

Alara:

This is it. Blade, our Quaestor, directed Tacitus Athanasius to kill by whatever means necessary every single person we came to meet on the planet. For formality's sake, I was assigned to fight alongside Shadow and Brandon: an assignment I feel both good about and rather shaky about. I slightly fear that Shadow may just spin around and kill me upon first chance, but I also feel as though this could be good bonding for us; so long as that oaf Brandon doesn't get in the way.

I began to mess with the digital pad that was strapped to my arm. The main screen had a map of the planet's main database centre downloaded to it. I sat down in a control module's seat, away and to the right from the cockpit of our shuttle. The whole shuttle had a slight blue hue coming off of the screens in the cockpit and modules. Shadow sat at the co-pilot's chair to the right of her husband. He piloted the ship in the main chair. In the cockpit's window, we could see the big, blue green planet among the stars of the Ritor System. The planet's sun, Imperius, was to the left of us.

"Can't help but say that it's beautiful," the Battlemaster mumbled to herself.

"Aye, but not as beautiful as you, my bride," Brandon lifted Shadow's chin with his right index finger.

"UUGHhhhhhhh.." my face churned into a sickened look, "Seriously? We are about to maul a bunch of people and you want to still save time for romance?" Brandon sent a glare my way, but turned back with a shiny grin to his wife.

Shadow bit her lip, placed her hand on his for a moment, but then began to stand up from her seat. "Alara is slightly right, we need to prepare for battle. Blade gave us pretty straightforward instructions: Kill any who stands in our path. Are all of you ready to do so?"

"Of course. What a silly question." I replied, blowing hair from my face.

"Think on it though," Shadow explained herself further, "Anything that comes our way: men, children, innocents, women. Are we all prepared for that?"

"Well, I think it will be a bit challenging, but I know I can do anything by your side." Brandon turned from his seat as pilot and smiled at Shadow.

"And I by your side feel the same, darling." Shadow reached out her hand to his.

I couldn't stand the stupidity any longer, and huffed another sentence out, "We must be getting closer to landing, right?"

“Aye.” Brandon turned back to check the screens of the cockpit. “I’m awaiting Xen’s authorization now. It appears we were a little ahead of schedule. The other shuttles have a few moments yet to arrive. “

“Perhaps we should be focusing on making sure they’re ready rather than each other.” I looked down at my cuticles. In my peripheral I could see Shadow peering at me, and then scoffing while heading back to her seat.

“We might as well strap in to be ready. Xen could give us the ‘okay’ at any time now.” Shadow stated while obeying her own suggestion. Brandon nodded from the seat next to her, and did the same. I couldn’t help but roll my eyes a little, but strapped myself to the seat anyway. I didn’t like when Shadow was right. Though I probably should just get used to it by now. She seldom isn’t.

A few breaths went by. After a while Xen’s voice echoed through the speakers as his face appeared on the holocron:

“Your team ready, Shadow?”

“Aye, Consul. Whenever you are.” Shadow responded in the microphone before her.

“Good stuff. We will meet you down there. I’d recommend your team starts in the main transportation building. Work your way up to the top. When we see you signal from the tower, we will begin to fire down upon the campsite from up here. I’m sending a few teams down with you.”

“As you wish, Consul.” Shadow nodded.

“Best of luck. For the Empire!” Xen exclaimed.

“For the Empire.” Brandon, Shadow, and I replied. The holocron zapped off.

“Well, no point in putting this off further. Let’s go!” Brandon pushed the throttle. We descended speedily but silently towards the planet below.

“I’m plugging in the coordinates now to the main campsite. The transportation building should be fairly noticeable.” Shadow clicked away at the buttons before her. A red scope appeared on screen and zoomed in onto the proper location. “It appears as if the transportation has two levels. The ground level has 3 main bay doors, and two small exits facing the mine. The second level is filled with storage and offices for communications on the planet. There are large windows on all sides. The roof holds the satellite tower that Xen mentioned. I guess we just need to make sure we are not spotted by those windows.”

“Aye,” Brandon agreed. “I’ll land us on behind the mountain where the mine entrance is. We can climb up the mountain from there and descend down. I know you ladies are sneaky enough not to be seen. Perhaps you should enter through the back doors of the transportation bay? I can go in the right bay door guns-ablazing if you wish.”

“Oh Brandon, you are so cunning.” she placed her hand on his right forearm. “Perhaps we should wait on the guns-ablazing part though. I’ll give you a quick call when we need you. Alara and I should be able to kill at least the forefront security within the first level.” Shadow turned to look at me, as if awaiting my response.

“Well, since Xen wants us to start from the ground up rather than vice versa, I’d have to agree on this idea. Let’s do it, Shads.” I responded. She seemed content with that response. My sister and I were still on walking on eggshells around each other.

*I wonder if it will always be this way for us from now on...* I thought to myself.

“Without further ado, let’s get going!” Brandon continued to press the throttle. We began to flick quickly between the atmospheric cloud layers as we descended upon the surface of Aesirus.

Shadow:

Once our feet were on the ground, the other clan shuttles began to land around us. I saw Zehsaa, a Tacitus Athanasius member, wave at me. I smiled and gave her a wave back.

*Would I see her again? She’s strong... but what if something went wrong on this mission? Would I survive this?* Morbid thoughts kept running through my mind like this as I looked down at my gloved hands. I rubbed the leather between my fingers.

“Alright Sissy,” Alara called in a slightly mocking manner, “You ready to go or what?”

I turned around to see her there, lightsaber in hand. Her long golden braid slightly swaying in the wind. My older sister is a beautiful sight. Too bad she’s a mass murderer. At least at this moment in my lifetime though, it will come in handy.

“Aye, Sister. Let’s get going. Brandon, climb with us to the top. Wait for our signal before you rush to our aid in the main transportation bay, got it?” I looked towards my husband and couldn’t help but notice how he too was looking rather marvelous in the orangey sunset.

“Alright, my love. Stay safe.” He walked towards me and gave me a sweet gentle kiss on the forehead. I smiled in the warmth and kissed his cheek in response.

I could practically feel Alara rolling her eyes, "Let's get on with it then." I could hear the clicking of her lightsaber going back to its place on her belt.

With a slight chuckle, I turned away from my husband and began to climb up the large rocks. Alara kept up the pace, nearly passing me from my right. Brandon climbed below me, watching for my footing. We found our way to the top, and sat down to observe the area.

The large camp seemed to have the transportation bay in the focal point of its mapping: Two towers stood high at each corner of what seemed to be the entrance from this angle. There was a large backwards L-shaped building towards the right, and a large metal-roofed hall to the left. Straight below us we could hear the faint voices of the miners. The transportation bay's large doors were locking up for the night.

*We are going to have to unlock those somehow for Brandon to get in.*

Brandon, as if reading my mind, pointed towards a guard dressed in all black. He was at the bottom right corner of the building next to one of the small entrances. There he seemed to be operating a breaker to lock and unlock the doors. I smiled at Brandon, nodded in thanks, and kept observing. The second level indeed had large windows, but thankfully we were not noticed by the people looking through them. The angle we were at against them was distanced by several metres. The onlookers seemed to be staring down at the workers at the mine's orifice.

"Think they're still mining for the evening?" Alara nudged me inquisitively.

"Aye. I think so. Miners don't care what time of day it is. It's not like they can see down there anyways." I replied.

"I suppose you're right. Shall we go down now?" my older sister asked, slightly impatient.

I looked ahead and saw the guard that was once operating the doors head inside. "Yes. It seems to me these men have guns, Alara. So keep that in mind."

"Are you actually looking out for me?" she seemed rather flattered.

"Let's just get on with it. Brandon, stay here." I began to carefully slide down the rock. I aimed my legs so that I could land on the ground just behind a large stack of crates. With a quick tuck and roll, I succeeded. Alara did the same and landed at my side. Brandon peeked over the rock's top and waved, a satisfactory smile upon his face. I blew him a kiss, and began walking towards the transportation bay.

Alara was already ahead, and waved me forward to ensure me no guards were around. She pointed towards the dining hall to our right. Slight yellow light peered from between the cracks of

the windows and doors, but it seemed as though we came upon the scene without notice. I followed my younger sister towards the small entrance on the right. She stood just in front of the breaker, and allowed me to take the door's handle. Before I opened it, I looked to her.

"Okay. So we sneak in, kill one by one if we can. Check the room to ensure no one else is lurking around. Then if the coast is clear, we wave to Brandon to join us. If we mess up somehow, you run back, open the door, and I'll call to Brandon through my own telecom. We will switch from daggers to sabers from there. Sounds good?"

"I've always wanted to be more Tacitus Athanasius-like. Sneaky Sneaky. Daggery Daggery." Alara agreed with a smirk on her face. I couldn't help but smile back. I began to turn the handle open ever so slightly. As the door crept open, Alara took a quick peek, and slipped through the crack.

The room was slightly covered to us due to large shipping containers and bags towering over us from at least 10 feet. A pathway was made through the storage that veered us left after about 5 feet of walking.

"I'm tempted to climb these and peer from the top. I could shoot from above with my blaster." Alara bit her lip, looking at the walls.

"You'd be noticed far too swiftly." I reminded her. She nodded. We continued down the path the walls built for us. We grew closer to a large bay light from the ceiling, and noticed the pathway cut into two: One path veered left towards a table, while the other kept going straight. It appeared the straight path eventually veered right towards the vehicles that must be held inside. I nodded my head towards the left. Alara nodded, and did a tuck and roll to keep venturing straight without being noticed. I hunched closer towards the wall, and peered to look at the table. There were 7 Sullustans at the table, 1 standing, all of them facing a large white writing board.

"If you can see it here, the mine is obviously not safe in this sector of the shaft. We need to get our workers out of that vicinity and send them in the direct opposite direction." the man standing indicated on the map. He had a very sharp chin, and stood at about 6 feet tall. Scanning across the room quickly, it seemed they were all dressed in black attire; some wearing sweatpants, some wearing dressier looking pants. I crept around an inch more to observe the darker faced Sullustan who spoke next.

"But look how close they are to the core from there! Greshaw, we can't just have them turn back now. They signed up knowing the risks of the job! There could be a large geode of treasures there!" the dark man shouted from the opposite side of the table. He stood up while speaking and slammed his fist upon the table. Before another word could be breathed, I threw my throwing knives: one at the Sullustan standing, one at the darker faced Sullustan, and another two sitting and facing my direction. Each knife, with precision and blessing from the Force,

landed at the Adam's Apple of each one. Three more Sullustans that once had their back towards me gasped and tried to get up from their seat. Before they had a chance, I sprung to each chair and sliced the neck of the last three with a dagger. The bodies all seemed to fall on the floor at once as I wiped my dagger on one of the man's coats. I quickly retrieved my throwing knives, cleaned them, stole a key card from the Sullustan called Greshaw, and went to follow Alara down the other path.

As I turned around the second corner, I saw Alara finishing off a guard by removing her larger dagger from his chest that was plunged upward into his back. The unfortunate guard choked on his own blood as he fell to the cement floor. Due to his size he made a fump as he hit the ground which alerted a guard that sat in a glassed station between the two front bay doors.

"Alara!" I whispered, "You're being careless!" I made a hand motion for her to duck, and pulled the large body away from the scene, carefully creeping away.

"Oh c'mon! I thought that was the last one!" she said slightly louder than my tone. "Call Brandon then! I'll finish this one off." She ran off, scaled a nearby tank and spun in the air. With the grace of a panther, she landed gracefully on the ground and ignited her saber with her left hand catching her balance on the ground. The guard, slightly stunned, peered from behind the door. He quickly retracted and tried to lock the door. He whispered into what seemed to be a handheld radio. A siren went off in the building as red siren lights were powered.

"Damn it," I opened my telecom quickly, and immediately my husband's face appeared on the screen. "Yeah I hear it, I'm coming. Open the doors." Brandon was on the move, running briskly in the arena. I nodded and shut off the telecom. "Alara!! Open the doors! There's gotta be a button in there somewhere!"

"Got it!" Alara called back, beheading the guard. His head rolled out of the glassed room while blood squirted across the panes. I could see Alara struggling to find the button. As soon as she found it, the bay doors began to crawl upwards. My husband, coming from the right bay door, held his large gun on his shoulder and walked in, the last sunlight sparkling off of his silver armor.

"What did you do, Lara?" Brandon spoke sternly as he walked into the bay.

"Yep. Immediately my fault." Alara growled, looking around at the lights flashing annoyingly across the room.

"Let's get going to the second level. We need to hurry before more guards show up." I started looking for the stairs, and saw them in the left corner of the room. I ran towards them, motioning the others to follow me.

“Awhhh... I can’t get into a tank and wait for them?” Brandon whined slightly, his loud footsteps echoing behind me.

“Later, dear. Let’s finish the mission first.” I slightly chuckled, looking back to make sure the others were behind me.

Brandon:

I followed my beloved wife up the staircase, armed and ready for whatever came next. My cranky sister-in-law, Alara, followed behind me. I wasn’t exactly sure why Shadow still lets her hang around, especially after killing their parents. But I never question my bride on what she does. Her intentions are usually hidden, but meaningful.

“Is it time to get my lightsaber out yet?” Alara’s voice resonated in my ear canal.

“Aye. I think so. The alarms will have brought a lot of guards away. No time for sneaking now.” Shadow replied from ahead of me. I could hear both girls clicking their lightsabers off of their belts. I pet the T-21 Light Repeating Blaster in my other hand, smiling to myself. Excitement crept throughout my veins. I loved the thrill. I loved that I could go out and battle next to my wife. As for Alara being here too? Well, I’ll deal with her for now.

As we reached the second level of the large building, there were guards already waiting for us. They began to rapidly fire at us, but my bullets do not miss easily. Alara jumped before me to deter the bullets with her saber. The yellow saber hissed at each impact. Shadow was already finishing the others that my bullets didn’t have a chance to hit with her own dance of sabers. I looked upon Alara with surprise. She just smirked and ran past me to catch up with her sister.

*Hmph. Women. I don’t think I’ll ever understand them.* I thought to myself. I ran to catch up with the girls who were already performing magnificent slaughter in another room of what seemed to be offices. I pointed my blaster towards the enemies going toward them and watched with glee as their bodies fell to the floor. The girls followed each other, slashing their lightsabers as they went like a whirlwind of light to find the centre of the room. I ran down one of the main paths and shot bullets towards every Sullustan I saw in each aisle. Papers and sparks flew everywhere as desks, electronics, and bodies were destroyed in the room. One Sullustan could be heard gurgling through his blood for mercy, but I observed that my beloved Shadow paid him none and beheaded him on the floor.

Once we cleared the office space and walked into the next section of the building, we realized that it was not just a giant square of a level, but that it was a four section level that held the perimeter of the giant satellite standing in the middle. We ran through a glassed hallway towards the other large room. Shots were being fired from the other glassed hallway across from us. What glass was once standing around us fell and shattered to the floor. The girls augmented

their speed to run faster. I began to shoot at the Sullustans across the way. Below and around the building I could see the other buildings flashing with artillery fire.

*Well, it appears we aren't doing too bad this round.*

We made it to the other room safely and discovered it to be the electrical breaker room. Large, thick, winding wires stuck out from the towers. All the servers and computers seemed to be fastened right to the walls and ceilings so as not to be moved very easily. I could hear a slight yelp from across the room. Alara already finished the job and removed her dagger from his heart, allowing his body to drop to the floor.

"Damn it, Alara! I thought you'd learn the first time! Don't let them just fall over like that!" Shadow growled at her older sister.

"Oh lighten up, no one else is here. It's just us. Not like it'll be heard with all this humming from the machines anyway." Alara kicked the Sullustan's body over to the wall.

"No one is here right now, anyway." Shadow spat back.

"Should we ask Xen if he would like us to trash this room? Looks like these computers probably handle a lot of the technology on this base." I looked over to Shadow.

"Good idea, love." she immediately pulled up her telecom and dialed to Xen. He didn't show up on the screen though.

"Make it quick, Shads! Under fire here," Xen answered with shuffling and yelling in the background.

"We found the control room! Want us to decimate it?" Shadow questioned with a slight smile.

"Sounds good! Let's make it dark as night! Xen out!" the telecom screen went dark as the Consul hung up.

"Well, let's get going then!" Alara ignited her saber and stabbed the nearest control panel. Sparks spat out from the machine. Shadow smiled and ignited her sabers as she hopped towards the nearest tower. She dragged her sabers across the computers as she skipped around, as if she were tracing her fingers in water. I allowed my blaster to mark designs in the control panel next to me as well. Among the sparks and chaos, we could hear the whole building shut down. Everything went pitch black instantly. Alara found the back up generator and destroyed it before the lights could come on once again. Having only the girls' sabers as our light, we went into the next glassed hallway.

As we neared the next room, we could hear the rustling of more guards and leaders around the room.



"Saber up, Alara!" Shadow checked to see if Alara was behind her.

"Don't have to tell me that, Sissy." Alara spoke plainly. The girls carefully stepped towards the room.

What we saw in that room was a sight to see indeed. Sullustans seemed to be standing in the middle of the room, circling a character we could not see in the dark. Some of the guards threw down flashlights to bring light to the room. In the middle of the room, we could see there stood a large mercenary Kiffar. When Alara met eye contact with him, she gasped, nearly dropping her saber to the floor.

"Hold your fire, guys. Do not shoot until I give the word." the Kiffar ordered, raising his hand.

"...T...Tor'vak?" Alara stepped slightly closer, holding her saber downwards.

"Hello Alara," the mercenary chuckled, "Didn't think I would see you here."

Tor'vak:

"Alara, is this the mercenary? Is this the one?!" the other half Sephi interrogated, spinning towards Alara. This must have been her sister, Shadow. She bit down on her lip in anger.

"Oh Alara, you did such a great job with your parents," Tor'vak chuckled, "I figured if I ever saw you again I'd have to pay you like I promised. Though I don't think you killed them just because I asked you..."

"IT WAS YOU!" Shadow growled in anger, and just about leapt towards her new-found enemy.

"SHADOW!" the white-haired male shouted, scooping up the rather angry Sephi with his large arm, "NOT NOW."

My Sullustan lieutenant Arko jumped slightly, readying his weapon. I put one of my hands on his shoulder, reassuring him it was okay. Arko relaxed from his stiffened position and went back to his place alongside the others.

"Hmmm... You must be Brandon Tarsus and Shadow Nighthunter, is that right?" I peered at them, stepping past my guards to get a better view. "Alara hasn't told me much about you."

"I can't believe you let him survive, Shadow. I was pretty sure he was going to die after you found out about him." Alara looked at her sister with a cocked eyebrow.

"Nahh," I smirked at the beautiful blonde half Sephi, "No one can locate me that easily. Unless I let them of course. However I am rather surprised to see you here."

"Seems as though it's easier to find you than you believe." She smirked at me, her hair falling into her eyes.

"Perhaps you're right, Lass." I sighed, "Or perhaps we were meant to meet here and I didn't even know it."

"Either way, Kiffar," Shadow interrupted, "We have been ordered to kill everyone on this base. Try to give me a good reason why I shouldn't." she snarled, holding her husband's arm.

"Easy. I don't kill you, you don't kill me. I see that as a fair trade. And since Alara did go ahead and kill your parents, I technically owe her a debt. Cash involved." I pointed out, throwing a kind glance to Alara. I could see her cheeks suddenly turn a flash of red, but went back to their normal color within a blink.

"You think that giving us money is going to spare your life?" Shadow snapped.

"Oh Shadow, enough!" Alara scoffed, glaring at her sister. "There must have been a pretty good reason for the mercenaries to want Father dead! You and I both know that. It's over and done with. It's not like Tor'vak killed them. I did."

"And you're lucky you have enough strength to breathe those words to me, Alara. Don't forget our last fight. The Force may want you alive, but I do not." Shadow's brow furrowed towards Alara. That last comment stung the beauty. I could see it in her eyes.

"Shadow, enough." Brandon pulled her closer, kissing her forehead. "Can you give us another reason to spare your life?" the silver-haired brute looked towards me.

"Simple. I know where the biggest crystals are below the surface. And I know where the vault is that the other mined crystals are being held in." After that phrase of mine, I spotted Alara's ears perking up slightly in curiosity.

"Actually, Shads. That's good information that Xen will want. We need to report this to him." Brandon stated.

The Sullustans around me began to squirm, quietly muttering to each other in their native tongue. Looking around at Shadow, Alara, and Brandon, I nodded while pulling out a knife. I stabbed my lieutenant in the back, as well as a few of his comrades surrounding him. Gunfire and saber slashing reverberated through my ears as the others caught my drift, and slaughtered the rest of the Sullustans.

“Well, let’s get going to the roof then.” I casually stepped over the bodies around me and pointed towards the opposite side of the room. As I walked towards the door there, I opened it and indicated for the others to climb the ladder behind it. One by one, each filed through the door and began their way up the ladder. I looked back for but a moment at my fallen acquaintances, but shut the door behind myself.

Shadow was already talking into her telecom, beckoning her leader’s response.

“Aye, good job guys! We will begin firing upon the rest of the camps. We’ve already told the others to join you on the roof. They should arrive there shortly. Who’s the new guy?” A male’s voice came through the telecom.

“This is what seemed to be the leader of the camp. He is willing to help us with information on the crystals that are mined, and the jackpot that’s left behind in the mine.” Shadow replied, eyeing me carefully.

“Oh! Alrighty then. We’ll discuss more of that once we have demolished the grounds. We won’t be aiming right at the crystals though, right?” the leader questioned, slightly concerned.

“No,” I stepped forward, “They are safe as long as you don’t trash the mining entrance or the building we are on.”

“Glad to hear it. We will start bombing the campground now.” the leader’s face disappeared from the screen.

Suddenly a large destroyer descended upon the sky with the word “Renown” engraved on it’s side. Ammunition and bombs began to fall from the ship onto the campground all around us. Explosions, heat, and fire scorched all around us. I looked to Alara, who seemed to be admiring the demolition in progress. Some voices came from behind us as more and more Jedi, Sith, and Fighters came to the roof.

*Well, Tor’vak. What have you got yourself into now? You’ll have to deliver... Ehh. Should be worth it. Especially if I can take Alara on a date.* I grinned to myself.

The sky kept shining in hues of blue, orange, yellow, and red due to the rapid fire from the ship. After what seemed to be ages, the ship ceased fire, and landed on top of the mining mountain.

“And I think that concludes our mission.” Alara smirked, looking over at me. “Time for you to shine, Tor’vak.”

I nodded, obliging her, and dug into my inside pocket from my jacket. I pulled out a blueprint which I then handed to the Sephi lass. “This has all the information you should need. I’ll lead you to both spots of course.”