***ACC Ravager***

**Hangar Deck**

**Esstran Sector**

**Deep Space**

**39 ABY**

Dracaryis sat on the edge of the shuttle’s boarding ramp and watched as his strike team prepared for the upcoming mission. He went over the mission details in his head for the fifth time: Board the Anchorage, move through the lower decks to an abandoned hangar bay, and secure a landing zone for the main force. In addition the two Guardians he had hand selected for the mission, he had also received direct control of a small strike force comprised of two teams of skilled infiltration troops. Guardian Onwai Starborne would lead the team focused on the securing the initial infiltration site, while Guardian DeCicco Ehne would lead the team focused on clearing the lower corridors and capturing the hangar bay.

Dracaryis watched as the two Journeymen inspected their men. Starborne was a natural leader. The young Obelisk ran his men through entry drills, corrected their tactics when required, and ensured that each man understood his mission, as well as the mission of adjacent and higher units to the detail.

DeCicco was another story. While no fault of his own, he was not the natural leader that Starborne was. While an exceptionally competent Journeyman of the Krath Order, DeCicco was very reserved and reluctant to command his men. As such, Dracaryis had decided that he would move with DeCicco’s assault team, in order to provide guidance and direction during the Guardian’s first tactical command.

“Onwai, DeCicco, on me for a few minutes.” Dracaryis ordered.

The two Guardians strode over to where Dracaryis stood.

“Report.”

Onwai spoke first. “Sir, the team is ready. We have rehearsed the landing and see no issues with securing the initial LZ. The only concern I have is holding the site for any longer than an hour. We can keep Drax’ forces from entering from the corridors, but we have no way of preventing an enemy force from hitting the hangar bay. There are no active turbolaser turrets where we are going.”

“What are your recommendations, then?” Dracaryis was annoyed. He expected leaders to come with solutions, not to simply drop problems into his lap.

Starborne was one step ahead of him. “A small fighter contingent stationed outside the main hangar bay could provide us with the necessary rear coverage. They could give us early warning as well as attack any enemy transports attempting to land in the bay.”

Dracaryis smiled. “A solid plan. I will speak to the Quaestor about providing a couple of fighters. The fleet is actively engaged against Drax’ forces, but I am certain she can spare two or three fighters to cover you. DeCicco?”

DeCicco spoke up. “Sir, the assault team is prepared, but I wish you would let me handle the attack on my own. I am ready.”

Dracaryis glared at the young Krath. “I move with the assault team, because that is where I feel I am needed. You don’t know what we could possibly run into, and your limited Force capability could use some assistance. You will have full command of your team, I am there to observe and correct as necessary.” Dracaryis eased his demeanor. “You will have plenty of opportunities to showcase your abilities, Guardian. I sense that there will be plenty to do once we begin moving through the lower corridors.”

DeCicco nodded. “I will not let you down, sir.”

Dracaryis stood. “Excellent. Both of you have your men board the shuttle. I will speak with Selika about the fighter escort. Mission kicks off in fifteen minutes.”

“The Force is strong with both of you. Rely on its power, and you will not fail.”

The Guardians turned, and moved to ready their men for battle.

***ACC Ravager***

**Bridge**

**Five Minutes Later**

Selika Roh stood at the main view port and gazed pensively at the battle raging outside. Flashes of green and red laser fire glittered the space between the *Ravager* and the *Anchorage*. Without turning her gaze, she spoke to her Aedile as he approached.

“Your teams are ready?”

“Yes. We have rehearsed the landing and the assault for hours. Starborne and DeCicco are as ready as they will ever be.”

“Do you have everything you need?”

Dracaryis stood beside his Quaestor and watched the battle. “I need a small fighter escort. We have no way to secure the hanger bay from space once we land. Two or three X-Wings should do the trick.”

“Done.” Selika turned and surveyed her Aedile. “You have done well. I am impressed with how far you have come in such a short period of time. This will be your defining moment. You are directly responsible for gaining an initial foothold on the *Anchorage.* Secure the site, and call in the cavalry. We will crush Drax and his forces with one swift stroke.”

Dracaryis nodded. “I will not fail you.”

“See that you don’t.”

Dracaryis grinned. This was his moment. If he could gain the initial lodgement on the *Anchorage*, he would be rewarded well. He turned and moved towards the bridge door.

“Oh, and Drac?” Selika called over her shoulder.

“Yes?”

“Try to not blow up the hangar door.”

***ACC Ravager***

**Bridge**

**Ten Minutes Later**

“Sixty seconds to the Landing Zone.” The transmission from the lead escort pilot was filled with static. Dracaryis gripped the support strap over his head and addressed the shuttle pilot. “Sixty seconds. I want you on ground no more than thirty. Unload us, and then get the hell off the *Anchorage*. This is a one-way trip for us!”

The shuttle pilot nodded. “Good luck, sir!”

Dracaryis turned and eyed the two teams. Starborne’s squad lined the port side of the shuttle, DeCicco’s squad lined starboard.

“Onwai, you’re off first. You have ten seconds to secure the shuttle bay.” Dracaryis barked. “DeCicco, you will follow me off the shuttle once the site is secure.”

“Yes, Sir!” The two Journeymen replied in unison.

Dracaryis donned his helmet, and switched on the internal HUD. Unhitching his lightsaber from his belt, he moved to the ramp of the shuttle. “Ten seconds! On your feet!”

The teams stood. Dracaryis felt a lurch as the shuttle landed in the bay. The ramp dropped, and Dracaryis motioned for Onwai’s team to disembark. The troopers quickly moved to secure their respective sites within the hangar bay. Onwai turned and gave the Aedile the signal. “DeCicco, follow me!” Dracaryis ignited his saber and led the second team off the shuttle.

“DeCicco, take your men and begin clearing the corridor. I will follow shortly.”

DeCicco nodded, and ordered his men to stack up outside the door leading to the lower corridor. The lead trooper emplaced a thermal charge on the door controls, and with a loud bang and a hiss, the door controls blasted apart and the door to the corridors opened. “Go, go go!” DeCicco barked to his team. Within seconds, the Krath’s team was out the door and moving along the darkened corridors.

Dracaryis activated his commlink. “*Ravager* control, this is Dracaryis. LZ secured. Beginning clearance of lower corridors. Moving to secure hanger bay. Time on target, six minutes.” Dracaryis switched off his commlink and turned to Starborne. “Hold this position. I will contact you once we have secured the hangar. Maintain contact with the X-Wings and inform me of any attempts by Drax to compromise your position. Otherwise, maintain radio silence.”

“Acknowledged.”

Dracaryis turned and moved towards the door. Reaching out with his mind, he saw DeCicco’s force approaching the outer door of the hangar bay. He felt another presence, but he could not identify it. His mind focused on achieving his objective, he stepped into the corridor and moved swiftly along its darkened path. Within minutes, he approached DeCicco’s position. The young Krath was attempting to use his weak armory saber to cleave a through the durasteel door. Dracaryis chuckled under his breath.

“Sir, I don’t think my blade can get through this door.” DeCicco looked frustrated.

Dracaryis pointed at two of the troopers securing the area. “You two, secure the corner of the corridor. I don’t want anyone coming in behind us.” He turned to DeCicco. “Door is a bit thick to cut through. Let’s try to work together to force the door open. DeCicco nodded.

The two dark jedi stood side by side and raised their hands, calling upon the Force to lift the large blast door. The door was extremely strong and moved a few inches before DeCicco lowered his hands. “It’s too heavy. I can’t move it!”

Dracaryis put his hand on the young Krath’s shoulder. “Yes, you can. Stretch out with your feelings. Use your power. This is no different than lifting a rock. Let the Force flow through you. Open your mind, and try again.”

Again, the two men lifted their hands and continued to force the door open. This time, the door moved a few feet. DeCicco smirked. “Got it!”

“Don’t get cocky, kid. We still have a ways to go.”

Suddenly the sounds of blaster fire erupted from the end of the corridor. Dracaryis turned and saw the two troopers securing the corridor fall from incoming enemy fire. He turned to DeCicco.

“Keep working on this door. I’ll handle whatever is coming our way.”

“But sir!”

“Do as I say! Your job is to get through this door and to secure the hangar on the other side. I’ll cover your rear flank.” Dracaryis ignited his saber, red light illuminating his black armor. “I’ve been waiting to use this on these bastards.”

Dracaryis turned and sprinted down the hall. As he rounded the corner, a flurry of red blaster fire erupted around him. Deflecting the bolts with his saber, he released a blast of energy that knocked the enemy soldiers to the ground. Rushing forward with hatred and malice towards the traitorous forces, he began cutting down anyone and everyone in his path. His lightsaber danced and flurried as he sliced limbs and heads off the foolish soldiers who dared try and interrupt his mission. Within moments, he stood over the remaining soldier, lightsaber held aloft.

“Run. Run and tell Drax that his station is boarded. The Plagues forces loyal to the Dread Lord have returned. He can surrender, or die. But his station will be boarded within moments.

Without another word, the soldier stood and ran. Dracaryis lifted his commlink. “Starborne, we just had a small force attempt to interdict the assault team. What is your status?”

The commlink crackled, “Sir, the X-Wings have engaged two shuttles attempting to land forces. We are prepared should they fail.”

“Acknowledged. Once we have the hangar door open, I want you to seal off the doors to the bay you are in and then move to our location.”

“Sir?” DeCicco’s voice came through clear over the commlink.

“Go ahead.”

“Sir, the door is open. We are moving to secure the bay.”

“Excellent. Starborne, break down your defensive position and displace. Rendevous with DeCicco’s team in the hangar bay.

“Acknowledged.”

Dracaryis switched channels on his commlink. “*Ravager* control, this is Dracaryis. Put Selika on.”

“Go ahead, Aedile.” The Quaestors voice was apprehensive.

“Selika, mission accomplished. The hangar will be secure in moments. Begin your approach.”

“Well done. Prepare for our arrival.” With that, the communication ended.

Dracaryis moved back along the corridor, stepping over the bodies of the slain troopers. He stepped through the door of the hangar bay and peered out into space.

“DeCicco, to me.”

The Krath approached the Aedile apprehenisively.

“Well done. There is great power in you. I expect you will continue to go far within the Clan.”

DeCicco smiled. “Thank you sir.”

Dracaryis looked back towards the mangled remains of the blast door as Onwai’s team entered and began securing their positions. The Obelisk approached DeCicco and Dracaryis. “Way to go, DeCicco!”

The three men turned stood and looked out of the massive hangar entrance. In the distance, hundreds of fighters and transports could be seen moving towards the *Anchorage.*

Dracaryis watched the approaching invasion force. “Now the real fun begins.”