PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE

FICTION CREATED

BY

WARRIOR DARKHAWK #264

MYSTIC KAAYN SALIS #4493

CAPTAIN SABE BAIZE #14729

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JNEpazATvs8mfFqbDueQm674bMziOmz5a63MOGjpydk/edit>

**LZ “Hawk” - Second Wave**

**One Hour After Reinforcement Order**

**Moriband**

Alarms were blaring in the cockpit of the Lambda shuttle, and in the pilot’s seat was a woman in an armored version of a TIE Pilot’s flight gear, wrestling with the controls.

“Mayday, mayday. This is Gamma Two-Aurek, we are going down, two klicks southwest of LZ Hawk. Heavy ground fire.” Sabe said into the commlink, before reaching over and trying to reactivate the repulsorlift system again.

“Hang on, everyone!” The co-pilot, who was just wearing a normal flight officer’s jumpsuit, called to the troop compartment behind them.

“Shut up and help me stabilize this thing. Dead sticking in a Lambda is not something I like doing alone.” Sabe said.

“Two hundred meters and dropping. Repulsors non-responsive.” The co-pilot said.

“Kriff it. Go full reverse thrusters, start the landing cycle.” Sabe ordered and tried to start cycling the remaining power into the shields.

“Got it. Starting…” The Lambda nosed over just as a hail of blaster fire smacked into the viewport. Several bolts ripped through the transparisteel and tore into the co-pilot, killing him.

“Kriff!” Sabe yanked hard back on the control yoke to get the nose back up and then smacked the button to fold the Lambda’s wings up.

“Gamma Two, pull up! Collision!” A voice called out on the comm. Sabe turned and saw one of the other Lambda spinning out of control on a horizontal axis right into them. But with unresponsive controls, there was nothing more she could do except watch, and the two shuttles collided, smashing into the rear. Screams echoed from the troop compartment as several soldiers and journeymen were ripped from the back and sent falling to their deaths.

Now the shuttle had no engines and was in a spin, and the g-forces were already taking their toll, making it difficult to reach the button to jettison the command cabin from the rest of the shuttle. But then her world became black as the Lambda slammed into the ground.

She came to with the sounds of boots in the troop compartment behind her. Fearing the worst, she began to struggle with her crash webbing but stopped when she heard the steps enter the cockpit. Looking up, she saw it wasn’t one of the hostiles listed in the rather abridged briefing, but rather, she recognized him as the Battle Team Leader of the Night Hawks.

“Are you injured?” He asked.

“Dunno. Don’t think so.” Sabe replied, and pulled her vibro dagger, cutting the harnesses to get free.

“Then there’s at least two survivors. Out of sixty. Get your gear, pilot.” DarkHawk had already turned to exit the craft.

“Captain, sir. Captain Sabe Baize, easier to just call me Blaze.” Sabe said, correcting him.

“Very well. Let’s go.” DarkHawk replied. Sabe pulled her rifle free from where she had secured it on the back of her seat and headed for the back. She could now see the extent of the damage. Not only had the rear been ripped off, but also a good portion of the ventral wing and hull it had been attached to. Landing this intact had been nothing short of a miracle.

Outside, a man in black armor was dusting himself off. He was one of the passengers, and Sabe was surprised he hadn’t been dumped out of the back. All around the LZ, there was bodies and debris of what had been three Lambda shuttles.

“We’re too exposed here. Come on, we’re heading back into the caves.” DarkHawk ordered, waving Sabe and Kaayn along.

Dusting himself off, Kaayn evaluated his overall well being.  Grabbing a throbbing pain in his right ribs, he thought, “No serious injuries.”  Closing his eyes, he took in the sights, smells, sounds, and emotion of the crash.  The terror in the crew that died in the crash fueled him.

“…heading back to the caves.” Kaayn overheard a tall man in

a dark combat suit order and motioned a woman in a flight suit and Kaayn to follow him.

The caves were only a short journey from the crash site.  The three gathered some of the supplies that survived the crash and headed towards the caves.

**Caves**

**2 hours after the crash**

**Moriband**

The three Sadowans made their way deeper into the caves.  It had been almost an hour since they entered the cave but not one of them said anything, except for the occasional command by DarkHawk.    They trekked further in the cave for more security.  The long tunnel had split into multiple sections.  Kaayn closed his eyes and probed each tunnel with the force.  Nothing.

Taking the east most path, which seemed to go forever, the three began to have an uneasy feeling.  As if something was following them.  In searching for the cause, they found nothing.  DarkHawk and Kaayn both tried to search through the force and still turned up nothing.     However, they pressed on.

**Alien City**

**Moriband**

The tunnel opened to a large cavern.   DarkHawk, Sebz, and Kaayn took cover behind a large rock. The cavern appeared to be a city or settlement of some kind.  Makeshift buildings were dotted the stone floor.  A crystal blue separated the tunnel opening and the buildings. A stone bridge extended the gap.    Large grey creatures moved about on three legs.  Their clawed hands grasping various objects that appeared to have been tools.  Occasionally, one would let out an unnatural clicking noise.   DarkHawk and Kaayn tried to sense the creatures..  nothing could be felt from the creatures.  The three continued to hide behind the rock when a clicking sound came from behind.

All three Sadowans spun around, weapons drawn.   Five creatures were directly behind them.  Their insectoid heads making a sickening clicking noise.  Bright streaks of the light road from the E-11 the TIE pilot was carrying.  The lights ripped through the lead creature.  It’s body broken and charred, fell to the ground in a crumbled heap.  Simultaneously, DarkHawk and Kaayn ignited their lightsabers.  Crimson and azure lights screamed to life.

Working in unison, the two Jedi sliced through two more of the creatures.  Kaayn turned to face the nearest creature.  As he prepared to engage it, the claw of the creature sliced across his face knocking him to the ground.  A burning sensation filled his body and the cold wet sensation of blood ran down his head.  Kaayn tried to climb to his feet but stumbled.  Red filled his vision and all went black.  DarkHawk and Sebz continued to engage the other two creatures and were able to defeat both.

DarkHawk leaned over the fallen Mystic.  The Warrior assessed his wounds.  His skin felt cold and clammy.  It seemed the Mystic may be going into shock.

“Sabe, do you have a med kit?”

“Yes, Sir a small one” replied the Captain

She handed the small medkit over, DarkHawk took a small vial from his utility belt and took a sample of the Mystics blood.

“Why are you doing that?” asked Sabe.

“He is obviously been poisoned and a blood sample will help us analyze it further once we get into communications range.”

A look of astonishment came over the face of the Captain.  DarkHawk cleaned and bandaged the wound.  Pulling out a small stim-kit and injected Kaayn with a needle.

“This won't cure him but it will bring him out of enough to aid us in the mission.”

The Mystic started coming to, and his eyes opened wide.  He tried to sit up and the Warrior aided him upright.

“Ugh, my head is pounding!” exclaimed Kaayn

It’s the toxins in your body, I injected you with a neurotoxin to help fight the poison.  It's only temporary, so don’t burn it out all at once.  We only got a couple hours before that wears off, so we need to find out where we’re at and make contact with the others”

Kaayn nodded.

“So we know not to let those things scratch us,” Sabe said sarcastically

The three were still tending to their fallen comrade when the attack came from the right.  Two of the “Greys” came charging before Sabe raised her rifle and Kaayn moved into position for a saber strike, DarkHawk had Force gripped the two creatures and motioned his arm slamming them into the rock wall.

The two just looked at the Warrior, Kaayn almost questioned the expression on the face of the Equite.  “*He enjoyed the kill…”* thought the Mystic.

The three took cover once again and surveyed the scene of this newly discovered underground city.  They had to be at least a  two klicks underground, minimum.  They all seemed a bit astonished that this citadel has been underground for all this time and no one has discovered it until now.

There was only one way in and that was across the bridge leading to a massive set of doors.  From their scanning and heat signatures, there were no guards posted at the doors.  The problem being that the bridge will leave them completely exposed.

The Warrior’s thought process was working overtime.  They had to make a move and get in, make their way to any sort of communications room and stay alive until reinforcements arrived.

“I will traverse the bridge, once I get to the other side I will signal for you to cross.  Sabe,  take up position with that rifle and if any of those things get in your sight, you know what to do…” said the Warrior.

Sabe nodded in agreement.

“What of me?” asked Kaayn

“Stay with Sabe for the meantime, I want that antitoxin working, we will need your saber soon enough.”

Kaayn nodded as well and positioned himself with the Captain.

The Warrior drew upon the Force and faded into nothing.  Even cloaked, he was diligent and tentative to his path as he made his course of action.  About midway through the bridge, the doors opened and three of the “Greys” appeared.  At first, they did not move, just stared across the bridge, the clicking they emanated echoed throughout the deep cavern.  The Equite paused with them.  Never moving, watching.  He began to slowly inch his way forward, no movement from the Greys.

The Sith was about four meters away from the Greys when a crumble of a stalactite began to shift.  DarkHawk could not look up fast enough as the rock came crashing down toward him.  Sabe took aim with her rifle and racked off two suppressed shots and the rock exploded before hitting the ground.

Meanwhile, DarkHawk scrambled and rolled out of the way of the falling debris.  The three Greys startled by the falling rock made their way to investigate.  The Sith, without thinking, uncloaked himself from the action of avoiding the falling rock.  The “Greys started their charge, and two dropped before their second step.

As the enemy charged, Sabe noticed that they weren’t just Grey from their skin, but they were wearing armor that had a dull silver sheen to it. Somehow, it struck her as familiar, but her mind snapped her back to the present. She tucked the stock of her carbine into her shoulder, lining up and began opening fire, pushing for the bridge itself to use the stone railing for cover. Blaster fire sailed over both sides, more so the incoming fire than the outgoing fire.

“Push up, I’ve got you covered!” Sabe called out. Kaayn looked at her for a moment, before igniting his red lightsaber and advancing towards the enemy. The doors into citadel started to creak open, and several more Greys rushed to join the fray, only to be ambushed by DarkHawk, closing to engage them with his quarterstaff.

Sabe leaned up from cover and sighted in one of the enemies on the bridge. Settling the sights onto her target’s center mass, she fired off a pair of crimson bolts into its torso, pitching it backwards with a smoldering scorching on its chest. Return fire chipped into the stone she was using for cover, forcing her to cover once more, and she started crab shuffling her way down the low wall to pop up at a different point.

As she came back up, she saw Kaayn close the distance with the second guard on the bridge. She noticed that his off-hand was kept behind his back as he batted a blaster bolt aside and then slashed upward in a diagonal slash. The Grey staggered back from the hit but was met with a second slash in the opposite direction.

Sabe lined up on the final Grey, who was trying to get behind Kaayn, and squeezed off a double-tap again, letting the muzzle climb push the barrel up the target. The first blast caught it in the back, the second was back of the head. But Kaayn was not done yet with his target, he was now sidestepping and juking from the Grey before making a feign attack to cause it to step back.

She had seen that a million times before, yet another Sith wanting to toy with someone rather than killing them. Sabe got to her feet and started advancing up the bridge, moving to the fray where DarkHawk was holding his ground against two Greys, one already sprawled on the ground. As soon as she could, she brought her carbine up and let loose a burst of fire that caught another, sending it spinning to the ground. The remaining Grey looked away to see what was the new threat, only to be swept off of its feet by way of DarkHawk’s quarterstaff, and then smashed in the face with it, knocking the creature out.

Finally, Sabe heard the sound of a lightsaber being run through a being, and the two regrouped with DarkHawk at the citadel doors.

“We’re going to have to keep moving to keep from getting overwhelmed,” Sabe said, putting her back against the wall next to the door.

“Yes. But we also don’t know what’s waiting for us in there.” DarkHawk replied.

“We should try to traverse in some kind of cover where possible, we’re far too exposed,” Kaayn added.

“You think so?” Sabe asked sarcastically, her eyes rolling unseen under her helmet.

“Don’t. Just take point, try to stick to inside buildings where possible.” DarkHawk said.

Sabe let out a sigh, leaning out to check their approach options before stepping off into the citadel with DarkHawk and Kaayn in tow.

The three Sadowans turned the corner and made their way towards an imposing staircase.  DarkHawk pointed down the adjacent hallway as the sounds of scuffling footsteps began to echo through the halls of the citadel.  They made their way to the staircase.  Sabe rifle shouldered and following the curves of the staircase gave the all clear sign.  The three quickly started to traverse the staircase, clearing the first landing just as four Grey’s entered the foyer room.  The audible clicks were rapid and loud, it just a matter of moments before they made their own way up the stairs.

DarkHawk stopped, motioned his comrades to push up.  Sabe nodded with almost an astonished look on her face.  Kaayn was sweating profusely, the antitoxins were working but not for long.  Kaayn tapped his saber hilt on the Warrior’s shoulder and followed Sabe up the stairway.  DarkHawk leaned against the wall, took in a deep breath.  He let the Dark Force bathe over his scheme of totality.  The hatred seething uninhibited through him.  *Fade to black…*

The Sith pictured in his mind’s eyes what was about to take place.  The Grey’s stood no chance against him.  That very thought was relished within himself, no emotion expressed, just the end result.  The Grey’s were gathered in the middle of the foyer still, their clicking almost in a chant-like state.  As one turned towards the stairs, it discharged a shriek alerting the others.  There at the top of the first landing, the Sith stood stoic, a death stare trance the hatred burning his core.

The four Grey’s charged across the foyer and up the stairs.  Their audible clicks were almost a war chant at this point, in sync with each other.  The Grey’s came to the midway point of the stairs and landing before the Equite made his move.  He sprung to action launching himself off the landing and executed a jumping side kick catching the lead aggressor directly in the chest.  The blow launched the Grey back into his brood and they tumbled down the stairs.  The Equite never changed pace, he descended the stairs with complete resoluteness.  Never taking his eyes off his targets.  *Fade to black…*

Two of the Grey’s got to their feet and made a second charge.  The first made a wild arcing swing with its claws at the black clad figure.  The Sadowan ducked under the blow and then caught his adversary with a devastating elbow to the back of its head.  The second came with a volley of blows, narrowly missing the Equite.  Their smell was atrocious, reeking of sulphur and death.  The Warrior’s concentration was almost broke by the pungent smell.

The Grey lost its balance with its last attack, the Equite used that momentum and grabbing the arm of the Grey, he twisted his hips bringing the arm up and over his body, feeling the bone snap with the motion and launched the figure over the railing crashing to the floor below.  The first attacker was back to his feet, and the other two charged from the bottom of the steps.  *“Two can play this game…”* he thought.  The two charging from the bottom made a sudden pause as the talons from the gloves exposed themselves.  A small smile crested the lips of the Warrior, and he went right to work.

One Grey came at him and his claws were blocked by the Warriors gauntlets, slashing across Grey’s midsection, two killing blows raked the torso wide open.  A charcoal colored liquid spewed over the stairwell, and the Grey slumped along the bannisters rolling towards the bottom of the stairs.  Another attack came from the rear and the caught the creature with a snap kick buckling it over.  DarkHawk raked the creature’s inner thighs with his talons and the Grey fell to its knees.  Before the Grey could blink the Warrior slashed the throat of his enemy and another slid to the bottom of the stairwell.  The last Grey was at the top of the landing and it launched itself in the air at the Warrior.  The Equite simply raised his right arm and stopped the attack in mid-air, for a moment he studied the creature memorizing its features.  The Grey struggled to try to break the bonds the Warrior had on it.  DarkHawk simply closed his fist and Grey’s body was crushed.

The Equite enjoyed the carnage he just created, but he knew he had to rendezvous with his comrades.  He bolted on a full sprint up the stairs.  Sabe and Kaayn had made it to the fourth level and were engaging with a group of Grey's themselves.  Sabe had dropped three of the creatures down the hallway.  The barrel of her E-11 was smoking from the volley of shots she had cut loose with.  Kaayn, was in close quarters combat with two of the Grey’s and the Warrior went to assist his partner.  Before he could jump in Kaayn, severed the arm of one of the creatures, crouched and spun burying the hilt of his saber into the second.  Kaayn kicked his foe off his saber stood and smiled at his partners.

“What is that horrid smell” Sabe exclaimed.

“That’s their blood” gruffed DarkHawk.

“Disgusting”

“These creatures are like moles, they feed off the planet, we are simply a treat.  They stick to the dimly lit areas, I believe they are light sensitive.  There has to be a power source here, and someone is controlling these things.”

“How do you figure,” asked Kaayn.

“The group in the foyer, they all had the same tones but there was one sound that was different, once they heard that, they attacked.” the Warrior explained.

“So what’s the play?” asked Sabe

“We gotta get out of here, there is no telling how many are here, and Kaayn won’t last much longer.  When we crossed the bridge, I saw what looked to be an antenna array looked to be heading to the surface, it’s the only way whoever is in charge here could get a signal.”

“So we find that COMM room eh?  You think it's close by?” Sabe asked

“I hope so, otherwise it is going to get thick for us and quick.” The Equite said with no emotion.

“Let's move then,” said Kaayn.

The three Sadawan’s moved down the hallway, Sabe had taken point, with Kaayn in the middle and DarkHawk kept an eye on their six.  Carefully the team moved in unison covering each opening as they passed by.  A large corridor approached, and a distinct sound of audible beeps could be heard from the east side of the corridor.  Sabe hugged the wall and motioned the team to stop.  She signalled the group to the sound and it was acknowledged by both men.  Sabe slid across the floor in a kneeling position, reaching the corner and peeked around the corner.  There was a group of the Grey’s in front of a massive door.  She motioned to her team of her discovery, DarkHawk reached into his utility belt and pulled out a flash grenade.  He motioned to his team with his gloved hand, three, two, one.  The Warrior hurled the grenade around the corner, the Grey’s startled to the sound of the grenade hitting the stone floor.  Before they could react, a massive flash exploded directly in front of the creatures.

The team charged the corridor, Sabe fired two shot and dropped the two closest Grey’s.  DarkHawk and Kaayn went to work with their sabers.  Kaayn had cut one of the Grey’s completely in two at the waist.  DarkHawk had both long hilted sabers unsheathed and the crimson blades were moving in a precision arching motion hacking the stunned creatures. Within seconds the hallway was clear except for the residue of smoke and burned flesh.

Sabe checked the door, “*Damn, locked”* she thought.  Before she could even say anything, DarkHawk kicked the door open.  There in that room was their prize.  A multitude of databanks, computers and communications, the likes they none of the three had seen before. Cautiously they entered the room.  Just as DarkHawk had entered the room, he quickly turned to his right catching the end of a long knotty staff over his gauntlet smashing it to twigs.  At the end of that staff was a tall very slender creature, with a surprisingly thin skull.  Sabe ready her rifle to send off a shot, DarkHawk quickly motioned her to stop.

“Are you the leader of this citadel?” the Warrior asked.

The creature said nothing.  The creature wore a long ornate crimson robe.  Its eyes were quite small and solid black.  The team studied the creature, it made no gestures nor made any kind of movement.

“Sabe get on that COMM and get us the hell out of here,”  DarkHawk ordered.

“Ha, and which one would that be!” she said facetiously.

Before DarkHawk or Kaayn could say a word, the creature raised its arm and pointed with long skinny fingers at a machine in the corner.  The Warrior motioned Sabe to approach, never taking his eyes of their host.  His other hand steady with his saber, ready, waiting.

Sabe started throwing switches to what she thought was familiar to her.  The speaker cracked as she zeroed in on the correct frequency.

“MayDay, mayday, this is Gamma Two-Aurek, we crashed two clicks south-west of LZ Hawk and we are about two and a half clicks beneath the surface.  We have discovered a Citadel underground and have been engaged by opposing force, we have one wounded.  We request immediate evacuation and reinforcements.  Do you copy?”

The speaker cracked and emanated a loud squeal.

“Gamma Two-Aurek, this is Gamma One, we read you loud and clear.  We are at the crash site and requesting further coordinates to your location.”

“Gamma One, just South-West of the crash site, there is a cavern opening, follow that down. Over”

“Gamma Two, we have a lock on your location, moving in.”

A sigh of relief came over Kaayn and Sabe.  DarkHawk stood staring at the figure before him.

“Who are you?” he asked

The creature said nothing.  It tilted its head looking back at the Warrior, almost puzzled by his appearance.

“What is this place”

Again, nothing from the creature.  The speaker cracked and the same voice from before came screaming through and echoed throughout the room.

“Gamma Two, this is Gamma One, we are at the citadel bridge are you clear to evacuate?”

The creature gestured with its left arm toward the door.  The three were almost taken back at the gesture.

“Don’t have to tell me twice!” said Sabe.

And she made her way towards the door.  DarkHawk slowly sheathed his saber to his utility belt, gave a slight nod of his head.  The Warrior turned and exited the room.  Before they could turn at the corridor, Kaayn dropped to one knee.  The Equite grabbed the Mystic and slung him over his shoulder.  Sabe led the way, rifle shouldered and backtracking their entry path.  They made it down the stairwell and into the foyer, through the entryway to the large citadel doors.  Sabe slammed into the doors and pushed them open.  There on the bridge, they could see the Warhost teams closing in.

They were met by Sergeant Major Krill, his rangers had a perimeter of the area and two of the rangers had grabbed Kaayn.

“He has been poisoned, I administered an antitoxin, but he has burned through it.” the Equite informed Krill.

He handed him the vile’s he took earlier of the blood samples.

“This should help, it’s a sample of Kaayn’s blood and the creature's blood.”

Krill handed them to his medic and the medic went right to work.

“What the hell is this place?” Krill asked.

“We have no clue,” said Sabe.