

Ikarri led the way through the dimly lit corridors of Respite Station, the emergency lighting flickering as they explored the facility. The air was heavy with an ominous silence, broken only by the distant hum of machinery. The team moved in a tight formation, each member alert and ready for any sign of trouble. Ikarri's mind, however, was focused on the Force, reaching out to sense any disturbances within the station.

As they approached a control terminal, with a momentary focus, Ikarri reached out within the Force, activating the terminal and triggering a holographic map displaying the layout of the station. Hector approached, taking a few seconds to study it intently, pointing out potential locations they could be ambushed. The squad set out, moving with precision, guided by Ikarri's instincts and Hector's tactical knowledge. The War Droid followed closely, its mechanical steps echoing through the hallways of the station as it trailed behind.

The station's interior was eerily deserted, devoid of the usual bustling activity that one would expect. It seemed frozen in time, as if the very essence of life had been sucked out of it. The team encountered no resistance as they made their way deeper into the heart of the station.

Ikarri couldn't shake the feeling that they were being watched. His senses heightened, and he motioned for the team to halt. The War Droid's photoreceptors glowed with a faint red hue as it scanned the surroundings. A low hum emanated from the droid, signaling its readiness for any potential threat.

Suddenly, a metallic voice echoed through the corridor, sending a chill down Ikarri's spine. "Intruders detected. Authorization required for further access."

Hector stepped forward, his expression determined. "Override code Alpha-Tango-Zero-Nine."

The metallic voice paused for a moment before responding, "Override accepted. Access granted." The two Force Users exchanged glances before proceeding ahead. Ikarri kept his voice low enough that only Hector heard him speak, "I can't sense what lies ahead."

As they reached what appeared to be the central control room, the atmosphere grew tense. The doors slid open, the team's maglite flickering as if having difficulty piercing the shadows of the room. At the center of the room, a figure stood, cloaked in darkness. The air seemed to crackle with an unseen energy that made it difficult to focus on the figure.

"I was hoping to finish this undisturbed," the figure spoke, its voice echoing with unnatural resonance. "I would recommend that you turn back and report you found nothing of consequence," the figure spoke without lifting his eyes and waved his hand as he spoke.

The entire squad seemed to hesitate, several of the troopers moving to turn and begin walking away. Hector let out a low growl as he recognized the effects of a Force User. In a moment, the Kiffar raised his own hand in return, reaching out within the Force to suppress the opposition's influence. The shadows immediately thinned for a moment as the two met in an invisible clash of wills.

Ikarri's hand tightened around the hilt of his Lightsaber, squinting to try and focus his vision to get a look at the individual. Standing in the center of the hub, the figure's hair was tied back in a short braid, his hair silver and white even down to his beard. Ikarri recognized the tell-tale signs of a fellow Epicanthix. He struggled to act even as his senses were screaming for him to act. He struggled to spit out the words but knew any information would be of value should even one of them escape the encounter. "Who are you? What have you done to this station?"

The figure stepped forward, with a sigh of resignation. He raised his hand with a flick that sent Hector and the squad of marines they'd brought tumbling backward, the marines slumping as they struck the durasteel walls of the corridor behind them. Hector fared better, maintaining his footing even as he was shoved back and his concentration broken. The man looked at them fully now, facing the two Force users before speaking. "I am the harbinger of a new era. This station is but a stepping stone to a greater destiny. All I need is a few moments to finish retrieving the data I require."

A surge of dark side energy emanated from the figure, nearly overwhelming both of them. His hands remained by his side, not reaching for a weapon, an almost perfect calm despite the powerful energy rippling from the figure.

"I think you are a damn fool!" Hector growled as lightning crackled from his gauntleted hand towards their enemy. A translucent barrier appeared as the figure turned his direct attention on the Kiffar warrior, Ikarri briefly forgotten for the moment ducked aside, moving quickly away even as he shouted a command into the corridor behind them.

"Engage!"

From the shadows outside, the emergency lighting flickered, lighting the reflective panels of the Sith War Droid, whose twin blaster cannons erupted. The brilliant bolts crossed the distance in a heartbeat, slamming into the figure's shield before splintering and dispersing. The roar of the cannons continued even as Hector and Ikarri circled quickly.

In another heartbeat, the Droid's servos whined as its arms began to twist, the resistant plating struggling against the unseen force before they began to spark as the guns shuddered and were torn from the droid's body, sending it crashing down under the weight of the figure's power. Even as the silence descended, Hector's lightsaber gauntlets activated, casting a brilliant light through the room as he charged forward, closing the distance.

Ikarri watched as the two circled, the older man didn't draw a weapon of his own but even as Hector struck, his target would slip through his attacks, seemingly moving faster than the Seer could keep up with. Meanwhile, Ikarri caught sight of the terminal and focused, reaching out within the Force to hex the console, its internal circuitry crumbling under the weight of Ikarri's reach.

His senses warned him only an instant before Hector flew through the air between them. The two Vizslans crashed to the floor. Consciousness began to slip away even as Ikarri watched the figure approach them. A look of irritation broken only by a momentary smirk of amusement.

"I respect your tenacity, but I really must be going." Ikarri struggled to rise alongside Hector, who was already nearly back on his feet. They felt invisible hands encircling their necks even as both men choked, struggling to breathe until within seconds they slumped unconscious to the floor.

Omancor Crask looked at the two prone forms, considering for a moment if it was worth eliminating them but decided against it. Neither of them would be able to identify him; he wasn't concerned with Vizsla learning of his presence here. He looked back at the command terminal of the central hub, which now actively sparked as its internal systems were beginning to catch fire. He approached and quickly gathered the dataslate he'd connected previously. Though the download had been interrupted, his task was complete, and their records on the Unknown Regions could possess exactly what the former Jedi Master was seeking.