surroundings and took up what cover and concealment they could. Creon came over to Walsh who took a knee and held out his datapad. The screen showed a camera display of a dome opening. Inside the domed area, Shikari Huntresses and various correctional facility soldiers and security droids were staged.

"Goddard got into their camera systems. What we're seeing now is a round opening. Every cell block section has a single path that all converge to this place. The north-eastern most hallway leads straight to the Warden's command central. If Kendra isn't already there, i'll definitely be able to find her."

Creon took a small pause to assess the situation. Judging by the map on his HUD, there was no alternate route to the Warden's station. From what the different camera angles could reveal, they funneled a trap within the open area. The Shikar Huntresses were above the ground in different elevation structures along the wall. The dome itself was guessed to be about six meters high, with a radius of around five meters.

"You said that each of those openings are from different cell sections?"

"Yessir," Walsh answered.

"Good thing we brought our chips then. I think I have a plan."

"Oi, about that mate. I forgot mine."

Creon slowly turned his helmet to look at Walsh's nervous grin. He could tell Creon had an unamused look from behind that helmet. "No worries," Jetsam assured, "I'll just let my little ol scanner here act as a beacon for you. It would just be on a separate display than the rest."

With a long sigh, Creon nodded. No sense in arguing over it now. He addressed his team through their respective comlinks, telling them each to split up in various cell blocks. The ambushers would more than likely expect his team to enter together. Splitting them up and coming through different sections would give the element of some surprise. However, it would risk leaving his team members to avoid capture on their own. He would have to place trust in them, and the Force. They were capable enough, Creon believed. This was the most effective and most professional team Creon had the pleasure of working with, even with a few discrepancies like Walsh forgetting his chip.

"Alright team, listen up. I have a plan," Creon called. He asked Walsh to activate each of their chips, connect them to his scan pulse, and have it be displayed on his HUD. What stood out was one of the registered chips was separate from the group, but not too far away. It identified to be Lucine. When he cross-referenced her pulse scan with the uploaded map, it looked as if she was in the contraband storage room.

*What would she need from there?* Creon wondered.



The metallic singing resonated within the entire room, both in sound and in the Force. The Sith Sword held a dense aura of the Dark Side, to which every Force Sensitive in the facility could feel its subtle chill. After switching out his prisoner jumpsuit with his normal attire, and having felt the Sith Sword, Areticus felt at ease. He had become more inclined to the Light Side of the Force recently, but the power within his blade reminded Areticus to avoid neglecting the Dark Side.

"I was told only the elders within the Brotherhood could have the privilege," Lucine remarked in reference to his blade.

"It was a gift from the Shadow Academy. I was-*am* one of its most prestigious graduates and employees," Areticus replied.

"What do you plan to do now?"

Areticus took a moment to focus through the Force of his surroundings. He projected the extra sense and focused on the items within the room. He could connect objects that held significant impact to their users, and was able to identify who those items belonged from their user's imprint in the Force. His mind wandered and filtered through the weave of equipment until he came upon a few things that held a familiar signature. He slowly walked to each, and drew them from their containment pods.

"I need to retrieve my apprentice, and my monster," Areticus answered as he took out a lightsaber from the pod.

"You told me that your release would keep Creon from danger."

"That I did. The Force has shown me what I must do. Right now, it's retrieving Ilios and Lo-Kain. We will be there when the time is right."

“Then you’ll be getting them on your own. I can’t afford anymore detours. If this is some roush you’re doing to get out of here, I’ll find you.”

Areticus smiled with a soft chuckle, “Of that, my dear, I have no doubt.”



The calm serene pause in waiting for their prey’s arrival came to an abrupt halt from a large flash of light. The Shikari Huntresses and soldiers all shouted from the blinding flash<sup>5</sup> that erupted in the center of the room. A *thoompshhh* sound followed shortly after along with a discharge of the room<sup>6</sup>. The lights flickered out, the systems went down, and the droids dropped to the floor in an inactive state.

Individual members of the O.T.F. funneled through into the dome complex. Each one carried with them a single denton charge explosive<sup>7</sup>. They were either pitched by hand or slung with the Force to various areas along the dome wall near the huntresses. After each were placed, Creon gestured a hand signal to Walsh and each of the charges exploded in unison. Dral’s repeater mowed down soldiers who stood and the inactive droids in order to *keep* them inactive. The majority of the Shikari Huntresses were swift enough to avoid the blasts from the charges. They each landed just a few short meters away from the O.T.F. team. With their eyesight slowly recovering from the earlier flash, they renounced their light bows in favor of stun batons and vibro knucklers. Each of the Jedi in the group drew their sabers, along with Fletcher and his Z6 Baton, and engaged the Shikari.

Terry swung overhead at one of the Kiffars, who ducked underneath and replied with a slap to the thigh with her baton. Terry dropped to a knee with a growl and then took a hard hook at the side of his helmet from the Huntresses’ knuckler.

“Thank you doll, may Terry please have another?” he asked his opponent.

The huntress snarled and brought her baton down overhead only to be blocked by Terry’s own baton in kind. Terry then mustered his strength and threw himself at the woman, who dodged the tackle with a retreating backflip. She primed the dart shooter at her wrist and fired

<sup>5</sup> Tarvit’s Blinding Force Power.

<sup>6</sup> Jetsam’s Wrist Rocket EMP

<sup>7</sup> From Jetsam’s Denton Explosive Kit

at a location she deemed to be exposed. Terry stood up and wobbled a little bit, appearing disoriented. She smiled to herself; she had him now. She walked towards the O.T.F. medic who fell to one knee before her. She raised her baton to deliver the final blow, but was caught by complete surprise by Terry's swift interjection with his Z6 at her gut. The huntress woman was blasted a few meters back, and her spine crunched at a platform that caused the back to bend further than she was suppose to. The huntress fell to the floor, crippled and unconscious.

"Woo hooo! Did you see that?!" Fletcher called, "She took off into hyperspace, bish flew so fast."

Terry Fletcher then was thrown off his feet by the impact of a blaster bolt down one of the hallways.

"Medic down!" Tarvitz called. Each of them looked, and then the team slowly disengaged to retreated to their casualty.

"Where did the shot come fro-" Dral asked before another shot took him down as well.

"Spread out! Take cover!" Creon shouted. More blaster fire began to travel through the halls and into the dome. Reinforcements began to to march in every hallway, and the three huntresses that remained went for their lightbows. Just shortly before the Collective soldiers and security droids could reach the domed area, each entrance to the dome was shut off by the activation of an energy-based blast door.

"Bloody sithspit!" Walsh cheered after looking up from his comlink.

"Was that?" Creon asked.

"Yup," Walsh said with a grin.

"Alright... I'll call him Goddard then."

The only entrance to a hallway that remained unshielded was the north-eastern most direction. It led to the Warden's command center, where Creon witnessed a squad of droids funnel out of the center door. Behind them was Kendra Icasta herself with an HK droid that looked somewhat different than the other units encountered on the Meridian. Creon guessed from his mission debrief prior to deployment that *this* was the warden of the Meridian Correctional Facility.

His attention quickly snapped back by the Force to deflect an incoming shot from a huntress lightbow. The arrow reflected back from his saber to the huntress and caused her to drop lifelessly on the floor. Kendra sent a warning shot with her slug to cause everyone to stop as

the security droids began to fill the room. They took up positions around the dome to surround the huddled O.T.F. team. Their weapons were aimed but they held their fire.

From the hallways countless Collective security personnel and droids gathered as close as they could without coming into contact with the shields. Creon noticed an umbaran female amongst them who held a sniper rifle alongside her hit. She looked over at Terry and Dral before giving Creon a knowing wink.

“Intruders, surrender or you will be terminated,” Rutgar-4 warned.

“Please tell me you have a plan?” Jael asked.

Creon didn’t have a plan. They were outnumbered, outgunned, and had no feasible means of escape. Creon checked his scan pulse. Everyone was still alive, thankfully, including Fletcher and Falgorth. Then he remembered Lucine’s still being nearby.

“Lucine,” Creon called into his helmet, “Could really use your help right now.”

“You have 5 seconds to comply or we will open fire,” Rutgar-4 announced.

“Always having to clean up after you boys,” Lucine gested.

“4”

“This is serious Lucine, we’re about to be compromised.”

“3”

“I’m aware, sweetheart. My friends should be there to assist you shortly.”

“2”

“Friends? What friends? And we don’t enough time for ‘shortly’.”

Before Rutgar-4 could finish with “1”, screams came from one of the tunnel hallways. The droids and soldiers from that hallway turned and aimed blasters. A body was thrown into the energy-based blast door<sup>8</sup>. He screamed in pain as the back half of his body molted and cauterized. The fresh corpse then dropped to the floor and smoldered from the ground. A crimson saber whirled like a spinning fan in the chaotic crowd. Then from another hallway,

<sup>8</sup> Telekinesis from Lo-Kain

someone announced that the inmate cells were deactivated. Every security droid and soldier turned from the dome and scattered to detain the newly released prisoners.

“Jael, Walsh, the droids are yours! Tarvitz, go for the Shikari. Icasta is mine. **MOVE** while we still have a chance!” Creon roared.

Creon activated his lightsaber and shield generator and used the Force to perform a large leap towards Kendra. His movement caused the security droids to raise their blasters at him while Jael tore off various parts with the Force. Walsh followed in kind with firing his pistol and a wrist laser. When Creon landed past the small crowd of security droids, he performed a barrel roll and brought up his arm in a shielding manner to generate a barrier with the Force. Kendra’s slugs tore through the barrier and threw Creon on his back from the impact. He didn’t have time to assess if the wounds had been fatal or not. Instead, he numbed his nerves and reached out with his arm to use the Force and yank the DE-21 from Kendra’s grasp. She drew out her electro whip in response as Creon gained his footing.

The crack of the whip and it’s current slithered in the air. The weapon was able to go through Creon’s shield, but was helpful in the fact that random bolts that came his way would dissipate. Creon focused on his duel and numbing the pain from the two shots that jabbed at his body. The rounds didn’t go deep, as his armor was able to take most of the impact. Still, he was wounded, and would have blood escaping had it not been for his control over his body. Another crack of Kendra’s whip came at Creon’s left side, and the Jedi replied with a twirl of his saber. He hoped that eventually the whip would connect with the blade, causing it to break and the electrical current to be absorbed into the blade. His plan was foiled, however, as Kendra’s skill to feint was better than Creon’s ability to riposte. She timed her attacks in such a way that electrical currents would barely reach Creon even as the whip withdrew. These currents gave minor shocks to his body and shorted out his shield generator. He pulled his pistol from its holster with the Force and fired a series of shots at her. Kendra responded with a side roll and firing a poisoned dart. With a warning from the Force, Creon was able to glance his body to have the dart hit one of the plates on his armor and fall to the ground.

The Shikari leader pulled out a baton with her left hand, and fitted a knuckler in her right. Creon strained himself, but responded in the standing posture of a Soresu adherent. Kendra rushed and shoved her baton in a thrusting motion to Creon’s chest. Creon spun his blade and cut through the baton, but was unable to bring one of his arms back up. He looked to see Kendra gripping his wrist before she delivered a punch to the helmet with her knuckler, then swept him to the ground with her leg. His saber clattered to the ground and deactivated. Kendra proceeded to kick off Creon’s helmet, causing him to bleed from his nose from the impact.

“Oh so you *are* that guy I shot on Formos. Man, you don’t know when to quit.” She grinned as

she brought up her first to deliver an ending blow, but looked to her left and rolled to her right. A blade flickered in Creon's vision above him. Kendra pulled herself up from her dodge and unintentionally bumped into a Zabrak that loomed behind her. The monster grabbed her by the throat and slammed her to the ground in a choke slam, and then sent his fist to her temple and knocked her out cold.

"We cannot delay, grab who you can." a muffled voice called as Creon's consciousness began to slowly fade. At some point he barely woke to feel his body being carried and shaken. Muffled noises of blaster fire and angry shouting were everywhere. He could however hear Lucine for a flicker of a moment.

"Where did they keep your ship?" she asked.

"I found it," Jael responded, "A Sheathipede, right?"

Creon then blacked out again.



### **Lo-Kain's Sheathipede-class Transport Shuttle Hyperspace**

"So who are they?" Creon asked. He was leaning against a corner, cramped in a tight ship that swirled in hyperspace.

"Colleagues from the Inquisitorius. Plagueans," Lucine replied as she slowly took off the various pieces to his armor.

"Former" Areticus corrected from the co-pilot seat, "In regards to the latter."

"More Sith," Creon groaned. He winced as the chestplate was removed and pinched his wound.

"Sorry. But we can trust them. We wouldn't have made it out alive without their help. They

even secured Kendra who is tied up near the hangar door.”

Creon looked around to see who else was present. A Zabrak and the man who spoke earlier sat in the pilot and co-pilot seats. Jael and his BB unit were present, along with Tarvitz overlooking the navigation console. He turned his head to see Walsh giving Creon a thumbs up and a smile with Goddard at his side. Dral and Terry were also laying down in opposite corners of him. Their armors had been removed and looks as if their wounds were tended to.

“Anything else I can get you guys?” A Chiss asked from around the corner.

“No, lios. Thank you,” Lucine replied.

Everyone seemed to be accounted for, and the mission to capture Kendra had been complete. Creon could finally relax. He wasn’t entirely comfortable in his position with two Sith governing his destination, two of his men down, and a dangerous Collective leader only bound by zipties. He would just need to place his trust in everyone. Tarvitz even gave a nod of assurance when he saw Creon coming to.

Creon then looked to Lucine, “Darling.”

“Yes, Creon?”

“You need to tell me *everything*...”