

Arx
Imperial Capital
Wild Space
34 ABY

Warning klaxons screamed directly into the Twi'lek's ears. Spinning red lights overlapped and waned throughout the cockpit, making his skin wax into a deep purple. The controls were not responding to him and he let out an impressive scream. He slammed his fist down onto the console and immediately recoiled his hand. He may have broken a bone in his palm.

As if today could not possibly get worse.

"If you're wondering why you've lost control of your ship, Inquisitor, it is because I have locked you out." RX-102 wasn't even looking over at Alaris Jinn as she spoke, she just calmly fiddled at the controls in front of her, somehow keeping the Lambda-class shuttle moving in the direction of Arx instead of falling into the gravity of the system's star. The pilot droid's dripped with condescension, a tendency that had sprang up over time knowing that Alaris had no idea how to pilot this shuttle for himself.

Instead of barking orders at the droid, he just shut up and leaned back into the pilot's chair. He pulled the restraining straps tight and hoped to hell he hadn't made a mistake in letting this droid do the flying for him. The droid and the shuttle had been provided by Braecen Kaeth, who, in his last act as Quaestor of Galares, had released Alaris and helped him escape the prison in Arconan space.

The light of the star coming in through the viewport suddenly darkened as a ship suddenly came into view on an intercept course. Alaris couldn't tell its size at first; depth perception is nearly impossible in space. As they drew closer, Jinn's mouth dropped agape. It was massive. His ears around the galaxy had informed him of the new *Resurgent*-class Star Destroyers, but this was the first time he had ever seen one in person.

A grin crept across the Twi'lek's face. "Rex, slow us down. Change course for that ship and open a channel."

RX's head slowly turned toward her new master. "Changing course is not an option, Inquisitor. The maneuvering thrusters were shot on the last laser blast from Arcona's 'send-off' fighter squadron. Which you would have seen if you had any idea how shuttles worked. We got lucky that we came out of hyperspace directly facing this planet to begin with."

"Do you want to ever fly a shuttle again, you blasted bucket of scrap?"

Lacking the lung capacity to sigh, the droid simply turned her head back to the viewscreen and turned off the engines, beginning the coast toward the planet before them. This was until the

ship came to a sudden halt. Inertial dampeners kept the two opposing personalities from feeling it so much as noticing the planet not getting closer anymore.

There was silence for a few seconds before the Twi'lek broke it. "You opened a channel, right?"

RX spun her head quickly. "What do I look like, some incompetent Threepio droid?"

A voice crackled over the intercom. "Unidentified shuttle. State your name and purpose here."

It was time to see if his name still carried any weight. "This is Chief Inquisitor Alaris Jinn. I am returning from an unsuccessful mission on Selen."

There was a brief silence and then the voice came back over. "Please maintain your position."

Alaris and Rex looked at each other briefly, knowing full well they weren't moving even if they wanted to, before looking back up to the massive ship before them. The silence lasted several minutes. Alaris half expected a proton torpedo to come flying out of the side of the massive ship and end Alaris's existence right then and there. It would depend who was on the trigger end of the ship in front of them.

"I understand you spent an entire year in Selen's prison system and never broke." The voice over the comm that came was different, but undeniable. "That's extremely impressive, Jinn."

The corners of Alaris's terse lips twisted upward into a maniacal grin. "Marick Arconae."

"Tyris. I am Marick Tyris. Welcome home, High Inquisitor."

Alaris raised his eyebrows. He had been promoted within The Society. Torture for a year was usually met with death at the hands of the Inquisition, but Braecen Kaeth was also, apparently, an Inquisitor and had personally overseen Alaris's interrogation, something he took great joy in. One could never tell what Kaeth's ultimate goals were.

"We're going to pull you into the docking bay of *The Suffering*. I'm headed elsewhere now, but this ship is about to head to Kr'Tal. I trust you remember Karufr."

The Suffering

Karufr

Kr'Tal System

34 ABY

"FIRE!"

The barrage of turbolasers burst forth from the three *Resurgent*-class Star Destroyers. They burned through the first of Taldryan's fleet in a matter of minutes. TIE/sf squadrons filled the void and tore through what had once been the pride of the Taldryan Starfighter Corps. There was little pretense of any show of power; this was genocide.

Alaris Jinn stood behind the Justicar and watched him wield his own brand of justice. The Twi'lek could feel the hatred dripping off Jac as if the Grand Master Emeritus had just stepped out of a pool. The dark side was palpable on the bridge and it emanated from the centre, where Cotelin stood. Alaris tended to think of himself as a beacon of the dark side, but he had never seen this much vitriol in such a pure form.

Jac Cotelin, patriarch of Taldryan, Justicar of the Brotherhood, turned and stormed off the bridge as well as he could without his black staff. The room kept working like a well oiled machine. It was rigid, technical, and mechanical. The crew carried on its orbital bombardment, glassing the planet below. Any ships attempting to escape were met with a barrage of turbolasers and torn to scrap in a matter of seconds. Taldryan's fleet was finished, and soon the entire Clan would be left in ruins.

The twi'lek stepped toward the ebony staff in the centre of the room and reached down to grab it. The moment he touched it, he was filled with an intense power and the lingering hatred of Jac Cotelin. He held it in one hand and placed the boot of it firmly on the durasteel floor. The clang sound out. The staff did not belong to him, but it carried the weight of who it did. Jac hadn't specifically left him in command, but as the ranking member of the Inquisition on the bridge, he took it upon himself to watch the carnage unfold before him.

He spoke aloud to nobody in particular. "Thus is the beginning of the end. Today sees the end of Taldryan. Tomorrow, I will finish what I started and eradicate Odan Urr."