

Knight Droveth Kathera Vectivi (Jedi) / Battle Team Wildcards of House Hoth of Clan Odan-Urr [SA: VI] [ACC: Q] [INQ: VII]

ACx3 / DC / Cr:3R-4A-6S-13E-1T-5Q / Clx39 / CGx28 / DSSx2 / LS / SoL / S:1D-5Rv

{SA: MVHL - MVLD - MVPH - MVW - DPE - DPV - SVWP}

## **Whistling Salt Flats**

### **Jechary**

### **Solyiat**

### **Kiast System**

“You runnin’ that old thing out here? You’re gonna get smoked!” Droveth wiped the sweat from his brow and turned towards the source of his annoyance, a young boy who had traveled a bit too far from his family and the main festivities. The Knight merely stared back at him, and he kicked sheepishly at the dry cracked ground, diverting his gaze.

“Do you know anything about speeder bikes, little man?” The Jedi replied after a long pause, distorting his voice to make it deeper and more intimidating. Droveth admittedly knew little to nothing about the workings of these machines, but he could certainly act the part. He stood and pulled the little boy around to the back of the bike. “ See that? Know what that is?”

“An ion afterburner, duh.” The young boy scoffed and rolled his eyes. “My daddy has one of those. I’ve seen ‘em before.”

Droveth had grown impatient with the child now, the sweltering midday sun reflecting off of both the Salt Flats all around and his blacked-out speeder bike beside him. He pulled his robe back slightly to reveal the blaster pistol on his hip.

“Run back to your daddy then. Get!” He scampered off quickly, back toward the race strip and his family. The Jedi reached up and clicked his comlink back on, dropping his vocal modifications. “Knight Vectivi to Solyiat Air Patrol. Arrived at Salt Flats. Beginning trip to Corax.” Dust and sand kicked up in a swirl as he tore off on his bike toward the mountains that bordered to the east.

“Confirmed. Movement is being tracked.”

Droveth had been surprised when his Aedile, Celevon, had approached him for this mission. The Jedi had little contact with the Warden before then, other than through their mutual Quaestor. He was even more shocked still when Celevon told him that he was the first choice.

The Knight had proven himself in many reconnaissance situations before, sure, but with tensions on Solyiat so high, sending a Jedi in could bode ill for their cause. A misjudged move on his part might end up an international incident.

With his eyes focused on the ever-growing mountain range, he hoped that the mission was as simple as it was sold to him. Droveth would have no problem blending in with a crowd, or quietly stalking a foe in a city, but in the empty and open environment surrounding him, not so much. He would need to rely on the Force for this to go smoothly. The Knight's robes whipped around wildly behind him, and he pulled his belt tighter. He reached up and placed his hand on his hilt, tucked into his cuirass.

'I hope I don't need you, little buddy.' Droveth thought to himself. 'A lightsaber would be sure to rile up some unneeded attention.' As he came upon the base of one mountain, his commlink chirped to life.

"3 Kilometer safe distance reached. Proceed on foot."

*Sigh.*

Droveth slid off his speeder bike and surveyed the rocks around him, searching for a suitable stash spot. He found a small opening hidden behind a tall, jagged boulder a few meters away. He took a deep breath, cleared his mind, and channeled the Force through his hands. The bike slowly lifted off the ground, and the Knight carefully moved it into the opening. He pulled off his robes and threw them over the speeder bike, then added some dirt and rocks to conceal it further.

The Jedi turned and looked up at his obstacle, a shorter peak that broke the even stretch of mountaintops. On the other side was a old, rundown mine. From what Droveth had heard, it never was of much use anyway. The site was a fluke, and dozens of miners had poured their whole livelihoods into a scam. Only one person came out with any profit: Whoever sold the land. Preying on the poor for financial gain disgusted him, and he wished he could find the people responsible for the 'Miner's Disappointment'. Maybe sometime in the future, after all of this.

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The sun was already approaching dusk when he finally made it over the peak. As Droveth descended to the treeline below, he hugged close to the mountain. His dark bronze tan and black and green armor would serve as a suitable camouflage in this setting, especially with the sun beginning to set. He reached up and clicked his commlink one last time.

"Approaching Corax. Going silent." Droveth removed his earpiece and slid it into his cuirass. The Jedi moved swiftly through the trees, careful to step softly and observe his surroundings. He noted that the air tasted much better on this side of the peak than the Salt Flats, as well as

being much cooler climate. The ground was covered with soft mosses and fallen leaves, and the dirt beneath was moist from condensation.

After several minutes of rapid descent, the Knight could hear the sounds of heavy vehicles in the distance. He focused hard on the sounds to pinpoint the direction, confirming that it was indeed coming from the Corax mines. He shifted over to the left so that he would come out beside the entrance and continued down. The incline gradually began to level and the density of trees increased. Droveth slowed his pace, focusing now on the rumbling of machinery ahead of him. He laid down prone and began to crawl, quietly, towards the dirt road a few meters away.

His eyes instead fell on the actual opening of the cave, which was massive. Dark black stone jutted out in unnatural angles and the shadow loomed over a great distance. It looked as though some ancient, titanic beast had crawled its way out of the ground and was gasping for air, only to be frozen in time. The structure appeared to have been built around, not into, the cave. The appearance gave the Jedi a bad feeling in his gut. Something dangerous was happening here.

Heavy transport vehicles streamed single file into the opening of the mine, with large sheets covering their cargo. Armed soldiers in dark grey uniforms marched alongside the caravan on either side. At the mouth of the cave sat a large black tank, seemingly modeled after the Imperial Assault Tank. It had one large central blaster cannon on top and a number of smaller turrets around the sides. A deep crimson skull was emblazoned on the front below the cannon.

Droveth turned his attention to the transports and revealing their contents. He waited patiently for a small gap in the soldiers, and reached out with the Force. He pulled one of the sheets gently, lifting the corner so he could peek underneath. The Knight could see a long, cylindrical wing with a turret at the tip.

'A starfighter?' He released his hold on the covering and the corner flopped back down, leaving the cargo still in view slightly. 'Storing starfighters in a mine? What is this, a coup? I need to get back to Trepus.' As the transport reached the entrance of the cave, a female voice called out.

"Hold! I said hold dammit!" A woman stepped out from behind the tank and approached the transport. She was around Droveth's height with a similar build, albeit slightly more muscular. She had bright white hair in a tight mohawk, with a tattoo of a skull on the side of her head matching the tank. She walked to the back of the vehicle and pulled the corner down the cover the starfighter, then nodded to one of the soldiers. He ripped the door open and threw the driver onto the ground.

"How fucking far you drive with this shit, huh?" She motioned to the transport. "You showing everyone what we got? That what you doin'?" She leaned down and got right into the man's face. "Answer me you fuck!" Tears streaked down his face and he began to beg.

"Please, it was an accide-ent. I swe-ear, I didn't mean no harm!" He choked out between sobs. His accuser stood and let out a laugh, looking around at the other soldiers. She reached behind

and unsheathed a long curved blade from her belt. Pressing it to his temple, she spoke again, this time much quieter.

“You workin’ for someone else, you shit?” A line of blood trickled down his face. “I thought you was workin’ for me.”

“No! Havost, I swear! I’m telling the truth! I work for you, I work for you...” He held onto her vest as he begged, but she just laughed again.

“See, I don’t really care. I just wanted a reason ta kill somebody.” Havost pushed the blade into his temple with full force his light was extinguished. The man collapsed to the ground in a bloody pile. She put her boot on his head and pulled the knife out, wiping the blood off on his shirt.

“You! Drive it the rest of the way. I got shit to do.” She pointed to the soldier that had pulled the driver out, and he hopped into the transport. The caravan continued on as if nothing had happened, and no one cared to move the dead body in the road.

Droveth watched on in shock, but knew he could not interfere. He would mourn that man another day, now he needed to get back with this information. His mind was quickly becoming clouded with anger, and he took deep breaths to calm himself. The Jedi stood and turned to leave, but his mind was drawn back to Havost. She was leaning up against the side of the tank, smoking a cigarette and laughing. He reached up and felt the hilt of his lightsaber.

“You’ll get yours, lady, I promise. Soon.”