**Mygeeto Outer Atmosphere  
Transport Ship D  
Cockpit**  
Cackling came over the other transport ships; a wary silence. The Duros looked at the Clawdite and both shared an abnormal glare from their consoles. Aexod Burgoo repeated the call, "Transport Ship A, B, C, E, or F; come in. Central Command; come in."  
  
*Nothing.*The Mystic was the first one to pipe up, "My console shows the nav is correct. There may be a glitch in the system though. Gonna check out the nav console." Dek stood up out of the pilot seat and went to the back end of the cockpit, fooling around with some of the electronics.  
  
Aexod enjoyed Dek's company. The Duros kept to himself and seemed to focus more on the task at hand rather than small talk or other distractingly boring materials of communication. This allowed the Major to have his alone time while having a competent pilot also piloting the transport. Words flashed across Dek's console screen. It was illegible to Aexod. *Strange,* thought the co-pilot.  
  
The Cawdite peered back to Dek. Still fooling around with the nav glitch, Aexod decided to attempt to translate the message using the console. Tapping a few buttons revealed some of the message.  
  
"That should do it," Dek finished as the Major stood up wide eyed and went to the back of the cockpit passed Dek. "What are you doing?" Questioned the Mystic staring inquisitively at Dek.  
  
"You got a message."  
  
The Duros grunted and looked over at strode over to the console.  
  
That was the Major's moment. He went over to the artifacts sitting next to one of the artifacts sitting next to the tertiary cockpit seat and lifted up the glass over the artifact, removing it and running out the door, closing it behind him.  
  
*All Sadowans are to be eliminate....* He didn't need to see the rest. The Major knew he probably could not go toe to toe against a Force User, but could still gain a spoil of war from his former ally. Or it could become a bargaining chip for other things, such as his life if need be. He also hoped Dek wasn't as loyal as his other...  
  
"Aexod," a voice called a voice from behind him. It was Dek. "I'm gonna need that item before you leave. Give it to me and you can then leave."  
  
"You don't order me around, Dek. I have the rank here. You are a pawn of your Empire, and I am a cog in mine, albeit a powerful cog."  
  
"I don't care about the philosophical underpinnings of our two Empires. What I care about is the artifact. By leaving with it, you risk my life and I can't have that. As for you, leaving without it doesn't hurt you. The logical choice is to give it to me and to be on your way."  
  
Aexod stepped a bit back, "I want to believe you, Dek. But you've got a slight upper hand here. I can't give you all the power."  
  
"So be it, Aexod."  
  
The Major grabbed one of his blasters as Dek lit his saber. Two shots fired and two deflected as Aexod ran. Dek turned around and reentered the cockpit.  
  
Running down the corridor, Aexod knew he would have to get to the shuttle b... *ROOOAAARRRRBOOOOMMMM!!!*The ship buckled a bit, knocking down the Major as his pilot's helm hit the wall. *What was that?*  
  
He shook his head out of a small daze and looked up to the corridor leading to the shuttle bay. Each door slowly closed, trapping soldiers and other combatants in those corridors. Also blocking the short path to the shuttle bay. Looking behind him, he saw the Duros appear out of the cockpit again, "You're being irrational," shouted Dek down the hallway. "I merely want the artifact. The path to the shuttle bay is blocked."   
  
*Then to the escape pods it is.*Dek closed his eyes and turned his head down, "I'm sorry, Aexod." Suddenly opening them and igniting his yellow saber he ran down the hallway towards Aexod. The Clawdite immediately stood up and threw a prepped thermal detonator into his previous position, creating more distance between them. But Aexod could feel it. The detonator went further than he has expected and gravity felt slightly lighter than it previously had.  
  
Turning a corner, Aexod had felt the slight impact of the explosion blow onto his back. Dek's need for this artifact was the true irrationality. Any words Dek had for the artifacts over the past few days had always referenced the words "junk", "technologically archaic", or even the strangely worded "someone who has a fetish for hundred year old men and their pointy magical objects". If his life truly depended on it then he would have probably fought for it earlier. Unless he was mentioning all those to try and throw Aexod off his game.  
  
Maybe Dek was partially right that Aexod didn't need it, but his arguments made no sense. The superior tactic would be to hold onto it and wait for more answers or simply bring it back to the Summit and let them decide what to do with it. Maybe they can explain this betrayal better than I could.  
  
Each stride was difficult. The ship was obviously losing some of its gravity. *What did that sneaky hacker do?* The Sadowan faced a few Warhost guards every now and then, directing them to the escape pods or to find a way to the shuttle bay. Some he directed to hold certain positions to guard his escape. *Their sacrifice will be remembered.* But conflicts between the Imperial Guards and the Warhost continued throughout the ship. It was clear many of them may not escape, and in this ship they may be all be fighting a losing battle.   
  
The Major could feel it. The ship was starting to turn slightly and slowly become dragged by the outer atmosphere. Soon this ship with be in a forward free fall. Now his fight to the escape pods got a lot worse. *What had Dek done? Is he that insane? Is he a lot darker than he had previously lead on?*  
  
He approached the escape pod room. There were five escape pods left, with another pilot in the room already wearing the exact same pilot uniform that Aexod was wearing. Aexod closed his eyes for a second, shifting his form into that of a human male with dark brown hair and light skin. He threw the artifact into the nearest escape pod, and both him and the other pilot entered the escape pod entrance. The door suddenly swooshed open. Both the changed Clawdite and the other pilot looked up momentarily.  
  
*Dek Rott.*  
  
The Duros held a blaster in his hand, and shot the other pilot in the leg, forcing him to slump into the pod. Walking over to the escape pod, Dek peered inside just as the door closed. Aexod hoped that Dek wouldn't recognize the eyes as he shot the pod out of the transport ship. Aexod shifted back and bent down in the cramped chamber to look at the leg of the injured pilot.  
  
"I'm sorry, ace. That shot was meant for me." Aexod Burgoo let out a guilty sigh, angry that this potentially innocent man simply trying to get to safety had taken a bullet for him. He was not a Warhost, but a simply pilot.  
  
"Luckily it was a blaster bolt," the pilot chuckled as he slouched painfully against the small of the escape door edge, "Pain? Yes. Blood? No."  
  
The Major was comforted by the man's words. The ability to use comedy in a situation like this was...  
  
*SMAAASSSHHH!!!*The window cracked a tiny bit and the escape pod was suddenly knocked sideways. The pod window showed a view of a falling transport ship darting away from them while another escape pod fell right after them. The other pod was being maneuvered manually and ever so slightly with expert skill.  
  
*By Marka Ragnos. Is that Dek Rott?*  
  
Now furious, the Clawdite went into full pilot mode. Whether it was Dek or not didn't matter. This other guy was somehow mastering the piloting of the escape pod. Luckily, Aexod had watched Dek for a day or so while he piloted the transport. It certainly wasn't the same concept, but Dek's style could be extrapolated from what was happening now compared to what he did before. So if it was Dek this may be a bit easier. If not...well, then I guess the Sadowan will be in for a suprise.  
  
Aexod thrustered the pod ever so slightly back out of the small spin it was in. He would have to land it amongst some snow as well. He aimed for the snow bank near one of the cities that could be used as a regrouping spot in case of emergencies, at least for both Imperials and Warhost forces. The Sadowans would definitely be faring better in this fight.  
  
The other pod attempted to gain speed, but lost the momentum that it had from crashing into the current pod. "Ace, hold on. We're coming in for a snowy landing."  
  
The pilot grasped the small bench and placed his strong leg against the front of the pod. The Major did the same with his whole body against the pit of the pod near the front.  
  
*PUFFFF silence PUFFF silence PUFFFFFFFFFFFSSSSSSSKSKSKSKSKSKSKSKSKS!!!!!!*With a few air bumps the escape pod landed harshly. The back of the pod was barely covered by snow...yet. It was a blizzard out there. Soon enough the snow would cover the pod. Waiting here wasn't an option. They would take the survival gear and the radio and head out.  
  
"Major," started the ace pilot, "You gotta leave me. I'll slow you down. You could easily come back.."  
  
"I won't hear it. Plus, I have ever the need for you. You'll be a part of my disguise, and you'll help me carry this artifact."  
  
"Uhh, ok, sir." The pilot questioned the true motives of Aexod, but didn't think it would add much value to their current situation.  
  
As they popped open the door, some snow blew in. Cloaked for protection, and carrying a few items on the Clawdite's back and in the cloak, they started to march off to the not so distant city with lights. *Looks like there is no major fighting. Seems the Sadowa...*A lightsaber suddenly ignited across their faces. It was yellow and blended in well with the snow that was falling down. The wind did not howl though, as the whiteness settled the ground.  
  
"The Emperor needs this item. If I don't obtain it, he will have my head or my Force abilities. I cannot allow either of those to happen."  
  
"You're dedicated," looked the Sadowan over to the Scholaen. The Duros grasped his leg, and wore no hood, letting the chilling frozen fluff hit his face. "You'd take down the ship to get this item?"  
  
"You think I want to do any of this?!" Dek yelled out to the Clawdite. The blade shivered from the hand.  
  
"I fell into the wrong crowd. I did well and got picked for the wrong missions. And now I work for the Emperor and his Sith spit Grand Marshal. They're insane. And they know it, but I remain loyal. I must. His doubts of me will be compounded with no return of this artifact."  
  
Dek bowed his head and disignited the saber, "I only wish to get by. The Emperor has been ultimately good to me. But the people he is surrounded by, his leaders, they are all manipulative. The head of the hidden house supposedly enjoys toying with his enemies, forcing them through mazes of trouble in order to manipulate every aspect of their criminal lives. The head of Imperium? I once saw him dissect a child whose neck he had snapped. And most people were content with it. And after seeing these things, people still remain loyal. Maybe they fear the Emperor and his minions."  
  
Aexod was surprised. He had seen similar things amongst his fellow members and felt...awkward amongst that. But the difference here is that Aexod chose loyalty. Dek only wishes to be paid for it. He wants the lavish lifestyle without the gruesome work.  
  
Whatever the case, Aexod was wrong about Dek's intentions. If he really wanted them dead then he would've chosen to kill them right now. Aexod threw down the artifact to Dek, "Take it. But Dek?"  
  
The Duros looked up.  
  
"You're weak. If your Emperor had any sense about you he would have killed you long ago. Like I said though, you're a pawn. Which means you still have a use. And when that use it up, you will die."  
  
Dek picked up the artifact, looked at Aexod strangely, and ran off. The cackling of the snowy steps was all that could be heard; a wary silence for all.