Howlader stretched his arms out and then rubbed at his eyes for seemingly the tenth time in the last hour. No matter how many times he looked at the tactical display, the situation never improved. Howlader needed to clear his head to get a better perspective on the situation, if only for a few minutes, so he stood up from the dusty display and walked out of the conference room. As he walked down the corridor, Howlader became keenly aware of the state of the *Justice*, even without looking at the extensive damage reports that were available to him as a senior member of the clan. The normally polished silver-grey of long corridor was distinctly darker – nearly black in appearance, with cracks and fire damage apparent with disturbing regularity. The once clear, almost sterile air now had a distinctive smoky flavour to it – and one that Howlader might almost find interesting under the right circumstances (perhaps planet side with a large beverage) – but these were certainly not those. Access panels were open throughout the corridor, along the walls and on the ceiling – exposing conduits and wiring – revealing that the damage to Taldryan’s flagship went far beyond the cosmetic.

As Howlader moved beyond the access corridor towards the more populated parts of the ship, he noticed the near unmistakable smell of burned flesh and blood began to penetrate his nasal passages. Turning a corner, the old master discovered the source of the powerful odours – it appeared that this section of the *Justice* was being used as a makeshift aid station for the crew located in this section of the damaged vessel. The sounds of the groans and screams of the young men and women of the Expansionary Force that were wounded (let alone those that had already succumbed to their injuries) due to Ashen’s insanity were almost too much for Howlader to bear.

Howlader’s insides were filled with a new strength and sense of resolve– and strode out of the corridor with a new sense of purpose. He would avenge those young men and women lying in agony on the *Justice.* It became apparent to Howlader that even though the *Justice*’s less than successful encounter (to put it mildly) with that mad man Ashen’s forces was only a few hours ago, it felt almost like another lifetime. Resolved, Howlader moved swiftly through the vessel’s corridors towards the hanger, finally arriving at the XS-800 *Senility*. He steadied his anger, took a final look around the *Justice*, and climbed aboard.

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*Several minutes later  
Airspace over Korriban  
XS-800 Senility*

The old freighter’s communications system screamed to life: "What the hell do you think you’re doing, Howie?" the voice of Jac Cotelin’s was surprisingly calm, especially given the circumstances of the last few hours. "Your place is here, not on some damn fool expendition to the surface in a freighter older than I am. What in the hell do you think you are possibly going to contribute to this? We are in the fight for all of our lives and the future of our civilization, and you run off?"

"Sorry Jac. This time things have gone too far. I need to see things settled for my own sanity – I won’t be any good to you or those kids up there until I do."

Determined, Howlader disabled the communications system - he would not be convinced to change his ways this time.

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*One hour later*

*Senility* bobbed up and down, spinning along its axis in an attempt to avoid the anti-spacecraft batteries that were positioned all along the surface of Korriban. Howlader’s attempts to get within reasonable distance of the academy through flying maneuvers and subterfuge were not working. A new tactic was required, Howlader decided, as he increased the throttle and powered up the weapons.

"COVERING FIRE" Howlader screamed at no one in particular, as the XS-800 dove towards the surface, weapons firing at the weapon emplacements. Unfortunately for Howlader and the XS-800, the shields protecting the anti-air weapons were too powerful – making the strafing attacks ineffective. Worse still, Howlader’s less than subtle approach to attacking Korriban had drawn some unwanted attention – in the form of a squadron of TIE Avengers. A dozen fast moving and shielded fighters, combined with increasingly accurate and powerful surface weaponry were too much for even a pilot of Howlader’s skill.

"Okay!" Howlader yelled at the empty cockpit, "this was obviously a mistake!" Realizing the gravity of his situation – the pilot put *Senility* into a near vertical climb – and attempted to fly away from his opponents.

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*Six hours later  
Surface of Korriban  
XS-800 Senility*

Howlader, from underneath a patchwork of cables and conduits, heard a knock from the port side hatch. Puzzled, he stood up and opened the hatch – a younger man with bright blonde hair stood outdoors.

"Looks like you could use some help," he commented glibly.

Howlader, not accustomed to such comments shouted back: "who the hell are you?"

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*Several hours and drinks later*

The blonde stranger sighed and shook his head: "well, Howlader – looks like I have to help you."

"Damn straight," Howlader replied, "don’t ever bet against a Dark Jedi when death is on the line."

With that, the stranger (who had revealed himself as Connor Grey) agreed to aid the forces loyal to Cotelin on Korriban.

Howlader  
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Clan Taldryan