

"Master Rian, we found one." The human Ensign said, coming to an abrupt halt next to the Mirialan Quaestor.

"Are you sure?" Rian Taldrya asked.

"Yes Sir, Intelligence says the Rhen Var System is our best chance so far."

"Rhen Var? Never heard of it."

"It is a small outpost though," the Ensign set forth handing the Augur a datapad. "It was used by the Empire during the Galactic Civil War."

Rian inspected the more than meager surveillance report for Rhen var:

Region: Outer Rim

Sector: Thanium Sector

System: Tobali System

Suns: Tor

Orbital Period: 563 Days

Class: Terrestrial

Diameter: 9,380 km

Atmosphere: Oxygen mix

Climate: Frozen

Gravity: 1.03g

"The only structure on the surface remaining intact is a former Imperial monitoring station that should have long been abandoned." The Ensign summed up.

"It could now be used by the First Order." Rian countered.

"Negative, Sir. We sent a standard Surveillance Flight just to be sure and registered communication frequencies used by the Iron Throne during that flight."

"Thank you Ensign. Please inform the Consul that I will be on a short leave."

"Sir?" The Quaestor's counterpart was irritated.

"This mission is too important for someone else to be sent." Rian explained. "The Consul will understand that."

Knowing that he was officially dismissed, the Ensign slightly bowed and left.

As he rushed away from the Consul, Rian already started for the bay his starship was docked. Rushing through the hallways, a male Zabrak emerging from another hallway almost crashed into him. "Master, why are you in such a hurry?"

Rian met the eyes of his former apprentice. "Intelligence has found an outpost that seems to be used by the Iron Legion."

"You mean..." The eyes of the Zabrak began to gleam. "...when do we leave."

"I am going alone." Rian interrupted him. "You are needed here in case I fail."

The Mirialan could tell that Thorn didn't like the idea even without looking into his face.

"I would still feel better if you'd allow me to come with you."

"I know my friend." Rian said as they reached the door leading to the docked *Kom'rk-class Fighter*.

"May the Force be with you."

"May the Force be with you Rian."

Aboard the *Stormcloud* Rian immediately ran through the pre-flight checks assisted by *Cipher*, his BB-series Astromech droid who beeped agitatedly after Rian told him to plot a course for the Tobali System. A blinking light indicated an incoming call and miniature hologram of the Taldryan Consul appeared above the central console. "Rian, I heard you want to leave?"

"Yes my Consul, but it will only be a short leave."

"I am pretty sure of that. Rian, I can't let you go on that mission, especially alone. I have ordered a team to support you on that mission. Delay your departure until they arrive, that is an order!"

"Thank you for your concern, but I am more than capable to take care of this mission, also *Cipher* will assist me on that mission."

"You can't really count an Astromech-droid as assistance for a mission as crucial as this one. Wait for the team to arrive and then you are cleared for your mission." The hologram disappeared and *Cipher* beeped in protest, for both, the insult of the Consul and the docking control to lock down the *Stormcloud*.

A few minutes later the team arrived, a squad of SpecForce members led by the most latest Taldryan Knight, Zasaki Ttyezsh.

"I am thankful, Rhyllance sent another Ektrosian." Rian said once he saw her. "I will brief you once we are on route."

The human female nodded and followed the Quaestor while the militaries settled down in the crew section.

"Coming out of hyperspace in five minutes." Came the voice of Zasaki from the intercom. Rian now dressed in the robes of a Chief Inquisitor looked into the mirror. He never liked that uniform, but at least he wouldn't draw any unnecessary attention while he sneaked through the outpost. For a final time he made sure his gear was in place and tightly secured and that the mask covered enough of his face to hide his tattoos before going back to the cockpit.

"Ok, once we are leaving hyperspace, we will go dark. This means we will have no offensive capabilities in case we will run into a patrol." Rian said to the everyone in the cockpit. "We will make a quick strafe run using the cover of the night to drop me onto the platform. Once I am on the ground, you will take position just out of their sensor range. I will call you once I have hacked their system."

"And you are sure you want to go alone?"

"Yes, after all the less attention we draw the better." Rian said to the human Knight. "Also I need someone who can quickly think through situations and adapt to them."

The soldier now flying the ship called. "Exiting hyperspace in five, four, three, two, one."

The moment the *Stormcloud* dropped out of hyperspace, the entire illumination within the cockpit went out and the instrumentations dimmed as closely as possible to mere gleaming when the sensor jammers went live. The planet's night side filled the entire canopy. "Nothing on the screens. No patrols, jammers at one-hundred percent." said the pilot.

"Good, now let's hope things remain as they are at the moment." Rian said.

Rhen Var's air was filled with icy winds, nothing the Stormcloud wasn't unable to deal with. But once the boarding ramp lowered, the Quaeator was struck by the full power of the wind blasting over the surface. The entrance to the outpost was about thirty meters from him, unguarded. Rian inhaled the chill air, then burst forward, his steps accelerated by the Force.

He reached the door and the doors automatically parted without even requiring an authorization from him. Rian glanced to both sides but no one seemed to have been there to see him. To his left was a *KX-series* Enforcer-droid clanking down the corridor of the outpost.

"Hey you." He called the droid, who immediately stopped in his tracks.

"Oh, I am *C7-G0*, how can I be of help for you?"

"I have lost myself, can you tell me where to find the main control room?"

"Of course, I know every single corridor in this facility, the main control room is twenty levels above at the top level, but you need to have security clearance to access it. Are you new to this facility?"

"Yes, yes, I am. I arrived last week."

"But the last ship to arrive at the outpost left a month ago. Are you sure you are only lost, it seems you might have lost your memory as..."

"No, I am fine, it just seems I lost my sense for time as well." Rian interrupted the droid. "To be honest I need to upload a very important datapackage for the Justicar."

"Oh, in that case, there is a communications station four levels above, at the opposite side of the facility. You can take the lift fifteen meters from here." The droid said, raising his artificial limb and pointing to Rian's right.

"Thank you *C7-G0*." Rian said, turning to the right for the lift.

As with the door leading into the outpost, the lift didn't require an authorization and a few seconds after he had punched the call button. The lift was empty. Rian punched the button that would bring him up the four levels and the lift immediately started to move upwards.

This level was much more alive, with several droids and Inquisitors going down the corridors to get along with their day to day work. Rian blended easily into the crowd in his disguise and a few minutes later he stood in front of the communications room. Inside was another *KX-series droid* who was working on the controls of the communications console. The droid automatically turned his head when Rian entered the room.

"Hello my name is *F6-C2*, how can I help you." he introduced himself.

"I need to transmit important informations to the Justicar." Rian said matter of factly.

"How wouldn't you do that from the communications console in the main control room?" The droid asked.

Rian walked over to the droid, stopping just in front of him while the droid didn't turn his gaze from him for a single blink. "The informations are top secret if you understand what that means."

"Of course I know what-" The Droid lowered his head when he saw Rian's hand resting on his lightsaber. "My memorycore is linked with the entire databank of the Iron Throne, that lightsaber is a Taldryan design. You are a Taldryanite. You are a traitor."

The Arms of the droid burst forward to grab Rian but he was too late, the blade of the lightsaber arced through the air, cutting easily through the droids forearms before spinning around the Equite's wrist and shoot upward to pierce through the droids head.

F6 white photoreceptors blinked for a second before turning dark. The droid sank audible to the ground, making way for Rian to connect his computer spike to the console.

Rian raised his comlink. "Zasati, I am in, *Cipher* should now be able to connect to the outpost. Tell him to download everything he can get regarding fleet movements and military operations, I will control the download from here."

Next to Rian a small screen went life, showing endless lines of currently downloaded data. "Copied that, we will get in to pick you up once the download is complete."

Rian was about to reply when a single line drew his attention. He opened the linked file: *Operation Purge*

Scrolling through the details of the file he found multiple notes that detailed the results of Operation Purge. He opened the most recent:

"The subject is now mentally stable, though the conditioning had unexpected effects on his physical condition. It is worth to be detailed that the higher the connection of the subjects to the Force the better they react to the conditioning, especially those that were captured during the attack on Karufr. It seems their relationship to the Justicar might make them more sensible to the conditioning."

Operation Purge? Mental Conditioning? Prisoners from Karufr? Rian closed the file and in its place opened a search for prisoners located within the outpost. *This can't be.*

"Zasati, Change of plans. I need to get something else done here before you can pick me up. And prepare a med kit, we might have to treat someone injured!"

"What are you talking about."

"I can't tell you now, just do what I told you." Rian ended the connection and located the cell block he was looking for, for whatever reason it was on the same level he entered the outpost.

He left the communication room and made his way back through the corridor and to the lift. Back down, he searched for the particular cell, luckily the droid was gone and after a few minutes he found it, he opened the door and found a familiar form sitting on the floor with his legs crossed. "Shaz'air." he called his dear friend and former master.

Shaz'air Taldrya raised his head but said nothing. Rian stormed into the cell, helping the Miraluka up onto his feet. "Come on, we need to get out of here."

Going as fast as he could supporting Shaz'air, they made their way back and to the entry to the outpost, only to face a squadron of Inquisitors, standing on the walkway, blocking their way.

Rian leaned his weakened friend against the wall, where he could wait safe from the wind to face the Inquisitors while he walked into the wind. "Wait here, I'll handle them."

In the light of the Stormclouds headlights they activated their lightsabers in unison.

Rian burst forward, fainted left than shot his blade up to block the first crimson blade. Forcing the Inquisitor to back away a step. Rian spun his blade around, meeting the next blade while forcefully connecting his right foot in the gut of the second Inquisitor, folding him in the middle. Ducking under the blade of the second Inquisitor's blade, he came up and sliced him across the chest before kneecapping the Inquisitor he had hit with a kick before. Spinning around the third Inquisitor in one smooth move, he hung his own lightsaber onto his belt and grabbed the Inquisitor's arm at the wrist, using the crimson blade to impale the chest of the fourth Inquisitor. Using the dazed Inquisitor's thigh as ledge, he spun through the air while summoning his sun-coloured blade back into his hand, piercing it through the throat of the last standing Inquisitor.

Turning, Rian shouted after Shaz'air, who seemed to have mobilized his last remaining strength and started to walk over to him. "Come on."

Running for the Stormcloud, Rian turned after his friend when he reached it, only to see Shaz'air standing only a few meters behind him.

"You have betrayed us." Shaz'air spoke up for the first time. "You have sworn to serve the throne and now you have betrayed us."

"What are you saying?" Rian shouted over the wind, puzzled.

With a flicker of his hand, Shaz'air grabbed the lightsaber he had given his former apprentice during his knightening ceremony. "You aren't worth of this anymore."

From within the ship's boarding area, Zasati watched the scene, he knew Shaz'air and the bond between the two men as her own master has been the master of Shaz'air. But she too saw more squadrons of Inquisitors coming for them, their lightsabers already lit. With a nod of her, two of the soldiers grabbed the shocked Rian and pulled him into the Stormcloud. Once they were in, Cipher turned the ship and brought them out of the atmosphere.

One week later

"What ever it is, Jac is doing with those he was able to capture during the attack on Karufr, we can be pretty sure, he was able to turn them against us." Rian said to the rest of the Taldryan Summit.

"But can we be sure that its only those that came from the attack on Karufr?" Andrelious asked. "I mean your report and what we were able to decipher from the data till now indicate that he did this to every so called Undesirable he was able to capture."

"That is probably correct." Rhyllance said from behind his desk. "But there are more bad news. All the military data were fairly outdated, at least every outpost mentioned in the data has been abandoned already.."

"It seems all this had just one purpose." The Twi'lek Rollmaster added. "One of the notes Rian brought us indicated that those who were Taldrya much better reacted to Jac's mental conditioning than those who were not. In other words, he was trying to lure us to him."

"That is what it seems like." Rian concluded. "But we can be pretty much sure of, every Taldrya we meet that hasn't escaped with us from Karufr, is now against us."

The End.