

***[TID] Just dropping by***  
*(by Rian Taldrya, #10701)*

Taldryan Great Hall  
Karufr  
34 ABY

Rian Taldrya leaned against a column from which he could easily watch the situation table while he listened to the Taldryan Consul Keirdagh Taldrya Cantor. "...Sphinxian Satellite Technologies has crossed a line, and it will be the last one they cross."

Neither was the room as crowded as it was used to be when ever there was a top level military meeting, nor were the usual people attending to it, only a handful of Taldrya including the reigning Consul and Proconsul as well as the Dinaarian Quaestor. "While normally actions like this call for a decisive strike from our Naval Forces, but Director Elson's Intelligence Division has pointed out that there may be other spies who could inform their masters so they can prepare for our arrival."

"Ok, so no nuking back into the imperial era for them." Halcyon said. "But I guess you guys have already something on your minds that fit the terms 'deals with them appropriately'."

"Yes we have. Instead of one hard, decisive strike, Director Elson suggests that we send small squads to take actions against the heart and soul of Sphinxian on Orron III and other worlds where they have bases of military value." All eyes turned to the Consul. "Intelligence has calculated that small coordinated attacks will most likely be more successfully go unnoticed than one large military operation."

"And this is where we come into play." Andan Taldrya Marshall chimed in. "But how? Honestly if you look at us, this seems like the most randomly chosen group possible, except we're all related to the Taldryan Summit one way or the other."

"Yes, your relationship is one of the reasons. For the time being, those we can trust are few and even more fewer if we count in those who own a personal starship and the ability to leave Karufr on their own business unnoticed.

Rian smiled. "Ok we all see where this is going, what are our targets?"

"A droid construction site on Balmorra as well as their ore-refining station orbiting Mustafar and a manufacturing plant on Nar Shaddaa programming processors for their battledroids." Keirdagh followed up. "Halcyon, you take out the manufacturing plant on Nar Shaddaa, Omega, you will deal with the construction Site on Balmorra, lastly Andan, you will be dispatched to deal with the refining station on Mustafar. Alright gentlemen, you all got your missions, show them what Taldryan is made from."

"And what about me? Do you want me to go with one of the others?"

"No Rian, we got a special mission for you. Please wait a minute."

Once everyone was out Keirdaghs expression darkened. "What's it Keirdagh?" The former Consul asked.

"Rian, I don't like to admit this, but the recent attack on us, it might be possible that we have partially caused it."

"What?"

Howlader closed to them. "Not so long ago we sent a reconnaissance team to Orron III investigating Sphinxian and their potential threat for Taldryan when we found out that they were spying on us. But our team was spot upon spying out a secret droid construction site underneath their headquarter. All but one were caught during their mission and the remaining member of the team was able to send us this data before going into hiding on Orron III."

Howlader worked a few settings on his datapad and the image above the situation table shifted, showing a massively armored, bipedal droid with large menacing claws instead of arms dwarfing what was probably meant to be an average sized human.

"Jedi Killers." Rian whispered. "How many of these have they already built?"

"We don't know. For what the report said there are only one or two prototypes."

"Rian, this is the most crucial missions, we need you to destroy this construction site before they can built entire series of these beasts. Go to Orron III and find the remaining member of our recon team, he already has set up a plan to take out the factory as well as their headquarter."

"If he has gone into hiding, how can he be found?"

"Before we lost contact, the team has set up a safe house and sent us the coordinates." Howlader said handing Rian the datapad.

Taking it as a hint Rian took it and turned with a slight bow. "I may leave at once then."

When he was out of the conference room, Rian opened another channel on his comlink. "Kara, I need you at the hangar, we gotta take out the *Hunter* out for a ride around the block.

There were several hangars located within the Taldryan Headquarter dealing with a multitude of ships given on their purpose ranging from fighter bays to large cavernous hangars designed to accomodate shuttles and other craft to ship passengers and VIPs to and off ground. But from all of these there was one special as it held the personal starships of the members of Taldryan. From the doors leading into it, Rian could easily make out the ships of the other members that had attended the recent meeting with the Consul. The black tainted YT-2400 belonging to Omega Kira, Andan's *One Armed Scissor*, Halcyon's *Entil'Zha* and his modified Corellian VCX-100 Freighter, the *Ravenous Hunter*. By the time Rian entered the hangar, it was a hub of activity, deckcrews were attending the ships, fueling them and going through pre-flight checks under their owner's supervision.

Next to the *Hunter* stood Kara running through the pre-flight checks with one of the deckofficers but turned from him upon seeing Rian. Catching him half way through the hangar she said. "You sure we are just taking the *Hunter* for a trip around the block or is there something cooking up? I mean look, almost every ship in this hangar gets armed and fueled, it just looks more like we are riding into war again."

"Believe me, it's not as bad as you assume Kara."

"But it is related to the recent attack against the Great Hall, isn't it? Who was it? The Iron Throne? Another Clan?"

"Nothing like that. I will tell you once we are underway."

They arrived back at the *Ravenous Hunter*. "Alright, we should be ready to lift off, are we?" Kara asked the deck officer.

"Yes, ma'am. You are clear for take off."

"Good," she said to the officer before stepping up the ramp into the belly of the *Hunter*, stopping at the air lock. "I guess we are leaving at once then Rian, do we?"

"Of course we do."

"Ok, so where do we go?"

"Orron III."

"The Corporate Sector?" She asked, but decided to let the matter drop as Rian certainly had reasons to go there. "Alright, let's plot a course then."

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Authority Data Center Outskirts

Orron III

34 ABY

Rian sat in an aircar taxi on the street outside the building that showed up as the coordinates for the safe house where the surviving member of the reconnaissance team was hiding. He watched the street and the surrounding buildings for a some time, monitoring every movement on the streets, but nothing caught his attraction.

He waited another couple of minutes, then decided to go inside and see if the teammember was still there and alive. He paid the driver and hopped out onto the street and into the building.

The exact coordinates destined the safe house to be at the second floor, the third apartment on the left. Rian closed in to the door as silent as possible in a only dim-lighted floor. The door wasn't locked. The apartment itself seemed to be abandoned but for some reason Rian's senses where on the edge. The sound of a lightsaber being ignited behind him made him stop in his tracks.

"Don't move!" A familiar voice said sternly. "Now turn around. Slowly!"

Rian did as he was ordered, throwing back the hood of his cloak as he turned.

Rathus Marr cocked his head and deactivated his lightsaber. "Rian."

"Rathus, Keirdagh hasn't told me it was you I was looking for."

"Neither did I expect you to be send to come after me. I was already worried, Howlader and Keirdagh wouldn't give my plan a chance to take out these Jedi Killer droids."

"It's quite the opposite." Rian said. "But things have taken a different way since you left Karufr for your recon mission. Sphinxian has attacked the Great Hall a couple of days ago."

Rathus's face became white. "When I sliced into Sphinxian's secured network a couple of days ago, I stumbled over some intern messages send to Karufr instructing one of our own to plant an attack on us but I thought it to be a trick to get me out of hiding. I should have warned you."

"Don't worry Rathus, you had to make a decision and no one will judge you for not risking your position. However, Howlader's datapad only mentioned the basic outlines of your plan, how exactly are we going to take out the factory beneath the headquarter?"

"Have you brought a ship with you?"

"Sure, how do you think I could have come here?"

"Alright, if we are to destroy the factory, we need to split up. One of us will have to sneak into the headquarter and disabling its shielding while the other one slices into one of the orbital defense satellites and uses it's weaponry to rain hell upon it."

"And since you are the slicer of us I will be the one to disable their shields, how do I do that?"

"Herewith." Rathus fished a small datastick from within his pocket and handed it to Rian.

"Okay, so I get in disable the shields and then you glass the haedquarter and everything beneath. Sounds good. Just give me enough time to get out of it."

Sphinxian Satellite's Headquarter was located somewhat outside of the Data Center surrounded by a small forest. Rian was waiting inside the *Harpy*, The *Hunter's* auxillary starfighter, for Rathus's signal that he has successfully sliced into the defense satellite and started to alter it's position to open fire on the headquarter. Finally his comlink received a message. *We are in, one hour till we are in position*, the words read. *Alright, time to get moving.*

Leaving the *Harpy*, Rian headed straight for the security fence. Searching around for some automated security measures, he followed the fence a couple of meters until he found a point in it near a tree large enough to allow him to jump over the fence. He jumped up on the tree and then over the fence. A quick glance around him assured him that he hasn't been seen and he took a dash for the nearest wall to get some more cover. Crouched against the wall, Rian ran along it for the nearest entry. As he approached the entry, he saw a small security team guarding the doors. Reaching out from the shadows with his hand, he touched a tree on this side of the fence with the Force, forcing the group to leave their spot to investigate it.

Stealing himself into the building before the group returned, Rian found himself in a narrow corridor. If the blueprints Rathus was able to slice from Sphinxian's network were correct, the corridor should lead him to a lift that he could take to get him to the operation room where he could

disable the shields. Once on the correct level, he would have to get past a set of cubicles, then when he made it into the operation room, the only thing he would have to do is connecting Rathus data stick with an access point and wait for the system to be hacked before he would take a run for the outside.

Rian set down the hall for about fifty meters, then around a corner he found the lifts. The lifts didn't requested a security code. He pressed the access panel and the doors willingly slid open. It took the lift only a couple of seconds to reach the floor with the operation room.

The hall on this floor was quite bigger compared to the floor where he entered the headquarter and was lined with doors on each side. The operation room was located in the southeastern corner of the floor and Rian would have to pass nearly the entire length of the floor to get there.

Arriving at the office, he tapped the code that Rathus had sliced along the headquarters schematics into the security panel. The door opened and Rian faced a surprised technician watching over the controls. Before the technician could reach out for the alarm, Rian sent his lightsaber through the air and into the chest of the technician. Without hesitation, Rian threw the lifeless body out of the chair and connected the data-stick with the access point, a window popped up on the screen, showing a bar slowly increasing from the left to right. *Come on.*

Finally after what Rian felt rivaling an eternity the bar was fully loaded and the image changed into a laughing skull before the screen went black. It returned in a blink, now showing the shields being disabled. He removed the data-stick before leaving the room.

The moment the door fell into its lock, Rian faced a hulking droid on the opposite side of the floor, blocking the way between him and the lift. It swiveled its head and locked eyes with the Taldrya before turning its body to face the intruder.

Raising his lightsaber, Rian broke into a run. Slashing at the enormous droid when he came into range the hulking droid countered the slash driving both of his enormous claws into the ground stopping Rian mid movement. Spinning away from the droid a few steps Rian prepared to strike again at the droid who lifted his claws to strike again at the mirialan. Ducking under the blow, Rian was driven back to the operation room when his comlink beeped again. *Target locked. Fire in five minutes. Get your ass outside.*

*Easier to be said than done.* Rian thought ducking under another blow from the Droid. The next time it raised its claws for a strike, he used the opportunity to make a dash for the unprotected joints connecting its upper body and legs. Coming back up behind the droid, he slashed behind horizontally, slicing through a set of cables instantly flooding the floor with some servo-liquids. Spinning around in a backward flip, he finished up the droid, separating its torso and legs.

Another message. *Sixty seconds, get out!!!*

Rian was running out of options, with only one minute left the lift wasn't an option anymore. Looking around frantically, Rian found the only remaining option in jumping. Dashing for the nearest cubicle, he rushed past the technicians huddled in the corner of the room. Warning them wouldn't have made any difference anyways. Lightsaber stabbing ahead of him he jumped at the window. The glass shattered upon his impact and for a moment he hung suspended in the air for a moment surrounded by splinters of glass before gravity grabbed at him and he plummeted toward the ground several meters below him.

Bracing for the impact he steeled himself and rolled over upon touching ground, he was up again in the blink of an eye and running toward the fence when the powerful weaponry of the defense satellite connected with the Sphinxian headquarter. Jumping again, he used the kinetic energy of the

first concussive shockwave to further his leap. Rian first allowed himself a bit to relax once he was back aboard the *Harpy* and had punched in the sequence that would send it back to the *Ravenous Hunter*.

The End

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