**Korriban Skies**

The day of reckoning had arrived. The skies above Korriban was riddled with the hulking wrecks of capital vessels, medium sized shuttles, and twinkling illuminated blips as fighter craft drifted off to oblivion. It was doubtful any of the three fleets in orbit would survive the melee. The situation on the ground was little better off. The ancient pyramids of the Valley of the Dark Lords lurked above, casting an ominous shadow before all of the assembled forces. The ruins of the ancient Shadow Academy stood singularly as the prize of the contest.

Muz Ashen’s Loyalist forces had arrived first. After all, it was Muz’s plan to enact the ancient rituals to achieve immortality and ultimate power. Lord Jac’s forces had no choice but to attempt a landing to flush out the enemy’s progress and attempt to thwart the final solution.

And yet, they were not alone. Somehow, someway, the traitor Esoteric had positioned his forces here all along. Marginally neutral, Esoteric’s forces were a motley group of Imperials, former Dark Brotherhood members, mercenaries, One Sith, and a multitude of other sects all banding together to eek out an existence for their goals. The stage was set for an epic conflagration.

The Loyalists were heavily entrenched at the feet of the pyramids and were diligently working their way towards the Shadow Academy. Jac’s forces held positions covered amongst the rubble and used every opportunity to probe the lines. A stalemate was achieved in this regard, with neither side able to dislodge the other. Esoteric’s forces held the ground at the far edge of the Valley, boxing in the Rebel forces yet not yet moving forward.

Air superiority was nonexistent. Each side had minimal air forces remaining and dared not risk what remained to test the surface. Each side was in serious risk of being stranded on the surface of Korriban. Along with this fact, the aspect of supply and life support was keenly raised. With no outside routes or ability to feed their troops, Korriban was a dead world. Someone would need to act fast.

Esoteric’s forces moved first. Artillery barrages burst out, covering the Rebel forces and forcing Muz’s Loyalists deeper into their foxholes and ducking from every round. The Loyalists did not respond. They dared not risk exposing their positions and hunkered down. The Rebels had no choice, they did not trust Esoteric but they had no other alternative than to trust the man who had saved them from destruction above Antei.

The Rebels moved fast. Dark Jedi led the charge, soldiers moving on foot en mass with what remained of the armored vehicles covering the formations. Loyalist small arms fire and squad weapons mowed down the enemy, but the big guns were silenced by Esoteric’s artillery. The two sides were closing quarters and reached in hand to hand combat. Still, the assault was unlikely to force the Loyalists from their positions.

The Rebels were forced to leave a sizeable rear echelon guard to ward off any deceit from Esoteric’s forces. Yet, once the two armies were engaged and the Rebels were clinging to the few yards they had gained, Esoteric’s forces retreated. Within minutes they had disappeared from the field of battle. Confused, Lord Jac pulled his reserves forward for a final assault.

With the footholds already taken, the fresh reserves launched themselves forward with murderous aplomb. The Loyalists gave ground, punished from the onslaught of enemy forces weighing down on them. Soon the Loyalists were pushed inside the pyramids and were losing men rapidly. All seemed lost.

And then, the ground opened up below them. The pyramids crumbled, taking Loyalists and Rebels alike. An ancient megaship burned its thrusters forward for the first time in eons. Muz’s last card to play was at hand. He had lost the ground and the sky, yet he would make the Rebels pay in blood. Once above the bloodied field, the ship opened fire with all of its ancient, arcane weaponry. Not a single soul remained on the ground. The ship began to rise slowly, whole sections of the ship falling apart showing the skeleton of the megalith.

Esoteric’s forces were upon the monster vessel at last. The artillery and remaining ships launched forward at once, punishing the decrepit ship. The heavy guns held the day, and Muz’s last gambit lurched downward fragmenting rapidly. Once it hit the ground, it smothered the Neutral forces. In orbit, the surviving vessels prepared to depart the dead Sith capital world. All was lost. Throughout the galaxy, the diaspora of the Dark Brotherhood had already begun to pull together for a rebirth.