



Dark Jedi Brotherhood – Great Jedi War XII

Evacuation of the MC80 Solari

Multi-Objective Prompt: Objective 3 - Extraction

Arcia Cortel, 3463

10/30/2017

OEF High Command
Kiast System
Present Day...

“...please recount the details of the evacuation of the *Solari* and other vessels running support. And please state your name and rank for the record.”

After a moment of silence, someone from within the dimly lit room cleared their throat to prompt action.

“My name is Colonel Arcia Cortel, currently serving as Fleet Admiral of the Odanite Expeditionary Force. We were—” Cortel began before being interrupted.

“Note for the record that your position of Fleet Admiral is also under consideration and scrutiny given the outcome of these events.”

Arcia sneered and continued. “We were tasked to monitor fleet movements in preparation to support Arconan forces attacking a Collective outpost. Everything was by the books until we received word that one of our ships was running with far too high energy output and its emissions could easily be tracked. It became immediately apparent that someone within our fleet was signaling our position.”

“And then what happened, Colonel?”

Cortel took in a deep breath, closed her eyes and slowly let her breath rush through pursed lips as she recalled the events.

MC80 *Solari*
Unknown Location
36 Hours Prior...

“Captain, the dreadnought is lining up for a shot!”

“All hands brace for impact!” Ihi, captain of the *Solari*, called out throughout the ship.

Olive green eyes stared out the viewport as a brilliant blaze of green energy focused upon the farthest point of the X60 Heavy Dreadnought. The admiral’s teeth grit as that pent-up energy rocketed outwards, closing the distance between the two ships in but a breath. Klaxons blared as the MC80 took a direct hit towards the aft of the ship and shuddered as bulkheads exploded and environment rushed to fill the vacuum of space.

“Direct hit! We are losing atmosphere. Decks seven through twelve reporting heavy damage. Casualty reports are coming in now. Forty-eight presumed dead, one hundred thirteen wounded and more are being reported. Force fields are failing. Power is fluctuating, and engines are not responding.” The operations officer wiped sweat from her brow. “Sirs, we’ve already taken one of these. If we take another hit like that, the ship will be destroyed.”

“They’re powering up again!”

Cortel's gaze snapped from the operations officer back to the ship now barely visible through the cracked viewscreen. This wasn't a fight; it was a slaughter. There was nothing the *Solari* could do to counter such a powerful weapon. Rubbing the bridge of her nose, Arcia quickly darted towards the communications console and pushed the unconscious officer to the deck. Her fingers glided across the surface as she fixed in on the closest ship to the dreadnought.

"*Pride of Oh—ohwee—*" she began, internally cursing herself for never getting the name of the corvette down. "*Pride*, this is Admiral Cortel on the *Solari*. I do not know if you can hear me, but if you can, I need you to follow my instructions to the letter. Abandon your ship. Repeat: abandon your ship. Jettison all escape pods and plot a course for that dreadnought. The High Councilor is still onboard, and we need time to escape. Our hearts go out to you all."

After but a few minutes of silence, dozens of pods jettisoned from the CR90 as its engines flared to life, sending it straight towards the dreadnought. A volley of turbolaser fire erupted from the Collective ship, many hitting their target as the hull of the *Pride* was engulfed in explosions and flame that quickly snuffed out in the oxygen-depleted space. The dreadnought's attempts were to no avail. The *Pride of Ohywehe* slammed into the middle of the heavy dreadnought, causing it to veer off course and its powerful laser narrowly missed the *Solari*.

"Thank goodness..." Captain Ihi muttered under his breath.

"We are not out of the thick of it yet, everyone. Give me a status report—" Arcia was cut off mid-statement.

"Contact! Contact! Multiple unidentified ships bearing 102 mark 009. Port side! Port side!"

Everyone snapped their attention towards the port viewscreen as they watched a half dozen single pilot ships slam into the side of the MC80. The entire ship rocked and shuddered under the multiple high yield explosions that cut deep into the ship. Bulkheads ripped apart. Emergency force fields failed. The ship began to bleed its atmosphere and hemorrhaged as life drained from it and crewmen were sucked out into the void. Klaxons and alarms blared as everyone on the bridge began to shout over one another, relaying the information their failing consoles spat at them. They did their best to remain calm, but Cortel could make out every panicked voice; each unsure if they would make it out alive.

"...Admiral? Admiral Cortel!"

Arcia blinked and turned to face Ihi, who had moved from his chair to stand before her. "Yes, what?"

"What do you recommend we do, Admiral? I defer to your experience," Ihi stated as another explosion deep within the bowels of the ship caused his footing to slip momentarily.

The admiral took a deep breath and turned her attention to operations. "Status report."

"Engines are down. Main power has failed. Life support is failing. Casualties are off the charts. Emergency fields are failing and we cannot contain the breaches. We—"

"Abandon ship," Cortel stated plainly.

"Ma'am?" the entirety of the senior staff questioned, barely audible over the turmoil.

"We abandon ship. The *Solari* is lost and we do not have the time to debate. Signal the evacuation before it is too late. I will remain on the bridge to coordinate efforts," Cortel stated as she pushed past the captain and began working on one of the nearby command consoles.

After keying in a few commands, the ship-wide announcement system pinged. "All hands, this is Admiral Cortel. I am ordering the evacuation of the *Solari* immediately. Make your way to the designated locations for pod departure. Medical teams shall stage triage stations near departure locations to ensure crewmen are safe to launch. Division commanders are to check their blue cards for further instruction. All squadrons launch and provide cover for the pods; I do not want to lose anyone because a Collective hotshot wants to add a few more hash marks to his hull. I will signal for the *Rohlan's Vision* to provide additional cover while we perform evacuations. With any luck, they will draw fire. Cortel out."

Arcia stood straight and turned to face the command staff. They simply stood there, watching her. After a moment of locking each of their looks into memory, Arcia's face turned cold.

"Move!"

Present day...

"I see. So you were met by a superior force and you sacrificed a ship to save a man. You put countless lives in the balance to ensure a single person could make it out alive. Did you not feel this was perhaps a poor use of resources? Do you think you could have—"

Arcia leaned forward before interrupting. "You can ask anyone in the OEF if they would risk their lives to save the High Councilor's. We all know what we signed up for, *you* especially know, and I would put my commission on the line to back that up. This war cannot be won without Turel Sorenn. Force user or not, he is a man that can move the people. He is a man that can inspire loyalty. Without him, this war is already lost."

"Force user or not...' Interesting choice of words, taking the nature of our enemy into consideration."

"I am not here to be judged on my beliefs of magic," Cortel stated sourly.

"We'll see... So, according to your written statement, as well as others, you were forced to abandon the bridge? What happened there?"

Cortel took a deep breath and closed her eyes once again. "Once the bridge was cleared of all non-essential staff, I ordered the rest of them to leave depart. Including the captain. He did not take kindly to my orders..."

36 Hours Prior...

"I will not abandon my ship, Admiral. Orders or not." Ihi stood straight, his defiance apparent in the air.

"We do not need to lose a captain such as yourself, Ariki. Go with your crew. Save yourself."

"If there is a person we cannot lose during this war, Cortel, it would be you. I may be good, but I don't have the experience you have commanding entire fleets. We shouldn't even be having this discussion!"

Arcia nodded and rubbed her chin. "You are correct. We should not be having this discussion..."

Cortel walked over to the communications console and tapped a few commands into it, as well as a few extra on one of the command consoles next to it allowing the ship wide comms to activate. "Effectively immediately, Ihi Ariki is relieved of all duties as captain of the *Solari*. Let the record state this action was authorized by Admiral Arcia Cortel. That is all."

Ihi's eyes widened. "Why...what is this going to accomplish?"

"As ranking officer aboard this ship I now take full command. Therefore, Ariki..." Arcia turned to face him; her eyes ice cold. "Get off my ship."

Ihi glared at the woman before him, wanting to retort. Wanting to say *something*, but he did not. He could not. She was saving his life, as much as he did not want her to. Without a word, the Pau'an turned and stormed out of the bridge, leaving the Admiral in silence.

Present Day...

"You relieved Captain Ariki of command...? In the middle of a war...?"

"It was to save his life. May I continue or are you going to continue to interrupt me and make this last far longer than it needs to be?" Arcia snapped back. "As I was saying..."

36 Hours Prior...

Cortel sat uncomfortably in the command chair of the *Solari*, watching the reports of pods being loaded and launched. She breathed deeply, knowing that Ravaa Squadron and the *Vision* would keep them safe. She sighed, feeling as if she could have prevented this from happening. The flagship of the OEF, the pride of Odan-Urr, was dying. She was trusted to run the fleet and everyone had their eyes on her: she would be blamed for the loss of life and ship. With a nod, she affirmed to herself that she alone would be to blame. She would not have it any other way. If anyone else would attempt to share blame, she would—

"ALERT. ALERT. PROXIMITY DETECTION."

Arcia snapped back to reality as she quickly studied various screens scattered across the bridge. Her eyes widened as her cybernetics took in the situation in a heartbeat and her gaze turned towards the viewport before her.

One of the bombers was on a direct collision course for the bridge.

Admiral Cortel had only moments to throw herself from the command chair and sprint towards the exit. She did not know how close the bomber was when the ship's computers detected the proximity breach and she did not have time to think about it. All she could do was run as fast as she could. When she finally reached the door, she heard the sickening sound of durasteel tearing and screaming as it was shredded by the impact of the bomber. Arcia slammed her hand into the control panel on her way through the door to close and secure it when she heard the explosion of the ship and payload detonating. She had just enough time to turn and look through the closing door as the ball of orange and yellow fire rocketed towards her...then her world went black.

Present Day...

"So what you're telling me is that by disregarding standard Naval protocol for evacuating a ship and sending everyone, including bridge staff, off the bridge...you unknowingly saved all of their lives."

"Apparently so; are you going to reprimand me for that as well or should I receive a medal for it?" Cortel rolled her eyes as she snapped back.

Arcia received a few throat clears in response. "We will...take it into consideration."

"Very well. What is next on your list of interrogative topics, then?"

A few chirps of a datapad populated the silence before her question was answered.

"It seems that after you woke, you were at one of the primary triage stations where you met with High Councilor Sorenn and other senior members. It was here that you made a rather interesting decision."

"Correct. After a brief reiteration of the events that had transpired on the bridge, Sorenn and I spoke about his departure from the *Solari*..."

36 Hours Prior...

"You are going to leave this ship, Sorenn. Even if I have to shoot you in the leg and drag you into the pod myself," Arcia stated, holding a fistful of Turel's garb.

Turel shoved the Admiral back and straightened his clothing. "You better be in this pod as well, Arcia. There's no reason for you to stay behind."

"I will not leave this ship until I have confirmed that every person is off and safe. Until then, I will remain to assist in keeping the Collective from destroying any additional pods. We have lost too many as it is."

"Admiral, I stress for you to evacuate with the High Councilor."

Arcia turned to Ihi, seeing the pleading look on his face that went well in hand with his statement. "I will not leave anyone behind. And stop with all of this pressure of my being so important."

The ship rocked as another bomber collided with the fore section, causing the lights to flicker and sparks to erupt from a nearby console. Fire quickly appeared and began to lick the ceiling as a fire crew ran over to extinguish it. The ship was far beyond help and was already adrift with various Collective vessels continuously firing upon her and the occasional bomber slamming into the hull. Their enemy knew the significance of destroying the *Solari* and they were doing everything possible to ensure its demise.

"What's the status of the evacuation, Admiral?" Turel asked softly.

"Last reports stated that 98% of survivors have been successfully evacuated. That does not attest to those lost after launch," the admiral responded, turning her back to the Jedi as she reviewed every name of those lost in her mind.

While the woman's back was turned, Turel motioned for the rest of the senior staff to enter their pods. "So there are only a few remaining aboard. Statistically speaking, they are already at their pods or are being loaded in now, correct?"

"That is correct. Why do you—" Cortel began but quickly froze as she felt a foreign presence within her.

She slowly turned to face Turel, her teeth grit as she put forth every ounce of resistance she could muster. "I'm sorry, Arcia. I can't let you die today."

Arcia felt an overwhelming desire to enter the escape pod behind Turel. She felt afraid that if she did not, she would fail everyone. Tears began to well as she whimpered in retaliation. Against her former best judgment, she took a step forward. And then another. And another. Turel's brow was ripe with sweat as he concentrated and imposed his will upon the admiral; something he would never do in any other situation.

"T-Turel...stop it..." Cortel managed to sputter, but he would not give in.

By the time Arcia took a single step into the pod, she screamed at the High Councilor, overexerting her own resistance and her world was swallowed by blackness once more. It was the last thing she remembered of the events upon the *Solari*.

Present Day...

"So the High Councilor used the Force on you and forced you to abandon the ship? How did that make you feel?"

Arcia did not respond at first, mulling the question over in her mind.

After a few minutes of silence, she looked up to Alethia Archenksova who had been drilling questions into her all night. “How it made me feel has nothing to do with my actions aboard the *Solari*. Stop playing with me.”

“Alright. Do you have anything else to add?”

“Let the record know, that due to my actions and my orders, I helped save over four thousand people. You would think that I would be thanked instead of interrogated over the reasoning for my actions.”

“You were thanked, Colonel. And we thank you again. You are dismissed, if there is nothing else. We will be in contact as this investigation continues.”

Arcia Cortel stood from her central seat in the chamber and offered a crisp salute before about facing and heading towards the exit of the room. Many people had died when the *Solari* was ambushed and significant damage was dealt to the ship. If it were not for the efforts of a passing Arconan scout fleet, the *Rohlan's Vision* and support craft would have likely been overrun as well. But that was what allies were for: to come together in a time of need and lend a helping hand.

And in this war, everyone was going to need all the help they could get...

