

Nancora Prime Orbit

35 ABY

The orbit of Nancora Prime had quickly become a floating metal graveyard; countless cruisers belonging to both the Brotherhood and Collective fleets had already been downed, littering the space around the ancient planet and sending debris right into the middle of the battle. Lasers and missiles filled the cosmic battlefield, with flashes of red, blue, and green being exchanged between the opposing fleets. Starfighters crunched, crippled, and exploded en masse as both sides continued to suffer heavy casualties. Out of hyperspace, a new combatant prepared to enter the arena. As if from nothing, a group of Arconan ships appeared, heading straight for the battle.

“This is Dark leader. Darkwing Squadron, assume the shield formation” Plaid Sadira’s voice scrambled over the comms channel. “We have to cut a path to the Shadow’s Promise so that we can board and begin the extraction process. Onyx squadron will bring up the rear. Protect these gunships at all costs.”

The 12 T-70 X-Wings that made up Darkwing Squadron formed a triangle around a group of 8 LAAT/i gunships that were accompanying them. The 12 B-Wings that formed Onyx squadron then formed a chevron at the back of the line.

“This is Dark Five to Dark Leader.” A slightly raspy voice flooded the comms channel. “With all due respect, it is extremely risky to board an already doomed ship, commander. These casualties could get even worse.”

“Your concern is noted, lieutenant, but we have our orders,” replied Plaid. “There are some very important people on that cruiser, and a lot of our own soldiers. In addition to our current force, the Nighthawk is currently en route. We will board this ship under the cover of the Nighthawk and our own SPHA lines.”

“We’re going to use the SPHA lines in space? Are you insane?” Another voice quipped over the channel.

“Dark Four, I did not put this plan together on my own. This was the only alternative,” replied the Zabak. “There is a disabled Venator-class cruiser in the proximity of the Shadow’s Promise. It has managed to stabilize to the point that the artillery line can be attached without risk. They will give us cover and keep the other ships busy while we begin the extraction. That is our *only* option.”

As the ships continued to approach the battlefield, a CR90 Corvette sprang into their path out of hyperspace, and its turrets immediately began bearing down upon the group of ships.

“Evasive maneuvers!” yelled Plaid, before jerking his ship upwards.

As he began to gain traction, he started spinning the ship. He turned the ship back down, targeting the upper dual turbolaser first. He launched a missile at it, and subsequently opened fire on the single turbolasers complementing it. In a barrage of red lasers, the turrets were destroyed, and Plaid's X-wing veered away from the CR90 and back towards his allies.

"Regroup! Regroup! Regain your positions!"

"Dark Six is down commander."

"Do we have any other casualties?"

"This is Dark Nine, I'm still here but one of my engines was skimmed by the turrets."

"Dark Nine, fall back and join up with Onyx Squadron and help them hold the rear," replied Plaid. "Darkwing Squadron, tighten up the front line to compensate."

As the ships continued towards their objective, they mercilessly shot down the enemy ships in their path with minimal team casualties. One B-wing was lost and two X-Wings collided into the debris littering the battlefield, but the gunships remained unscathed. Eventually the Shadow's Promise was in plain view, and they could also see the Nighthawk in place, covered by the Galerean SPHA armaments that were in position on the downed cruiser.

"R3, patch me in. Get me Captain Tyus," said Plaid.

"REQUEST = CONFIRMED// Contacting Captain Tyus = INITIATED." The droid attached to the X-Wing began exclaiming in a series of beeps and binary inflections. As he did, A hologram appeared on the dashboard projector of the ship, displaying the young captain in his armor.

"What is the status of your people, Captain?" inquired the young Sith.

"We have managed to get everyone who couldn't make it to the escape pods to the ship's hangar," replied the Captain. He spoke in a forcefully calm tone; Plaid could sense the undertone of urgency crawling in his voice. "Our shuttles have already been evacuated, and the ship won't hold out for much longer. Your artillery lines have done an excellent job of diverting the cruiser's attention away from us, but the Collective's suicide bombers have not stopped hampering us. Bond Squadron and Oath Squadron have both attempted to intercept but have experienced heavy casualties."

"Make sure that everyone is prepped for a quick extraction. We have gunships in tow and will attempt to escort you back to the Nighthawk, and we'll make the jump from there."

"Roger that." The Captain saluted, and the hologram fizzed out of view.

“Darkwing, I want all X-Wings on those suicide bombers. We need you to cut them off so that we have room for the extraction. Onyx Squadron, tighten up the shield until we can reach the hangar. Once the extraction is complete, we will regroup and transport our passengers to the Nighthawk.

As the X-wings broke away, Plaid Sadira and the B-wings escorted the gunships to the hanger. Plaid himself landed as the B-Wings assumed defensive positions outside of the cruiser. He ejected and began directing the evacuation.

“Load up! Load up! We don't have much time!” he exclaimed. As soldiers clamored towards the gunship, Plaid noticed that among them was a group of New Republic dignitaries. Captain Tyus guided them towards an LAAT, at blaster-point.

Why would we have New Republic prisoners onboard during a skirmish with the Collective?
Another explosion rattled the cruiser, bringing the young Sith back into focus. *Oh well it doesn't matter. I've done my job.*

Plaid made his way back to his X-Wing. “Good job R3. Let's get out of here before this piece of junk comes down on us.” The astromech beeped in agreement.

As the ships rejoined the space outside, Plaid assumed his position at the front of the gunships again. “All starfighters, regroup! We have completed the extraction! Make for the Nighthawk!” As the starfighters rejoined Plaid looked into his rearview to see the Shadow's Promise erupt into flames, and subsequently explode, breaking off into several large pieces. The enemy cruisers began bearing down on the artillery lines, but the ships were already safe in the range of the Nighthawk, so there was no threat to the safety of the team.

“Good work, boys,” Plaid said over the comms channel. “We can mourn our fallen later. Right now, this is a mission accomplished. When we get back, drinks are on me.” Cheers and hollers flooded the channel.

Many lives were saved that day - but it would not prepare them for the dark times that lay ahead.