**Blood Brothers**

**39 ABY**

**Atlas Moon**

**Lair of the Pirate King**

The tunnels were misty and dark, reminiscent of a decaying corpse. Emergency lighting cast a shallow flickering glow, the distant sounds of scattered blaster fire and the familiar crackling hiss of sabers was dimly audible. The pair of strangers swiftly lurked down the descending tunnels into the unknown.

Facts of their encounter were already discussed. No words transpired, however. The telepathic bond between the two Krath was strong. The Kiffar female Syn and the Hapan male Zagro kept their heads down and sabers palmed, ready for any interaction. The prize was near, and yet, they felt ambivalent.

Red Fury was no pivotal threat. Strong, well coordinated, well funded, and highly placed spies made the organization a thorn in the side of both Scholae Palatinae and Naga Sadow, but the recent wars had taken the heart out of such minor disputes. The fact that the allied forces would win was never in question; how many dead they would be burying in the accursed moon was.

Fenn had lost all of his soldiers. Taking the command center was a straightforward task to be sure. The master slicer easily cracked into the system and shut down some of the automated defenses, however Red Fury had prepared for this. The number of enemies inside the Atlas base was staggering. Clearing it would be a slaughter for both sides. Given only a token force of scouts and intelligence operatives the group had been taking losses from ground-fall. Now near the bowels of the moon, Fenn found himself with one ally.

Syn likewise was cut-off from her unit. Her abilities were well known and viable; Fenn respected his erstwhile friend from the start. He was pinned down by a squad of Red Fury soldiers and as he dropped a few with blaster fire before charging forward with his blade, the rear guard was eliminated by a combination of saber work and Force lightning by the Sadow.

As a form of gratitude the Hapan let the Kiffar in on the intelligence many had died for; the Pirate King was a real entity. The legendary myth was in fact real in a matter of speaking; an ancient super battle droid from Xim the Despot’s secret arsenal. How and when it was released had been lost to time. Fenn was able to ascertain an escape route was open for the megalithic machine and waiting for the cavalry was not an option. So they pressed onward.

This suited Syn well. She had been dispatched to create chaos amongst Red Fury. The sorceress had decimated isolated pockets of resistance with an equally small strike team of soldiers. To say that both clans had made a mistake of not concentrating forces was an understatement. And now, the unlikely pair of Krath was in the sanctum of the Pirate King.

Standing five meters tall and bristling with weapons mounts, the Pirate King was a sight to see. It was a very graceful model. Proportion was well balanced amongst the limbs of the robot, it resembled an armored Mandalorian and had repulsors built into the legs creating a hovering warrior armed with a massive pike. The robot acknowledged the two silently and blaster fire burst from the shoulder mounts.

Instinctively the two Krath broke ranks and split up. Syn discharged lightning from a distance and distracted the machine momentarily. Fenn only had seconds before his ally would be pinned down by immense firepower. Time was not lost.

Fenn ran forward, saber glistening as he struck deep into the left leg of the robot, severing the repulsor and forcing the Pirate King to compensate equilibrium from the right. This emergent victory was short lived, as the swinging pike caught the Hapan square in the chest and sent him flying towards the walls of the chamber with a sickening ferocity.

Syn now took her chance and concentrated all her effort on the arm holding the pike. The electrical current overloaded the arm, forcing the pike to drop and the arm to smoke with an acrid smell. The arm was useless. This only slowed the robot slightly, pivoting on its good leg’s repulsor power the shoulder mounts again fired overwhelming blasts as Syn ran for cover.

Fenn regained his feet; visibly slowed and hobbled he lashed out with lightning of his own to turn the attention his way. The Pirate King barreled towards the Hapan, hoping seemingly to crush him against the wall like an overripe grape. Fenn smiled.

A slight second before the impact the Hapan dodged to the right, swinging his saber in a high arc with all his might. The effect was devastating. The remaining leg hit the ground with a loud thud as the Pirate King fell backwards-firing blaster fire indiscriminately. Syn ran to the hobbled Hapan’s aid and pulled him with her towards the exit. Looking back, Syn tossed a pair of thermal detonators into the chamber as the Krath raced upward.