**Ghtroc 720 Light Freighter *Polarising Personality***

**Hyperspace**

Andrelious already knew he’d be in big trouble once he got back home. Kooki was annoyed enough that he was going on another mission so soon after the birth of their son, but when she saw him boarding the *Polarising Personality*, her anger grew even more.

“Your spouse was not happy to see me, was she?” Prackx said, barely hiding a smirk. “She should really take it easy so soon after having a baby,”

“Please don’t make this any harder than it already is, Granta. I asked for your help on this mission because I needed someone outside of the clan,” Andrelious answered.

“I never could resist your pretty little face. I’m actually quite looking forward to this. Me and you, alone in deep space,” the female declared.

“I already told you. I sent another friend of mine ahead when I first heard about this mission. I need his skills just as much as I need yours,” Mimosa-Inahj replied.

“I’m sure he won’t mind if we get a little distracted...” Prackx said, her hand moving to Andrelious’ thigh. He attempted to move away, but found it a little difficult to escape the Juggernaut’s grasp.

“Time you reminded me about what we’re doing!” Granta instructed.

**Jervada Research Facility**

**Jervada Asteroid Belt**

A large, dark skinned male Human typed some commands into a computer console. For the past three weeks, he’d been carefully integrating himself into the facility’s staff, who welcomed the experienced slicer into their team after he exposed and fixed a whole host of security flaws within their computer systems.

In reality, the man was Swil Phift. The only truth that the facility staff knew about him that he was indeed a skilled slicer. Under the name Neddis Derny, he claimed to be almost completely useless in combat, in spite of the fact that he was actually a skilled sniper, as well as a master of disguise.

Seeing a message on his console, Phift scanned his eyes over the content before deleting it.

“Is everything alright, Neddis?” the facility’s director, Arten Mondham queried, trying and failing to decipher the various things going on on ‘Derny’s’ screen.

“I’ve got some good news for you. Although you won’t understand it just yet,” Swil replied.

“I’m sure I will appreciate it soon enough. Some kind of software update?” Mondham asked.

“A *complete* software update. Thing is, I’m going have to reboot each holocam individually. Some of the other systems might also switch themselves off for a minute or two while I run the update,” ‘Neddis’ explained.

“If you’re going to be shutting things down, please be as quick as possible. I don’t want to be left without defences for any longer than necessary,” the director ordered.

“I’ll be able to get it done sooner if you leave me to it, Arten,” Swil answered.

Mondham nodded and walked away. There was something about Neddis Derny that bothered him, but he hadn’t been able to figure out exactly *what*.

‘Derny’ input a few more commands. His console immediately started following instructions that he had coded in during his first few hours at the facility. Soon, Swil Phift had overridden every security device and defence across the facility. Checking to make sure he wasn’t being watched, the large man tapped the large red button marked ‘shutdown’. The system didn’t show any sign of shutting anything down; instead a large number of important looking windows appeared.

Leaving his computer to finish its task, Swil allowed himself a smile as he headed into the a nearby corridor.

“You’re all clear. Shutdown has begun,” he whispered into a comlink.

**Security Hub**

Although described as a hub, the centre of the Jervada Research Facility’s security was little more than a large room with access to the sensor grid, turbolasers, and an alarm to let the rest of the rather sparsely populated facility know that an unknown vessel was approaching. With secrecy the order of the day, the standing orders were to evacuate at the first sign of any trouble.

The Zabrak female watching the sensor grid’s output monitor was entering the seventh hour of her latest shift. She hadn’t seen anything for weeks; since the arrival of the new ‘technician’ nobody had even come close to the facility. Boredom lead her to almost chain smoking cigarras, leaving the entire room filled with the smell of burnt narcotics.

Just as she was about to light up again, the monitor went off for a few moments.

“Did we just get a power outage?” the Zabrak asked her colleague, a Human male who was watching a bank of security monitors.

“No. Derny is running a system wide update on the software. He said that things would turn themselves off,” the man answered. “I’ve just had four cameras update themselves,”

“Any obvious changes?” the female questioned.

“Not that I can tell. Probably just backend stuff,”

Unbeknown to the pair, Swil’s ‘update’ had altered the feed to the monitors. The sensor grid output was now six hours behind, whilst the camera feed was now a looped video, showing the same twenty seconds over and over. The code also overrode every status console, reporting that both the shield and the turbolaser systems were still working perfectly, when in reality they had been shut down for the next six hours.

Everything was in place for the *Polarising Personality*. It could make its approach unimpeded.

**-x-**

With the defences down, Andrelious and Granta landed without being challenged. On arriving in the facility’s large hangar, they spotted the ships from the intelligence report.

“Swil won’t have been able to do anything about those. Expect to have to escape fast if things do go wrong,” Andrelious explained.

“That’s your job, babe. I can take care of the heavy stuff,” Prackx replied.

“Let’s hope it doesn’t come to that. Swil should be beginning to collect the data right now. We just need to make sure he gets it to us, and get it, and him, off this rock,” the Aedile explained.

“What? No fight at all? What did you bring me for then?” the female answered crossly.

Mimosa-Inahj rolled his eyes. “The theory is that there will be no fight. We *should* be out of here before they even discover we’ve arrived, but things can easily go wrong,”

“Right. Well let’s find the turbolift. Are we meeting up with this Swil?” Granta questioned.

“If he’s following the plan, he’ll be waiting for us with a datapad full of information. Two levels down, then a short walk along a corridor,”

Prackx nodded and gestured over to a pair of red doors.

**-x-**

As they stepped into the turbolift, the two Sith expected a quick journey to meet with their ally. They moved downwards and started along the corridor. As the intelligence report suggested, the facility was almost completely deserted.

Rounding a corner, the pair expected to meet up with Swil Phift, but instead came face to face with a pair of guards.

“Ah ha! This explains why that technician was behaving oddly!” the taller guard declared.

Prackx looked unimpressed and pulled out her lightsaber, quickly killing one of the guards. The other guard sprinted away, screaming into his comlink that he was under attack. Alarms started to blare seconds later.

“Swil! Change of plan! Get to the hangar! Now!” Andrelious ordered, as he and his companion turned on their heels and rushed towards the turbolift. In front of them, a few scientists pushed the call button frantically.

Prackx barged through the crowd, scattering them as the doors opened. Andrelious followed in her wake a was pleased to see that Swil Phift was already inside the lift; he greeted the Seeker with a simple nod.

“There won’t be time to check everything on the ship! We need to punch it straight away if we’re to beat those X-Wings out of here,” Andrelious stated as the lift returned to the hangar.

Already several of the facility were boarding the Lambda shuttle. Arten Mondham noticed ‘Neddis’ with the two new arrivals, but could manage only a disappointed shake of the head as they ran past.

Andrelious leapt into the *Polarising Personality’s* pilot seat and immediately launched, knocking Prackx and Phift off their feet. He shunted as much power as he could to the rear shields.

The evacuees watched as the crimson ship departed their facility, wondering exactly what had happened.

**-x-**

“So I’ll take this to your contact on Coruscant. Mind if I pop in and meet the new arrival before I go?” Granta questioned.

“Best not to. Kooki won’t like it. I’m not even allowed to tell you where we’re living right now. Hence the Corellian drop-off,” Andrelious explained.

Prackx scowled.

*I’ll drop you off for now, sweetie. But I’ll be there when she lets you down*, she thought.

FIN