

The Soul of Nekros stood before the holotable in his command tent. The Nekros Syndicate had landed in force three days prior. The toxic and scarred landscape of Dathomir had made setting up their outpost difficult. But now that they had a proper holding the scouting parties had been sent out. They had been sent to this living grave to recover secrets lost to Tarentum since before the fall of the old Republic.

“Sir! The scouts have found something.” One of the Syndicate’s analysts spoke.

“Put it through.” Solas responded.

“Yes sir.” The holotable flickered before the image of a crouching soldier appeared.

“Command this Frost Squad. We’ve encountered what we believe to be an abandoned Nightsister compound. Grid square Titan-Iron-Two-Five. It appears to be a large fortress built into a canyon.”

“Very good Frost Squad. Hold your position until the recon team arrives.”

“Understood. We will dig in and wai-” Suddenly the holo cut out.

“Frost Squad respond. Frost Squad?” The holo began to flicker in and out.

“Command. We are under attack. Two dead, more wounded. We cannot identify the enemy. Please Advise.”

“Frost Squad you are to retreat immediately. Recover who you can and get your men out of there.” Solas then turned from the holotable. “Scramble all available units. Deploy them to Frost Squad’s location. And get me a ship!”

“Yes sir!”

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Solas stood in the bay of a Tarentum gunship as it lead a small flight of five ships to Frost Squad’s position. Overlooking the surface below, he could make out the remnants of Frost Squad surrounded by what could only be described as a horde. He then grabbed the inter-ship comm.

“Haze, Outlaw, and Jinx Squads get down there and retrieve what’s left of Frost and get them back to base. Grizzly and Zenith are coming with me. We’re going in, we need to find out what in there.” The squad leaders confirmed their orders and three of the ships broke off and descended to the surface to circle the remains of Frost to protect them from the horde.

The remaining two ships sped towards the fortress. The pair came to a stop over the entrance. Solas opened the bay door before turning back to his pilot.

“Find a place to set the ships down and meet me inside. I’m going on ahead.” And before anyone could protest, the Syndicate members watched as their leader leapt out the open bay door and plummeted towards the ground.

Solas landed with thud releasing a shockwave from his crouched form. Before he is even able to stand he is set upon by a small horde of what could only be described as walking corpses. With a smirk he grabbed his saber off his hip and flicked it to life. Leaping to his feet Solas spun and decapitated the nearest ghoul. Turning on the ball of his foot he through a sharp kick to the chest of another enemy. Solas begins to form a small circle around his form keeping the enemies at bay. Eventually the members of Grizzly and Zenith squads landed and began cutting a path through the horde towards their leader. Just as they came within range to see Solas, they witnessed as a ghoul struck his exposed right flank. Solas reached down and placed his hand on his ribs. Bringing his hand up he looked down at the blood that covered his palm. To the surprise of the Syndicate members, he began laughing. But not a joyous laugh, this laugh was hollow, raspy, chattering, it was the laugh of a madman. The air in the courtyard seemed to stand still. Soon a chilling voice split the air.

“Pain, death, despair, most of all blood, these are the absolute truths. These are what define all. And these are what I will bring to the universe. Starting with this festering rock.” As the Epicanthix spoke the air around him had begun to warp inward and darken. Soon he was encased in a pitch black aura and the once warm squamp air had become bone chillingly cold. “Now to those of you who can understand my words. I suggest that you retreat from this area, lest you end up as a casualty of this campaign.” Not needing any other reasons the members of Grizzly and Zenith booked a hasty retreat to their ships and took to the air circling the courtyard.

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Night had fallen by the time that the Soul of Nekros summoned his ship to come retrieve him from the compound. As the gunship circled the courtyard the soldiers saw what appeared to be a man sitting upon a pile of something. Setting the ship down as close as possible the troops approached the pile. What they found made many of them want to vomit. The courtyard was littered with the ruined remains of countless ghouls. In the center sat a mountain of bodies almost 3 meters high. At its summit sat the Soul of Nekros, covered in blood, his robes tattered, and fast asleep, but alive. After some time the soldiers finally managed to extract their unconscious leader and return to base.

The next day Solas awoke in the medical tent. Quickly getting dressed he made his way over to the command tent.

“What’s the situation?”

“Commander on deck.” Everyone in the tent snapped to attention.

“At ease. Get me up to speed.”

“Yes sir! We’ve had no further encounters with the ghouls. However this is because we’ve decided to employ aerial recon only.”

“Good. Maintain recon until further orders.”

“Yes sir.”

“Anything else?”

“Well our intel indicated that there was human settlements here.”

“What about them?”

“Well, we can’t find them.”

“What do you mean?”

“Sir, I mean that we’ve covered most of the planet’s surface and we’ve found no evidence of anyone living here in a long time.”

“Hmmm. That is concerning. But we’ll address that later. For now connect me to Tarentum command.”

“Understood.” Solas strode over to the holotable as the images of Proconsul Sith Bloodfyre and Consul Farrin Xies.

“Masters.”

“Night-Thorn, good to see you’re still with us.” Sith Bloodfyre spoke with a chuckle.

“This planet sure as hell had other plans.”

“Speaking of Dathomir. What can you tell us?”

“Well aside from the fact that it’s a swamp filled with death? First and foremost, the Nightsister’s magiks are still at work here. We’ve encountered hordes of walking corpses.”

“I see, what else?”

“Well we don’t have conclusive evidence on this yet, but it appears that the human inhabitants are gone.”

“Gone? What do you mean?” Sith raised an eyebrow.

“Just that Master. We’ve found no evidence that anyone has lived on this planet in a long time.”

“That could be a problem. But tell us more about these hordes you’ve encountered.”

“As you command. Well as I said, they’re comprised of walking corpses. they don’t seem to have any clear motives or goals. They appear to be a mindless horde, and they aren’t too difficult to defeat in combat...”

“What is it Night-Thorn?”

“We don’t have the manpower to combat these things. They just simply outnumber us, and they’re bloody everywhere. To put it bluntly this isn’t something the Syndicate can handle on our own. We’re going to need backup.”

“Understood. We’ll put out the call. Now hold your position. We’ll be there.” The holotable flicked off and Solas took a deep breath. *‘This is going to be big.’*