

Always two

A Clan Scholae Palatinae Fiction

IMS Tipoca II – 0600 Hours

Imperium Briefing Room – Former Med Bay

“What do you mean we are going on a raiding run right now?” Jurdan questioned Lexiconus after what he had just heard. “We don’t even have a home right now besides this station, and you want us to go steal a Venator class ship from a shipyard in the Corulag system?”

“That’s what you have been told Jurdan. Can you complete the mission or not?” Lexiconus questioned Jurdan’s ability to complete the mission openly in front of all the men.

“Shadow Guard will get the mission done. I may not be Delak, but never question my integrity again.” Jurdan said as he stormed out of the briefing room.

Never before had anyone openly questioned Jurdan’s integrity as an able bodied officer or a Sith. His chest was on fire fueled by the rage he felt about what Lexiconus had just said to him. Jurdan was one who would do what he could to honor his fallen brother. He would not let anyone talk to him this way. He would get this mission done. Strange though, that he would be leading a mission to his home planet. He knew of several repair stations that had ships docked at them. Some of these docks were abandoned with ships still in port. His father, the King of Corulag, would never allow him access to these ships. He was only a half son through a peasant concubine. He had been showed enough love to get his mother and him off world to live in peace.

Jurdan was now returning to his home world with Shadow Guard and Reiden Karr in tow. They would take his personal ship the Demolisher with them. It was a modified Sith Infiltrator that he acquired when Delak passed away. It was in his honor that he took the ship with its sleek lines and finely tuned engine. It had enough room for a few members to go with him. They might be tightly packed like banthas in an animal pen, but they would make it to the end of the journey. The Star Courier he flew was outfitted with a blackout camouflage which made his ship look like the night sky itself. It was quick and maneuverable with laser cannons and ion cannons. They could get on board the ship and take over as quickly and as quietly as they could.

Sith Infiltrator Demolisher – 0800 Hours

IMS Tipoca Landing Bay

Jurdan was finishing the pre-flight check on the Demolisher and signaled all ready to the controller. Everyone boarded the ship quickly and before anyone could say anything they were out the hangar doors. The navicomputer was calculating the quickest hyperspace routes to Corulag. A couple of lights started flashing on the console in front of him and then a warning klaxon went off. Jurdan pulled the handle for the hyperspace engines. He watched as the stars faded into a swirling blue and white vortex of light like a whirlpool on Mon Cala. The trip would take several hyperspace jumps to arrive at their destination. He had plotted a course so they drop out of hyperspace on the outskirts of the system. Jurdan planned for them to head for one of the outermost repair stations. He knew that there were some Venators left over from the Clone Wars still in the derelict stations. Hopefully they would get on the ship without a problem. Then they could steal the ship and all of the remaining support vehicles and fighters that might be on board.

Hyperspace travel was a good time for Jurdan to meditate on the coming mission. He always tried to see if there would be any coming troubles, but he wasn't always the best at seeing the future. Even when he did things seemed to come out very differently. Either way his meditation always helped him to focus himself so that he could be a more effective agent in the field.

"Hey Jurdan," Reiden roused Jurdan from his meditation abruptly. "Hey do you know how long it's going to be until we get to Corulag? We have been stuck in here for a long time and we are starting to feel anxious."

"You mean you are feeling anxious Reiden? I know you aren't accustomed to these types of missions but you wanted to come along anyways. Sit up here with me if it's getting to be too much back there." Jurdan suggested and motioned Reiden into the Co-pilot seat. "We are used to tight quarters. Although, we have usually been deployed with the Indomitable as a launch platform.

"Yea this entire situation is very unusual. With our numbers dwindling the way they are I decided that it would be time for me to get my hands dirty. We need to be able to take care of ourselves and each other don't you agree?" Reiden responded politely.

"Yes indeed. Never before have I seen destruction on this level first hand. We will not be able to strike fear into anyone or even defend ourselves without these ships. We must succeed for the sake of the Emperor and the Empire." Jurdan reassured Reiden.

Reiden nodded in agreement and turned his attention to the blue of hyperspace through the viewport. Jurdan returned to his meditation as he waited for the warning klaxon to notify him that they had arrived.

Some time passed as minutes became hours of what seemed like Reiden repeatedly interrupting Jurdan's attempts at meditation. He was not able to ever get a full grasp of what he was trying to meditate about. This mission might be shaping up to be a bad decision with this particular crew. No. Jurdan would not fail Delak. He would move forward and win the day if it meant losing his very life in the service of his Emperor. A warning klaxon began to go off.

“Finally,” Jurdan thought to himself. “Alright boys, lets get strapped in back there. We are entering the Corulag system and making our run for the outermost repair facility.”

Jurdan dropped the Demolisher out of hyperspace at the edge of the system so as to not be detected on scanners. So far his ships camo had worked beautifully. Even if they showed up on the scanners they would be very hard to spot with his current paint job. He brought his ship in on the port side of the station. Here it would make scanning his ship that much harder because it was blocked out by the station itself. Jurdan landed the ship inside of the main hangar bay of the Venator that they had come to steal. He ordered everyone disembark as quickly as possible.

The Venator, while old, was still a tough little ship. He had seen one used many times in battle where the ships took a beating and kept on ticking. This ship was named the Dauntless. He knew it from some of the security files they had decrypted while searching for suitable ships to replace their recently lost fleet. The ship seemed to still be empty so they pressed on.

VEN Dauntless - Bridge

The security droid pulled up a monitor to survey the ship for its weekly security analysis. It was flipping very quickly through the screens as it normally did until it stopped at a screen showing a new craft that it hadn't seen before. It was registering eight new lifeforms in the hangar bay as well.

“This is C2-B4 to security forces in the vicinity of the Ralgast repair station. The Dauntless has been boarded. Requesting immediate assistance to repel boarders. Hostile intent is expected. Dauntless out.” The droid stated into his internal comm unit.

A reply message came quickly and alerted him they were bringing in two ships. Two ships carried about twenty men total. The droid expected this would be enough to repel the boarders. He continued watching the screens following the progress of the men who had landed on the ship. They were completely unaware that he had raised any alarms and they would be walking into a trap. They would not take this ship.

C2 watched closely as the Corulagian Security Forces landed in the port side hangar bay. They were flying Lambda class shuttles and landed them right next to the Star Courier. They were pinned in and would not escape from his hands.

VEN Dauntless - Hallway

“Well the ship seems to be empty.” Reiden stated as everyone shook their heads. “What?” he questioned them.

“Of course the ship is empty. That's why we chose this ship as a target.” Wagglehorn said. “Silly Reiden. Away from your records. This is how we work. Stick with us and we will teach you a thing or two about stealth missions.”

“Alright guys it’s not Reiden’s first rodeo but we all need to stay quiet.” Jurdan said. “Even though it’s empty now, you never know who might be watching. We must be vigilant.” Jurdan peeked his head around a corner which lead to a turbo shaft towards the bridge. “Alright guys let’s move up.”

Jurdan led his troops forward to the turbolift. When they reached it they noticed that it still had power. Fortuitous or odd? They entered the turbolift and pressed a few buttons to reach the bridge. Jurdan started to feel odd as they rode the turbolift to the bridge. He couldn’t help but feel that something was about to happen. Just as he made that thought the turbolift stopped abruptly. The emergency locks had been engaged and they couldn’t get the lift moving again.

“What the heck just happened?” Reiden asked.

“Emergency locks engaged. We are not alone on this ship.” Jurdan said with an I told you so tone to his voice. “Alright guys we have to exit the shaft. We were stopped in between levels two and three. We can open the doors for level two and make our way through the crawl spaces to get to the bridge from there.” Jurdan said as he ignited his lightsaber with a purple glow. He sliced a circular hole in the ceiling of the car and had everyone stand back as the metal shard dropped into the car. The impact caused the car to shift a little. Jurdan ordered everyone out of the lift as fast as they could. He went first and pried the doors open to the second level. Everyone finished exiting the lift and Reiden was just about to jump as it started to fall.

Jurdan watched as Reiden started to fall with the lift. “Jump Reiden!” Jurdan yelled. Reiden jumped as hard as he could and did not make the door. Jurdan stretched out as quickly as he could through the Force and an invisible hand reached out to grab Reiden. It lifted him through the air and up to the ledge of the doorway. Wagglehorn and another man pulled Reiden through the doors. He laid out on the floor gasping for air. The adrenaline rush of almost falling to his death had not yet caught up to him.

“You ok Reiden?” Jurdan asked calmly.

“Yea Jurdan. Nice catch.” Reiden said with a sigh of relief.

“Alright guys let’s move on quickly. We need to secure this situation.”

VEN Dauntless - Bridge

C2 watched as the lift fell through the shaft leading back to the hangar bay. He had not caught the insurgents before they got off of it. No matter though. The car had been heading back down to pick up the security forces that were coming to help him. He watched as they boarded the car at the bottom of the shaft and quickly routed them up to the bridge.

He had noticed some of the cameras on level two were offline. He knew the insurgents were somewhere on that level but he didn’t know where. There was a noise coming from behind him somewhere. It sounded like it was coming from the ventilation shafts. There was a snap-hiss sound and then a purple blade poked out of the grating for the air shafts. The metal

was burning brightly as it melted to the floor and the remaining grate fell over with a metallic thud.

Eight men started filing out of the vent with lightsabers and blasters drawn. "Who are you?" C2 queried.

"We are the resurrection team. We are here to bring this ship back to life." The man with a purple blade said bluntly.

"You are not authorized to take command of this ship. I have alerted the security forces of Corulag. They will stop you." C2 challenged them.

Just then the turbolift door opened and the Corulagian Security Forces filed out of the car blasting. The insurgents ducked behind consoles and raised their blades to deflect the oncoming blaster bolts.

VEN Dauntless - Bridge

"Watch out!" Jurdan ordered as the security forces entered onto the bridge. He deflected a couple of blaster shots back in the direction of where they were coming from. One of the deflected blasts hit a security guard in the forehead. He slumped to the ground with a blackened char mark in the middle of his head. One of the security guards rushed Jurdan with a vibrosword swinging it wildly at the Sith Battlemaster. Jurdan dodged a couple of swings and then stabbed his lightsaber into the gut of the man and then pushed him backwards towards his friends as a human shield. "Arrrrrrgh!" Jurdan yelled as he moved. The body of the man he had slain was shot up and blackened by the time Jurdan reached the group. He dropped the man to the ground and reached deep within himself and called up enough power to shoot lightning from his fingertips. The lightning snaked from his fingertips in numerous directions towards their adversaries. Some of them were hit leaving black smoldering armor as they dropped to the ground. Some of the troops made it to cover in time to avoid the lightning.

One of the security guards managed to get off a quick shot on one of the soldiers Jurdan had brought from the station. The Palatinean dropped to the ground. Wagglehorn saw him fall and pulled him into cover behind a console and then leapt up on top of the console and lunged for the man who had shot his friend. He cleaved the man in two from head to waist. Wagglehorn moved to the next trooper and landed a kick to the chest knocking the man over onto the ground. The Lasat jumped up on top of the man's chest knocking all the air from his chest while crushing his rib cage at the same time. The ferocity of one of Shadow Guard's newest members was intense.

The battle went for about another five minutes before the rest of the guards were brutally cut down by the Sith forces.

"Security droid. This is an order from Jurdan Krennel. You will shut down systems on behalf of the royal family of Krennel. Wipe all memory banks and restart in safe mode awaiting further instructions from your new master." Jurdan ordered.

"A member of the Krennel family? What is the security authorization code?" C2 inquired.

"Alpha, Charlie, Zeta, two, two, oh." Jurdan confirmed. Delak had given him a data pad with Corulagian security codes just in case he ever made it back to his home planet.

“Security code accepted C2-B4 shutting down and restarting in safe mode.” The droid said as its eyes went dark and then flickered back on. “Security Droid C2-B4 awaiting commands your highness.” Jurdan winced a little at being called highness. He definitely wasn’t royal family material, only by name was he a Krennel.

“Droid activate the ship’s power core and begin decoupling procedures to undock us from this station. Send out a security code to the other security forces advising them that you made a false alarm and will need your systems checked when you get back home. Prepare sublight engines and hyperdrive engines for immediate launch.” Jurdan ordered.

The droid went about his business and followed every order to the letter. The ships systems came online and the Venator Dauntless was once again in flight. Jurdan took the helm and plotted a course for the IMS Tipoca II. Within minutes of clearing the repair stations outer arms the hyperdrive system hummed to life. Jurdan flipped a few switches on the old switchboard and activated the hyperdrive. The star lines faded away and they entered the swirling vortex of hyperspace. They would soon be home with a new prize.

IMS Tipoca II - Unknown Location

“Sir.” Lexiconus said to the Emperor as he watched his screens light up with warnings. “We have an incoming ship. It’s big sir!”

“Check the scanners. Has it registered and IFF signal?” Xen ordered.

“Yes sir it just did. It’s recognizing as a friendly. It’s callsign is the Venator Dauntless. Emperor incoming transmission from the Dauntless.” Lexiconus said quickly.

“Emperor, I bring you a mighty gift. The Venator Dauntless has been reclaimed from the Corulagian Security Forces. It is now a prize for the Empire.” Jurdan exclaimed with pride.

“Very good Battlemaster Krennel. I knew I sent the right man on the job. Bring her in and dock with the station.” Xen said proudly.