

The drop shuttle rocked from an explosion off its left side sending the soldiers inside tumbling from their jump seats. But one man stood like a statue, his body barely moving as the shuttle took a beating. One of the young soldier, a Mon Calamari, turned to the Human beside and said "How does he do that?"

Before she could respond the man looked over his shoulder and said "Practice. Lots and lots of practice."

Commander Darro Zhen stood steadfast in the midst of the chaos erupting in the cramped troop compartment as soldiers both seasoned and new were thrown left and right by the maneuvers of the shuttle pilot and the explosions of munitions outside. A young soldier fell from her jumpseat and fell at the old Mandalorians feet. The old man casually bent down, scooped her up and dropped her back into her seat before buckling her in.

As he stood back up the comm unit in his helmet squawked as the copilot said "We're two minutes out sir."

"Roger that." Darro said. Pulling his helmet off he looked each and every soldier in the eye and said "Two minutes people. When that ramp drops we are gonna be knee deep in it. I expect you all to come out guns blazing. We need to take this elevator or our little invasion is gonna stop in a real hurry. Set your blasters to stun and get ready."

"Thirty seconds." came a shout from the cockpit.

Pulling his battered old helmet over his battered old face Darro checked his weapon, set it for stun, and headed for the ramp. The shuttle hit the deck with a thump, the ramp dropping moments after touchdown. The big Human exited into a hailstorm of blue stun bolts coming from the only exit to the hangar he and his soldiers had found themselves in. It wasn't a large hanger, barely large enough to hold half a squadron of fighters, and was currently occupied by row upon row of shiny waist high metal boxes.

Raising his rifle to his shoulder the old man began to carefully pick off the Satele soldiers one by one, providing cover fire for his troops as they left the shuttle. The volume of fire from behind and beside him slowly picked up as the rest of his squad got clear of the shuttle ramp. Without warning the ramp slammed shut and the shuttle took off leaving them stranded on the station with only one way to go. From his right came a scream as one of his troops was hit, blue electricity arcing over his body, every nerve firing at once sending his body flopping around on the deck like a freshly caught fish.

"Give me some cover!" yelled Zhen over the cacophony of blaster bolts.

His squad responded, rising and firing as one, pushing the enemy troops down and into cover. Taking advantage of the momentary lull in incoming fire the old man leapt over the first

row of crates with surprising nimbleness for one so big and old. When he'd positioned himself once again behind some cover he shouted "Move forward." as he layed down a stream of covering fire.

His troops lept from the positions aiming to join him but the Satelians took full advantage of the decreased volume of fire and opened up on the Hoth forces striking a pair of soldiers with stun blasts before they could find cover. Hoping to keep as many of his troopers in the fight as possible Darro rose to his feet his T-21B barking like a wild vornskr, a trio of blasts finding their mark, dropping three enemy combatants to the ground. Seeing their commander taking the fight to the enemy inspired the soldiers under his command as they too rose to their feet and opened fire.

They began to advance in ones and twos laying down cover fire for the comrades as they too vaulted over the metal crates their stun blasts picking of Satele troops until the last opposition soldier was struck in the chest, her weapon clattering to the deck with a hollow clang. The old Mandalorian scanned the now quiet hangar with his dark brown eyes looking for any sign of opposition. After a handful of seconds of silence Darro lowered his rifle and removed his helmet and wiped the sweat from his eyes. "How many did we lose?" he asked no one in particular.

"Taia and Kravik are down sir. Danelo is checking on them now." came a female voice from beside him.

Looking down Darro saw it was the young woman he'd helped in the shuttle earlier. "Outstanding." Darro said. "Alright Corporal..."

"Bastra sir." she finished for him.

"Corporal Bastra. I want you to take three or four of the squad and restrain the Satelians, police up their weapons and remove the power packs." Zhen ordered.

"Roger that sir." she said as she headed off calling to three of her squadmates as she went.

But before she had gotten too far a flash of inspiration struck Darro and he yelled "Corporal wait, I have an idea."

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"Are you sure this is going to work sir?" asked the Corporal.

Darro chuckled and said "Not one bit. But ahhh...it should be good for a laugh."

"Yeah, a laugh." she replied under her breath.

“Relax kid.” Darro said “I’ve done way dumber stuff than this. Besides what’s the worst that could happen. Now be quiet and act natural.”

They were approaching a set of metal doors, a pair of guards standing at attention beside them. As Darro approached one of the soldiers raised a hand and asked “What’s going on here?”

“We caught this prisoner in hangar bay six three niner. The rest of his squad are stunned and cuffed back their.” answered Bastra.

“So why is he here?” the soldier asked pointing the muzzle of his rifle at Darro.

“Do you know who this is?” Bastra asked. When the soldier shook his head in the negative Bastra said “This is Commander Darro Zhen.” When the soldier showed no comprehension of who Darro was Bastra said “The scourge of Portas? The massacre at Oron Tal? No? Nothing? Well trust me the Major is gonna want to see who we’ve captured.”

With a sigh the soldier said “Fine.” and turned to open the door.

It slid open silently revealing a buzzing control room filled with computer banks occupied by a myriad of species busy with one task or another. And standing at its centre a portly Chiss man named Len lode. Noticing the soldiers escorting a much taller man Len dismissed his aide and sauntered over to stand in front of Bastra.

“Well, well, well.” he said with a smirk. “The mighty Mandalorian captured by my humble soldiers. Remove his helmet.” Bastra reached up and, none too gently, removed Darros helmet revealing a large smile splitting the Humans scarred face. “Why are you smiling Darro? My men have you.”

“Their not your men.” Darro said. Almost before the last word had left his lips Darros soldiers, dressed in the uniforms of the defeated Satelians, raised their rifles and opened fire illuminating the room with bright blue stun bolts. The Chiss, stunned by the sudden change of fortunes, turned just in time to see the cuffs around Darros wrists drop to the ground before a blaster pistol materialised in his hand. “Sorry Len.” Darro said before he pulled the trigger. A blue stun bolt struck the Major in the chest, his red eyes rolling back in his head as he fell to the ground.

“Secure those doors.” Darro barked. “And someone get me a secure channel to Edgar or Colonel Cortel. I need to tell them we’ve taken the elevator.”

As his soldiers jumped to work Darro blew out the breath he didn’t realise he’d been holding and looked around, stunned that his plan had actually worked.