***“Broken Cutlass”***

**Turel Sorenn 13830

Abandoned Mining Cave**

**New Tython**

Vorsa gathered the Knights of Allusis and the leaders of the armed prisoners for a hasty mission briefing. She did not share Revak’s enthusiasm for this final stage of their escape as there had been more than enough suffering and spilled blood in the past few days. Despite her initial misgivings, she saw the need to take both ships.

Once all the key players were in place the Seti began the briefing. “Harakoan scouts have confirmed that Alpha’s Omega is personally here to kill or recapture all of us. The scouts estimate a company size element of Omega mercenaries, roughly 100 infantry plus officers, set up in a hasty defense around the ships with squad sized scouting parties searching for us.” Vorsa gestured to a hasty terrain model the Harakoan scout leaders had put together of the enemy landing site. “We will conduct a coordinated raid with Strike Team Ooroo against the landing zone, seizing both ships. Time and coordination are key as it will not take long for the ships to take off once first contact is reported.”

Edgar Drachen cracked his fist, “Yeah, we don’t want those nerf herders slipping away after all this.”

“The bigger concern is those ships attacking us from the air. We have no anti-ship weapons.” Sa Ool calmly added in his mechanical Kel Doran voice.

Vorsa continued. “Precisely, we need to stop those ships from taking off before we have a chance to secure the camp. Nathan, if we can get you and a small team on to the ship can you stop it from taking off without permanently damaging it?

“Very easily, I just need to reach the engineering deck before they take off and I can ground the ship.” Nathan stated very matter of factly, as if he had just been asked to take a stroll in the park.

Vorsa nodded thoughtfully, “Nathan, Putra, Edgar and Aerin will infiltrate the ship while the rest of us engage the Omega forces. Chief Whenua’s scouts report that the Omega roaming squads are spreading out from the camp in a classic fan pattern. If we move along this creek bed and ambush the squad in this area that should clear the path for Nathan’s team to get to the ship.”

Kah stepped forward, “Me’sa will lead da Harakoan warriors in da ambush. Dey’s not knowin what hit dem.” The Harakoan warriors nodded in agreement, the path of death and destruction Kah carved at Purity Rock with his bare hands had become something of a legend among the Harakoan warriors. They were honored to fight beside the Gungan warrior.

A deep sense of concern washed over Vorsa. Kah had slipped into complete bloodlust back at Purity Rock, she knew he was at risk of going back to that dark place without her influence. The whole team needed time to mediate and decompress after this ordeal. For now, she had to go with him. “Sa and I will accompany you on the ambush. Mirus, Ryan and Turel will lead the Tythonians once the main battle begins.”

The hulking, mountain of a man, Mirus Hi’ija, moved behind Turel and Ryan and placed his hands on both their shoulders. “This will be a good fight.” Turel and Ryan nodded in unison.

With the plan in place, Vorsa concluded the briefing. “If there aren’t any questions we should each prepare. Time is not our ally.”

**Creekbed, Approximately 250 Meters from the Alpha’s Omega Landing Site**

**New Tython**

The Harakoan warriors had chosen the ambush site based on the enemy squad’s movements. Alpha’s Omega was an experienced mercenary outfit, but the bulk of their experience was clearly in urban warfare. The Jedi chosen to accompany the Harakoan warriors had been carefully chosen based on their experience fighting in wooded areas. The forest was as much a part of Kah and Vorsa as it was for the Harakoan warriors. Sa also had a great deal of experience in conducting woodland warfare. That’s not to say that the other Knights present weren’t capable of this mission, but this wasn’t their strong suit.

Kah was crouched in some bushes with his femur knives at the ready. Vorsa had positioned herself up in a nearby tree, using her native form to expertly camouflage herself. Sa had taken a hidden position with a small group of Harakoan warriors several meters away. Each knew their part, speed, surprise and the forest itself were their allies. Time was their enemy. The entire mission would be in jeopardy if any member of the enemy patrol were able to get a call out over the COMM. The Jedi and the Harakoan did not have to wait long for their quarry to enter the trap.

Eleven mercenaries, led by an officer, slowly wandered into the kill zone. Members of the patrol came within meters of the hidden attackers, but did not detect anything. The entire ambush party was as still and invisible as ghosts. When the last of the squad entered the kill zone, Vorsa initiated. The Seti dropped down upon 3 hapless mercenaries, shifting and twisting as they struggled. Kah rushed out of the bushes like a purple streak of lightning, giving a repeat performance of his combat artistry at Purity Rock with his Femur knives. Harakoan warriors rushed the remaining squad members with the speed and grace of a pride of jungle cats. Sa rushed up behind the patrol with several Harakoan warriors in tow to block the patrol's escape.

Vorsa regained her humanoid form to survey the aftermath. Out of a patrol of twelve men, three survived. The rest lay in a various states of bloody mess, either with slit throats or multiple stab wounds. None of the mercenaries on the patrol had been able to make a call over the COMM. So far so good. As Vorsa keyed up her COMM to coordinate with the other teams she noticed the creek water at her feet slowly turning red. This would not be the last blood spilled today.

**Outer Perimeter, Alpha’s Omega Landing Zone**

**Minutes later**

Nathan received Vorsa’s report over his COMM and crept back into the position where Putra, Aerin and Edgar were waiting. He whispered “Vorsa’s team has taken out the patrol and observation post on this side of the landing zone, we don’t have much time until someone raises an alarm. Have you spotted the roving guards yet?”

Putra maintained his vision through his handheld scanner, “I see two guards near the base of the ramp and about four members of the ship’s crew ferrying equipment out of the ship’s cargo holds. We should be able to take them out without raising an alarm.”

Aerin was distinctly uncomfortable with the idea of ‘taking out’ anyone, if that meant killing. “We may be able to bypass them entirely, we can distract the guards with the Force while we slip on board.” Nathan seemed eager to agree to this approach, while Edgar was indifferent, he just wanted to fight. Putra reluctantly agreed to do things Aerin’s way.

The group slipped inside the perimeter, moving from cover to cover as they approached the ship. Nathan reached out with the Force and diverted the two guards’ attention in the opposite direction. One guard ran off to check the noise he thought he heard while the other stayed in place intensely, and erroneously, focused on the direction his compatriot had ran off to. Aerin and Nathan both used the Force to conceal the team’s approach up the ramp as the remaining guard stared off into space.

Once the team was safely on board the ship and out of sight from the guard at the base of the ramp they relaxed a bit. Edgar audibly exhaled “Whew! That was close.”

Aerin matter of factly replied with a grin, “No it wasn’t, he had no idea we were even there. His buddy will come back feeling stupid for chasing phantom sounds.” Edgar silently chuckled to himself at that thought. Putra maintained a Zen-like focus on the task at hand.

“We should get to the engineering deck as quickly as possible.”

Nathan nodded. “Agreed. This way.” He gestured to a nearby door leading to a lift.

Most of ship’s crew had dispersed to man the defensive perimeter or join the search squads, only a handful of engineers, pilots and deck hands remained to man the ship. No one on the engineering deck paid any attention to the lift opening just outside the engine room. The few engineers on hand certainly didn’t see the four Jedi creep out of the lift. The dull hum of the idling engines was overtaken by the sounds of a very heated argument occurring near the main engine which held the crew’s attention. A Zabrak male and a Devoronian male were both pointing at the ship’s engine clearly in a heated argument.

The Zabrak male in dirty overalls got right in the Devoronian’s face, “For the last time Xiarr, I have to shut the engines off to flush the coolant valves and re-cycle the landing thrusters! Atmospheric flight is rough on the ol’ girl.” The Zabrak was clearly a senior engineer of some kind.

The Devoronian was incensed. “And I’ll remind you for the last time, Botr, that I am the executive officer of this ship! Captain’s orders are to keep the engines hot in case we need a quick take off.”

“Well I’ll just go talk to the cap’in then! She’ll listen to me!” Botr made like he was heading toward the lift, and the corner where the Jedi were hiding, when Xiarr moved in front of him to block his path. “Get outta my way you horn’d pile of poodoo, I don’t get paid enough to put up with you!”

“And **I** don’t get paid enough to put up with your, stubborn, insubordinate, drunken mouth. If you weren’t one of the best flight engineers in the business I would have flushed you out an airlock months ago and claimed it was an accident.”

The Zabrak engineer got right in the Devorian’s face, “What was that? I didn’t quite catch that.”

“You heard me!”

The Jedi were thoroughly confused at this point, each wondering how in the galaxy a ship could function with the XO and chief engineer at each other’s throats. Sleazy mercenaries sure were a strange bunch. They didn’t have the time to watch this scene play out. They had to take control of the engine room and fast. Nathan signaled for the group to approach the arguing officers. Putra had mentally counted four engineers on the deck and had made a hasty plan to take them all down, non-lethally, once the fight broke out. Aerin remained behind to guard the exit to keep engineers from escaping and prematurely raising an alarm.

“Could you gentlemen help me, I seem to be lost.” Nathan said in a happy voice.

Botr and Xiarr looked befuddled. Xiarr spoke up, “And just who in the blazes are you and what are you doing on my ship?”

“Get out of my engineering deck!” Botr injected.

Putra rushed the nearest engineer to him, starting his hasty plan to incapacitate all of them. Nathan slammed the two officers into a nearby bulkhead using the Force while Edgar tackled another engineer. The engineer nearest the lift made a run for it only to get clotheslined by Aerin as he rounded the corner Aerin was hiding in. Putra descended upon the last engineer before he could reach the intercom panel.

Edgar stood up. “Well that went well.”

“A shame we couldn’t let them finish their argument, I would have paid to see that fight.” Aerin commented as she rejoined the others.

“Edgar, grab that spool of wire over there and help me tie these guys up.” Putra ordered as he dragged two unconscious engineers into the center of the room.

“On it!”

Nathan went immediately to work powering down the various engine systems. He placed the engine into a full maintenance shutdown and self-diagnostic, which would take hours to complete. “Well we’ve bought ourselves some time but we’ll have to secure the bridge as well. Also, my COMM can’t transmit with all this interference from the engine.”

**Outer Perimeter, Alpha’s Omega Landing Zone**

Mirus crouched uncomfortably in the tree line watching the activity in the landing zone. Vorsa’s team and the Harakoan warriors had taken out a patrol and an observation post and no one on the landing zone seemed the wiser. Revak’s strike team had reported similar success. Nathan’s team had slipped onto the ship unnoticed and now the entire force was waiting on word that the *Omega’s Cutlass* had been disabled.

Ryan looked up from his scanner. “It looks like the *Cutlass*’ engines have cut off.”

“And no alarm yet? That’s a good sign.” Turel calmy commented as he sat with his back to a tree doing his pre-combat ritual of function checking his blaster pistols. This ritual was largely pointless because the plan was for him to use an armory lightsaber with Mirus and Ryan to deflect blaster bolts and cover the Tythonian forces approach. Still, checking his blaster pistols helped center him before battle.

Suddenly the ramp on the *Cutlass* raised and a group of mercenaries began running toward the ship. Mirus’ COMM crackled to life with Edgar’s voice, “Start the attack! we’ve disabled the ship and secured the bridge but the alarm has gone out.” Edgar’s sentence was cut off but a loud roar in the background.

Vorsa’s voice came over the COMM channel. “Acknowledged, starting attack. What was that sound? What’s your situation?”

“Oh, that’s the ship’s weapons officer, she’s not happy about us taking the bridge. The bridge is secure for the moment, but it won’t be for long if they force the ramp open.” Edgar sounded rushed.

Revak came over the COMM channel. “Acknowledged, Ooroo has a team in place to secure the *Destructor*. Starting attack now.”

Mirus keyed up his COMM. “Tythonian forces engaging camp.” He turned to his team and the human and Mon Calamari leaders of the armed former prisoners, “Let’s go! Move from cover to cover, stay behind the Jedi when you move, we’ll form a skirmish line.”

The three Jedi Guardians spread out, ignited their lightsabers and began a measure advance out of the tree line toward the hasty defensive positions. The Tythonians were attacking from the south, the Harakoans from the west and Ooroo and the remaining Tythonian forces from the East. The defenders of the landing zone were not prepared for such a coordinated offensive with no warning. The remaining observation posts outside the perimeter were simultaneously attacked. The mercenary COMM network was overwhelmed with units under siege from Jedi requesting reinforcements.

When the fighting started, Thett Omega was hundreds of meters outside of the landing zone leading a search party to where he thought the Jedi were hiding. Several squads were still out in the forest search, it fell to his executive officer, the human Zak Sallis to lead the defense of the landing zone. Zak didn’t have a chance. The Jedi, Harakoan and Tythonian forces formed a unified noose which strangled the landing zone while their own ship’s defensive turrets opened fire on them from inside the perimeter after the strike teams seized their respective bridges.

Within an hour and a half the combined force had seized the landing zone, both ships and had a sizable amount of the enemy force in custody, including senior Alpha’s Omega Lieutenants Zak Sallis and Fakot Odramord. The combined force under Jedi leadership had taken minimal casualties while inflicting quite a few on the mercenaries before Zak ordered their surrender. Thett Omega and roughly a platoon’s worth of mercenaries were still at large in the forest, but for now the Tythonian forces savored their victory.

After the battle, Revak and Vorsa stood between their newly acquired ships to survey the spoils of their victory. Revak seemed pleased with his acquisition, “Fine ships. We’ll put them to good use liberating the rest of New Tython.”

Vorsa nodded in agreement. “Indeed. They will need new names though, *Destructor* and *Omega’s Cutlass* don’t seem very appropriate for liberators.”

Revak thought for a second. “I think we’ll call Ooroo’s ship the *Proxia Mustirion*. What about the Knights’ latest addition?”

Without pausing Vorsa replied, “*The Pride of Owyhyee*”