**Ancient Ruins**

**Uskil**

**Arx**

"I'm not entirely sure that is a great idea." He looked at the man, then back at the display. The Braga spun, half detailed plans gleaned from various sources. It was a beast. Experimental prototypes keeping the ship from view until it could level an absurdly powerful prototypical weapon at whatever the Collective wanted annihilated. It was something to carefully consider in any engagement. "The intelligence..."

"…Is completely reliable." The Umbaran stared back. "I would bet my life on it."

"You very well might be." Telaris nodded once, taking another look at the datapad. "You might be betting all of our lives on this."

"If you are uncomfortable with this, there are other assets that we could use..."

"That's an awfully large risk, though." He pinched the touchscreen zooming into the blind spot in the rear of the ship, a small window of opportunity. "If it fails, we won't be getting another shot."

"Shall I open a channel?" The Inquisitor tilted his head, waiting for a response.

"No." Telaris half waved his hand, taking the datapad and turning from the Combat Master. "It would come better from me."

Atra just gave a quick nod and then redirected his attention to the datafeed. Stepping through the door, the Shadow Hand made his way to his own quarters, boot heels clacking on polished durasteel. He wasn't sure that he wanted to play his ace so soon in the game. He let his mind drift to think what Cotelin would say. Pravus would prefer fielding the man early, keeping track of him so that there would be no maneuvering, no question as to when he would just happen to pop up and make things interesting. He let the door slide closed behind him, staring at the bunk. There were other teams he could dispatch, as Atra had said, but failure would be unacceptable. They needed the Braga dead.

He sat, flipping the holocomm in his hand, taking a breath. There was no guarantee he would even answer. They hadn't had any meaningful interaction since the graveworld. Mav exhaled slowly, thumbing the activation key.

"Lord Keibatsu..."

**Private Quarters**

***ADS Fallen Spear***

**Redacted Location**

The hologram faded, evaporating back into the projector as Muz sat, one hand idly stroking his chin. The datastream unraveled in front of him, the plans for the enemy sharply focusing. This ship was a problem for the fleet, and having to ask him for help had to rankle them a little bit. He noted that it was the Deputy that reached out, and not the Throne itself. It was not unexpected, given the situation, but it still hit a note with him. He stood slowly, punching in a message to the bridge.

The throb of the hyperdrive tickled the edges of his senses as he moved toward his arming cabinet, his mind pulling the doors open, summoning the hilts of his weapons to his belt and shaking out the folds of his warcoat.

**Cargo Hold**

***The Braga***

**Nancora Orbit**

Danid snorted as he tossed the spanner back into his tool chest, the clatter of metal on metal echoing in the wide room. He watched the actuators on the loader piston back and forth smoother, the thick black grease working down into the cylinder.

"Are you done back there yet?" The voice bounced between the cargo containers, full of extra parts and fuel cells. Danid groused to himself under his breath before barking back.

"Yeah, on my way." The mechanic wiped his hands on his pants, stepping back toward the rolling tool chest.

The snarl of light that broke through the wall twisted in his eyes, mouth falling agape as it drew a wide circle. It took a moment for him to register the threat, shouting out unintelligible words to his coworker before his mind tightened it up.

"Boarders!"

Danid never even had time to think that would have been his last word. The disc of freed hull, glowing at the edges, seethed forward, crushing him against a durasteel container with sudden finality. The steam of smoking metal and purging void crept forward with him as the other mechanic turned the corner, his hand reaching for his commlink. The throb of the Force smashed him back as Muz stepped forward, his saber screaming forth from his hand, pinning him to the bulkhead by the throat. He kept moving forward, fingers twitching along the edges of the Force to bring his weapon back to his hand.

Engineering would be up several decks, the bridge further yet. Muz debated options, the partial plans playing out in his head before coming to a conclusion. He stopped, heels gliding together as he looked upward, his blades floating from his hands, carving a hole in the ceiling, the heavy deck falling a moment later with a clang. He stepped onto it; letting the Force coil within his legs as he vaulted himself upward.

Chaos erupted all around him as he landed, his blades flying through bulkhead and soldier alike as he tore through the mess. Tables flew, thrown by a simple gesture, throttling several soldiers against the wall, drenched with stew and caf. Rage poured through his veins, an avatar of vengeance. Golden cauterizing beams carried forth the grand master's will as they separated flesh from flesh, the scent of their own meat cooking scorching into their memories for the rest of their lives.

It took an hour for the minute to pass, a chorus of final breaths building to a ragged and rattling crescendo all around the dead and the crippled. At the heart of it, the Lion stopped, callously sweeping his vision across the mayhem before directing his attention upward, the whispering of his golden blades carving a path into the deck above.

The static voice of a commlink broke through the din. "Bridge to Fathro." Muz stopped, turning his head and seeing the rictus of terror wash over the man as he lay next to what used to be his legs. Fathro froze, his eyes widening at either the blackened visor of the Lord's helmet or shock.

"Fathro, come in." The voice pleaded. Muz swung his head away, stepping between corpses and leaping up into the next deck.

Muz's eyes narrowed beneath the helmet as he took it in. The power plant fed backward, massive conduits shunting energy from a massive array. He stepped forward, feeling the pull of the Force, a harmony of kind voices that seemed ever more urgent the closer he got.

He reached out, an outstretched hand drawing his senses outward, feeling. It could only be one thing. The reports Mav sent him had suggested it, but none of them wanted to believe it.

Muz followed the pull of the Force forward, tracing the power conduit as he walked, finding the long canister. Muz paused, setting his eyes on it, feeling past the chromium and titanium alloy.

"Kyber."

His blade snagged the corner of the housing, drawing a line of ruin across the polished metal, the green glow of the crystal pouring through the damage and bathing the room in colored light.

He pivoted the blade, drawing a window into the housing, eyes taking in the apparatus that the crystal nestled in. His mind raced, trying to rebuild the weapon in his mind, looking for the best avenue to go down.

The claxons rang out, interrupting his chain of thought, their sick sound reminding him that he did not have as much time as he would have liked. He drew back from the window, willing his saber to gouge out a deep channel in the crystal, freeing a slab of the rare mineral to float into his hand before he struck. The blade sank deep into the matrices, burning a violent occlusion into the stone, ruining the faceting, arcs of dangerous energy coruscating out, the scent of ozone from burning control boards rising into the air.

The freshly carved shard floated on his current, landing in his outstretched hand as he closed fingers around it, turning to draw his weapon across the controls on the far end of the housing with a shower of sparks. He moved with purpose now; the saber buried deep in the kyber crystal deactivating, flying to his belt, nestling in its holster as he dropped down, falling through two decks of floors, the bellow of men and a hail of blaster fire erupting through the mess moments too late to be of any use.

Muz looked up for a moment, amused by their attempt before turning back to the ruin he had made to board. Stepping through, he keyed the message to his own bridge to seal the airlock as he watched the Collective's soldiers filter through the cargo containers, raising weapons and firing as he calmly took his helmet off and held it under his arm, vanishing as he fell under the auspices of the *Fallen Spear*'s cloaks. Blaster bolts bounded back toward them, deflected by the sealing airlock as it backed away, leaving the wound in the ship's hull exposed to the void.

Atmosphere bled out from the ship. The closest soldier flung into the stars, freezing in the dark before one of the containers blocked the hole. He was one of the lucky ones.

The ship erupted in green flame and exploding atmosphere, peppering the nearest ship with enough shrapnel to tear it asunder, listing as it fell into the gravitational well of Nancora.

**Sith Throne Room**

**Ancient Ruins**

**Uskil, Arx**

Telaris let the door slide closed behind him before he stepped toward the holodisplay, tapping on his datapad to update the display with the newest feed information. The enemy fleet glitched for a second before showing the *Braga* and *Lasto* as destroyed. Pravus leaned forward, an eyebrow rising.

"Exactly as I have foreseen." The Dark Lord smiled as he searched his deputy for a reaction.

"What was the cost paid?" Dracaryis asked, staring at the battle coordinator, searching for changes among the clan fleets.

Telaris tilted his head. "We only sent one man."

Dracaryis stood up straight, staring at Cantor.

Pravus chuckled, a low and ominous sound that seemed to echo across the chamber and into their hearts as he leaned back in his throne. "Oh, I imagine you'll be able to ask him all about it soon."