

Hidden in Plain Sight

Fiction for Fleet Operations

"Enemy Mine"

By

Battlemaster Takagari "DarkHawk" KogaRyu (#264)

PROLOGUE

Deep Space

Orian Pipeline

Listehol Run Junction

After numerous and bitter hard-fought skirmishes with the Collective. Clan Naga Sadow and her Houses are regaining momentum to retake the Clan's properties in which the Collective over-ran them from. The short time the Collective has enjoyed the spoils of war at the expense of Clan Naga Sadow is quickly coming to an end.

The leadership of the Clan has prepared both Houses for a "Shock and Awe" retaliation mission that will assuredly regain the Clan their brick and mortar properties within the Orian system. In the meantime, the Clan relies on their bargaining and accords throughout to maintain their resources and way of life.

Most members of the Houses have been sent off in parts of the region to maintain order and to eliminate any members of the collective. So far missions have been successful, and the Clan is poised to make their strike against the Collective.

Before Clan leadership can implement their new attack plan upon the Collective, a few loose ends have to be taken care of. What is lurking in front of the Clan at the moment is a mining fleet depleting precious resources within the Clan's backyard. It has been discovered the fleet is operating illegally and without transponder codes within the outer edge debris fields.

Consul to Clan Naga Sadow, Battlelord Bentre Strahoes has commissioned House Shar Dakhan to eliminate the mining process and take control over the fleet and resources. The Combat Hammerhead Corvette "The Malevolent" has been designated as the House's flagship for the duration of this mission.

Battlelord Etah has been House Shar Dakhan's Quastor for a few months now. He has been relentless at maintaining the lore and prestige of the House. He carefully selected Battlemaster Takagari "DarkHawk" KogaRyu as his Aedile.

Etah paced the bridge impatiently; his stern look carried heavy weight to it. His brows formed in such a way that expressed a very anxious overture about him. Computer monitors stretched across the bridge of the flagship and at every station, its operators are working diligently. One Ensign's station squawked alive as the Battlelord paced by, The Equite turned quickly to see what was breaking his concentration.

"Sir, VT49 designation "Talon 1" is requesting permission to land," the Ensign barked out.

"Good, that is Battlemaster DarkHawk, grant permission and inform him I will meet him in the hanger," the Battlelord instructed.

"Copy that Sir...Talon 1 this is the Malevolent, you have cleared credentials and had permission to land at landing bay Echo 6, Battlelord Etah will meet you at your bay," the Ensign instructed.

The next sound was a communications break, and a gruff voice simply stated "Copy..."



Hammerhead Corvette

Malevolent

Hanger

The VT49 Decimator was already in place when the Battlelord arrived at Echo 6 landing pad. The crew was diligently completing post-flight inspections and unloading the ship's cargo.

Takagari was disembarking the battle harden Decimator as his Quaestor approached the ramp. DarkHawk showing his tenacious bond to customs and courtesies and bowed before his House leader.

"DH, glad you've made it back safe and sound. I see you're no worse for wear!" the Battlelord spoke enthusiastically as he gestured his Aedile to stand.

DarkHawk stood, and Etah motioned him to walk. The two Sith's walked side by side as Etah explained the details of their new tasking.

"So what's the play here boss?" asked Takagari.

"The best approach right now is to move the Malevolent into position on their main mining ship; it's an older Garman-class Mining Vessel. We make our presence and intentions known by giving them a few warning shots across their bow. Then we can deploy our boarding party

vessels to their main ship. Meantime I will have the rest of DoD readied to take out any remnants of their support ships and their Y-8.s.” the Battlelord stated.

DarkHawk let the instructions from his Questor swell around his head, looking and deciphering any intangibles that may give the advantage to the House.

“I am assuming the boarding party is a rouse to get inside?” asked the Battlemaster.

“Of course!” replied Etah

“I know you just got back from a mission, but I will need your expertise and talents to let say make sure none of our boys don’t get a wild hair up their arse and blow that ship up!” the Quaestor said sarcastically.

DarkHawk broke a small smile. Takagari just simply nodded to his Quaestor.

The two entered a turbo lift and headed to their newly stationed briefing room.



Malevolent

Briefing Room

The two Equite’s entered the briefing room and Warrior Erik Cato, Battle Team Leader of Disciples of Darkhan called the room to attention.

Etah took to the front of the briefing room as Takagari slid in a chair next to one of the House’s most seasoned member’s Adept Malik Shadow, DarkHawk respected the man, as Malik has been graced with the Sadow title, and his experience was irreplaceable. The two men nodded to one another as Etah began his briefing.

Etah explained the details of the mission. He instructed that Warrior Cato will lead the fighter sweep and newcomer Hunter Calenhad will lead the negotiation party.

“The biggest thing we need to remember is that the main vessel is the Garman-class and it was not to be touched we need that cargo and all the resources it still has on her. DarkHawk will take the lead on the bridge capture once Cal and the negotiators make contact with the mining vessel personnel. We have to sell this, so no gun’s a blazing, make contact, assess the situation, then move in. Keep them distracted until DarkHawk makes it to the bridge.”

DarkHawk was already linking his gauntlet CPU with the Malevolent’s files, and dossier’s on the Garman-class Mining Vessel. He studied the schematics closely.

“The quickest route to the bridge is here...” he punched up a diagram on the briefing room’s main screen. “But if Cal is met with any resistance, that route will surely be overrun with ship personnel. I will have to take a few detours to stay out of sight and make my way up to the

bridge via this crew ladder. The only downfall that crew ladder is going to take me right into at least one of Cal's rendezvous points. If nothing has set off a skirmish by then me being spotted will cause a firefight." the Battlemaster instructed.

"No worries Sir, one way or another we got you covered," Cal said.

"Well, if my calculations are correct, since they are operating under less than stellar appropriations and no transponder codes, they will more than likely shoot first asked questions later. So be on the ready at all times," replied Etah.

The members of House Shar Dahkan all stood as Etah began to leave the briefing room.

"DarkHawk you ready for this?" a familiar voice asked.

The Battlemaster spun about to see his old friend Battlemaster Marcus Kiriyu. Marcus extended his arm to the Shaevalian and Takagari did the same.

"Should be a walk in the park" DarkHawk replied.

"Let us hope this does not turn into a bantha-rope," Malik Sadow said as he walked by.



Corvette Malevolent

Bridge

"This is Battlelord Etah Bloodfyre aboard the Corvette Malevolent; I am requesting communications with mining vessel at my twelve o'clock respond immediately."

The comms broke no sound...

"This is Battlelord Etah Bloodfyre of the Brotherhood Corvette Malevolent; if you do not respond, I will be forced to show you the lengths we are willing to endure."

Again nothing

"Lieutenant, fire two bursts across her bow let them know we are not jerking around."

"As you command Sir" replied the Lieutenant, he punched in a few controls, and a large reticle came across the main screen. "Firing in three...two...one...FIRE!" the lieutenant mashed the trigger two times, and two large laser bursts raced out into space and narrowly missing the hull of the mining ship.

Still nothing over comms...

"Ensign give the ships the green light to launch" instructed the Bloodfyre disciple.

"Malevolent boarding party this is the bridge you have permission for launch" the Ensign directed into his comm's headset.

The Corvette's hanger bay opened and a mass of ships seemingly floated out into space. Three of the ships headed directly for the mining vessel, while a squadron of T70 X-Wing's started standard formation tactical air patrol within the vicinity.

Cal piloted the VT49 flawlessly as the boarding party moved in closer to the mining vessel. As they approached, there was no movement or hails coming in from the mining vessel. As they approached all systems seemed to be functioning aboard the mining ship. Though the entire boarding party seemed to be thinking the same thing, "*Looks can be so deceiving...*"

Etah watched this entire process from the bridge of the Malevolent, and it's many viewing screens. The X-wings strafed through debris searching for Y'8's, but nothing was present at the moment.

"Malevolent, this is Blue Two, we are making the second run of the parameter, as of currently, we have no bogey's insight or present.'

"Copy Blue Two"

Cal instructed the Decimator flight to level in behind him as he took the lead into the mining vessel's hangar bay.

"Malevolent this is Green One, we are making our final approach to the hanger, all clear" Cal said speaking clearly into his mic.

"Green One, this is Malevolent, Cal you are clear to board, keep radio channels open at all times I want eyes and ears on you and team," Etah instructed as he watched his teams closely on viewing screens.

"Copy Malevolent, landing sequence commenced we are in and setting down," replied Cal.



Garman Class Mining Vessel

Hanger Bay

The three VT49's landed inside the hanger. There was no movement, no welcoming party, no maintenance personnel the hanger bay was at the moment, empty.

The crew doors of the Decimators all opened and Cal and his team disembarked and formed a perimeter around their ships. Cal's team comprised of a mixture of Ranger's, as well as members of House Shar Dahkan. Cal gave the signal and the Ranger's started sweeping the hanger. Cal and the rest of the team started hitting open control consoles to check ship's history logs.

Nothing came across as out of the ordinary within the ship's logs. Cal gave the go ahead, and the team separated checking all the other consoles all came up with the same no incident occurrence.

Cal walking towards the large turbo lift called back his command ship, "Malevolent, this is Cal we are on board and currently have no signs of trouble or personnel."

"Copy Cal, proceed with caution..." Etah replied.

Cal and his team split and took separate lifts up to the next level. Cal got an uneasy feeling as they raced to the next level. The turbo lift came to an abrupt stop, and the doors whooshed open. The second level was holding storage for all the minerals and raw materials mined. The storage facility was nearly full of rich minerals and ore, which added to the more deafening question, where is the crew?

Back at the hanger, it was strangely quiet. The normal hustle and bustle sounds of an active hanger were not present. Inside the Decimator Cal piloted, a cross-member panel was slowly removed and Battlemaster DarkHawk crawled out of his smugglers hold. The Equite sat still for minutes, listening for anything. The black-clad figure moved ever so gingerly towards the crew door. Placing his feet in a very orchestrated motion allowing him to distribute his weight and frame virtually silently across the floor of the ship.

DarkHawk punch a button on his gauntlet, within seconds a DRK1 probe droid hovered over the Battlemaster's shoulder. "DK, find me something and kill the lights in here..." The little probe droid emitted a few low-level beeps and headed out to the hanger. The droid moved in militant covertness. Small, precise movements to and from cover, only exposing its antenna from its covered positions. DK made its way to a large control panel in the far corner of the hanger. As the DRK1 linked up with the control panel and the hanger lights mimicked the darkness of space.

Takagari slid his visor over his eyes and the green hue of the night vision appeared as his sight adjusted to the sensory adaptation. "DK find me my access door to crew ladder in quadrant Seven F." The probe droid continued its militant movements until it came upon three large crates blocking its path. Another set of low audible beeps, DarkHawk watched from afar, "What do you mean you can go any further? Takagari asked.

More beeps and whistles, "Stay right there DK I am on my way."

The Battlemaster moved with the same precision as the probe droid. Even in total blackness, his movements were premeditated. Making his way to the far end of the hanger he found his little probe droid hovering over the large crates. DarkHawk reached out to solidify his connection to the Force. With extended hands, the Equite moved rhythmically, and the crates slowly moved from one side of the wall to the other. DarkHawk exhaled as he sat the last crate down. That's when he felt it.

That familiar feeling rushed through his body. Something was off; he spun around searching the rest of the hanger as far as his night vision would allow. Suddenly near the rear of one of the Decimators, he caught the movements of at least two individuals. Without compromising himself or the whole mission, Takagari slid behind one of the rates he just moved. The Sith gave DK hand signals, and the probe droid rose high above the hangar floor and traversed adjacent one of the main support beams. Zooming in over the Decimators, no personnel could be seen. DK hovered past the ships and scanned the area, once again nothing could be seen.

The Equite slid to the other side of the crate just in time to see what he wanted to see. Three armed individuals were using maintenance pits to move undetected. The Battlemaster grinned and removed his collapsed Night Sister bow from its sheath on his back.

The Sith switched to a secure channel and hailed to his team members. In a low whisper, DarkHawk informed Cal and the Malevolent of his findings. Etah started to respond back, but Takagari broke contact and assumed back to his stealthy activities. Two of the foes crawled out from the maintenance pit, and that is when the Sith made his move. In one fluid motion, DarkHawk moved in a Parkour style scamper, hurdling obstacles in his path. Just as the third individual pulled himself out of the pit, a large forearm wrapped around the neck of the unknown assailant and a blow to the temple and the man fell limp in the Equite's grip.

The other two fleeing for a turbo lift had no idea what was about to transpire in front of them. DarkHawk went into a full sprint and Managed to close the gap between him and his prey. Just as the two went to enter the turbo lift, a fast moving black wraith tackled both men. Slamming the two to the ground, you could hear the air leave their lungs and the familiar sound of a skull bouncing off a steel floor. DarkHawk immediately executed a backward roll and kipped up to his feet.

One of the men rolled over and popped to his feet in a fast-paced motion. From the expression on his face, the knowledge of his demise was present. The man started to raise his blaster, and that was the last move he made. DarkHawk still in tune with his connection to the Force, moved at blazing speed. The Night Sister bow caught the forearm of the Sith's assailant, and the blaster fell to the floor. Using the momentum of the bow strike, DarkHawk spun the bow around and quickly struck again at the jaw of his assailant. Blood sprayed along the back wall of the turbo lift. The next thing the man saw was a blurred foot heading directly for him. There was no time to react; the sidekick caught the man square in the face. The sound of bones crushing echoed within the turbo lift. The man fell limp.

The second man managed to come too in time to see his partner in crime fall on his face. A quick leg sweep caught the Equite in the back of his left knee dropping him to a prone position. The man threw a right cross catching the Sith in the ribs. Before the man could retract his punch DarkHawk grappled the arm and in a circular motion threw his body around the grounded man. In one fell swoop, Takagari had the man in a full armbar, and the arm snapped like a twig. The pain raised through his assailant and before he could utter a scream a huge right cross came down and crushed the man's face rendering him unconscious.

DarkHawk made notice of the two men's uniforms, though there were no insignias they wore attire that was a striking resemblance to the Collectives Belsavis' Own. The Equite heard the moans of the first man he rendered unconscious. DarkHawk made his way out of the turbo lift, only to find the man staggering about. DarkHawk snapped a button on the hilt of the bow, and it sprung to life. Without hesitation, the Battlemaster fired two plasma arrows directly into the thighs of his prey. The man fell, and the first part of his scream echoed through the hangar. DarkHawk moved with lightning-fast reflexes and muffled the man's screams with his hand.

"Who are you and why are you on this ship?" demanded the Sith.

The man continued to scream, DarkHawk swung his right leg around and placed his boot heel on the wound and applied just enough pressure. "Either way, I am going to get what I need out of you, save yourself some agony and tell me what I want to know, not what you think I need to

hear, I will know the difference, and it will be very unpleasant for you,” DarkHawk said as he twisted his boot heel more into the wound. The man screamed inside the gloved hand of Takagari. But the brooding Shaevalian kept the pressure against his prey’s face muffling them into the darkness of the hangar.

DarkHawk kept his heel in the wound and slowly removed his hand. The man gasping for air, breathing long erratic breath’s, could do nothing but stare at the black wraith before him.

A chuckle was the first sound the man made. “Stupid Brotherhood scum, this ship is ours, we had control over it for the last forty-eight hours, one of our motherships will be here to unload its cargo and then we will blow it to bits.” The man sneered.

DarkHawk twisted his heel into the wound once again. “Where are the others?” demanded the Sith.

The man gasped for air again, “ We, we, we are scattered throughout the ship.” he exclaimed.

“How many are in the bridge?” asked the Battlemaster.

“Not sure,” the man said. Darkhawk twisted the heel again.

“FIVE!” the man screamed.

“Thanks for the heads up douchebag...” DarkHawk said smiling as he snapped the neck of the man before him.

“Malevolent, this is Talon One, I have confirmation we have Collective Mercenaries aboard, I repeat we have Collective Belsavis’ Own onboard.”

“DarkHawk, are you sure of this?” Etah exclaimed over comm’s

“Positive Sir, inform all parties we are not alone, and negotiations are over before they started, mothership incoming, I am heading to retake the bridge.” replied the Equite.

“Damn!” Etah exclaimed. “Ensign call back to the Clan, let them know what we found, I am not about to lose this vessel, we need everything here and fast!” the Battlelord demanded.

“Copy that Sir” replied the ensign. Another volley of button pushing and the Ensign made the hail back to the Clan and informed them of their findings.

“Cal did you copy that transmission from DH?” asked Etah.

“Roger Sir we are moving past cargo hold and headed to the central hull of the ship. Hopefully, DarkHawk gets there quick cause by the sounds of it we got company coming at us.” Cal replied.

DarkHawk had already made his way back to the crates he moved earlier and ripped open the access door to the crew ladder.

“On my way to the bridge” DarkHawk explained.



Mining Vessel

Crew Ladder

At every clearing DarkHawk assessed the scene to make sure he had no stragglers around or following him. Takagari was easily three floors up with at least three more to go. He could hear the shuffling above him. “*Company...*” he thought. The Equite waited until he could see movement above him, with nowhere to go but up DarkHawk did the only thing he could do. He took a position on the small ladder landing with his bow at the ready. Up above he caught the movement of two men shimmying across the catwalk. The Battlemaster smiled as he drew his bow back and in two quick motions launched two plasma arrows out at his targets. One of the men happened to look directly into the path of the incoming projectile and caught the full blow of the impact square in the face. The second arrow caught the second man at the bottom part of the sternum and exited through his neck. The two fell past the smiling Sith.

DarkHawk immediately raced up the ladder to the next level. Scanning as he hit the landing, he saw no movement and no other personnel moving in. The Battlemaster continued his climb upward. As he transcended to the fourth level, a large pane of glass allowed him to see his comrades and the skirmish they were involved in. Cal and the others were in a firefight with at least six mercenaries. Cal was already flanking them and managed to snuff the aggressors out rather quickly.

“Cal, you good?” asked Takagari.

“Yeah, we are good to go, we are making our way to the bridge” he replied

“Good, send a couple of men to the engine room and make sure we have no surprises there. Once we clear the bridge, you will need to pilot this pig out of here...”

“Copy that already on it, meet you at the bridge, Sir,” Cal said happily.

DarkHawk continued up the ladder and moved with a purpose to get up to that sixth level. Finally planting solid footing on the landing platform, he could see the hatch above.

“Cal, can you hear me? I am at the bridge opening.”

“Copy were are almost there bridge just ahead,” Cal replied

“Give them something to think about to distract them, and I will hit them from their flank.”

“Copy that...” Cal’s voice echoed through the earpiece communicator of the Battlemaster. Cal and the Ranger team pushed forward making their way to the bridge entrance. More straggler

mercenaries peered their heads from their hiding place. Only to find the Rangers and young Cal was not to be trifled with. The Ranger team blasted their way forward with precision movements. Each movement the Rangers made resembled a cadence, each kill in tune with their movements. Cal meanwhile was making little work of the group of mercs behind him. Holding his saber in one hand, his X-8 night sniper in the other Cal stoic face never changed as he cut through the midsection of a charging merc. Blood and visceral painted the wall where the merc stood in front of, a massive hole in his chest dripped the life out of his body.

Now the bridge entrance was in sight. The ranks already had set up a perimeter, Cal walked to the door and depressed the communicator on the side wall of the large steel door.

The communicator just squawked and fizzed. Cal turned from the door and walked away only pointing his thumb at the door. Two Rangers moved up and set up there breaching charges.

“DarkHawk, breach about to take place...” Cal said with a small smile. Rattataki



Mining Vessel

Bridge Entrance

The Equite could hear the muffled sounds through the hatch he was about to breach into the bridge. He could sense he feeling swelling inside him, something was amiss above, and that familiar gut feeling was speaking volumes to the Battlemaster.

Meanwhile, at the bridge entrance above, Cal and the Rangers sat poised and ready to push the button on the charges set on the bridge door. Cal is holding one hand up counting down with his gloved fingers, three, two, one.....**BOOOOOOOOM!!!!!!!!**

Smoke and debris fill the corridor, and the strike team waited for a retaliation. What was about to happen was unexpected.

DarkHawk coordinated his breach simultaneously with that of Cal's. When he heard the charges go off, the Battlemaster already with a flash grenade and a smoke grenade in hand. Takagari turned the latch and pushed the hatch open, in one swift move he yanked the pins out of the grenades with his teeth and let the safety handles recoil away. A quick toss and within seconds two loud pops echoed on the bridge. A flash of light and screams filled the room, another loud boom and the smoke filled the room.

DarkHawk launched into action, jumping through the hatch and landing straddling the opening. The first four men were gagging from the smoke and disoriented from the flashbang. Quickly the Equite went to work, unsheathing his electro-staff, keeping them in their two-piece configuration. Takagari took advantage of the few seconds he had to clear the room. The first merc took the blunt force of the initial blow to the back of the neck, spinning around Takagari dropped to one knee and smashed the outside of both knees of his adversary. The man dropped like a log.

The second merc almost tripped over Takagari as he stumbled around not aware of the violence that was taking place around him. DarkHawk grabbed the merc's arm, twisting and spinning the merc's arm overhead, Takagari flipped the man and sent him sailing into a control panel. The Equite landed the butt of his electro-staff into the base of the man's skull activating the apparatus and sending a massive jolt of electricity pulsing through the merc's body.

The smoke started to dissipate and the Battlemaster wasted did not time dispatching the last two men in the bridge. The first took a huge front kick to the sternum and DarkHawk followed that up with a spinning heel kick catching the man square in the jaw. The impact hit with such force that the merc sailed across the bridge smashing into a control station back first. Bones could be heard shattering from the impact, now screams of agony filled the remnants of the bridge. The last man was trying to stand upright when the Equite finished him off. Two quick spinning strikes from the electro-staff crushed the man's skull. His lifeless body fell limp to the floor.

Cal and the Rangers also had their hands full with a charging group of merc pooling out of the entrance door. The merc's formidable as they were, stood little change of the convergent position the Ranger's set up and their blaster cut them down with ease. Cal approached the bridge to back up the Battlemaster, as he approached the familiar sound of a saber igniting caught his attention.

As Cal entered the scene opened to a whole new agenda. There at one end of the bridge was a female Rattataki holding what seemed to be the Captain of the ship. In her hand, she held a yellow-bladed saber to the throat of her hostage. Cal quickly unsheathed and ignited his saber bringing it to the ready. Takagari held up a hand gesturing the young Journeyman to stand fast.

"Cal back up nice and slow, DO NOT engage the Rattataki" the Battlemaster ordered.

Cal, very confused at the moment started to move forward. The female Rattataki wrenched at the captain and brought the saber close to the flesh. The man was in so much fear he relieved himself. His tan pants darkened as his secretion ran down the front of his pants. DarkHawk once again screamed for Cal to stop his movement and back out of the bridge.

"Cal, stop! As much as I would like this is not to test your skill, not against her, so back up nice and slow..." Takagari instructed.

Cal slightly more confused took heed of his Master's words. Cal slowly backed away, instructing the Rangers to keep their sights locked in on their quarry. DarkHawk sheathed his electro-staff. Moving to the Rattataki's right, she followed the Shaevalian's movements turning her and her captive with him.

"Let go of the Captain woman, we can settle this the old way..." the Battlemaster said.

She uttered not a sound just glared at the Equite, waiting for his next move. Takagari was very familiar with the Rattataki, his first encounter with them was on a mission with Grand Master Muz. DarkHawk learned not only from The Lion but through first-hand experience how deadly these warriors were.

Nothing but a few grunts and exhales did the Rattataki expel as now the Battlemaster stood to her two o'clock. DarkHawk stood stoic and ready to see if the female warrior was going to engage him. She had to of known that her chances were slim of survival, but the Rattataki

know no limits and all she needed was a chance. DarkHawk was going to give her that chance. Takagari could feel the rage building inside him; instead of unleashing that full raw, unadulterated power, he controlled it. Letting that power flow through him solidifying his connection to the Force. In one swift motion of his arms, the Battemaster reached out to the Force and grabbing the Captain and the Rattataki in a Force grip sending them sailing in separate directions. The Captain fell at Cal's feet, and Cal grabbed the man and started dragging him to the exit.

The female warrior collided with a huge viewing monitor crashing to the floor. She pounded her fist to the floor and screamed. She immediately went into a roll towards the captain and in one quick execution plunged her saber into the side of the Captain. Her saber buried almost hilt deep, and the ship's commander slumped to the floor. The Rattataki prepared a killing blow as she was coming down to strike Cal where he stood. Cal's eyes illuminated as the cobalt-colored blade of his Master's saber blocked the yellow blade of the Rattataki.

DarkHawk followed his execution of a blade block with a vicious elbow to the side temple of the female warrior. She stumbled back shaking her head from the blow. Her facial expression quickly went from pain to rage as she charged at the wraith. Unleashing her skill of the saber, a barrage of volleys at the Battlemaster. DarkHawk expertly dispatched those volleys, his long hilted saber flowing effortlessly in his hands. Spinning and clashes illuminated a lit bridge. The Rattataki came with an overhand backhanded strike, Takagari smiled as he saw his opening. The Equite made a left-to-right parry and caught her yellow blade pushing her off balance. The Sith followed that action with a vicious roundhouse aimed at the women's head. At the last second, the Rattataki saw the blow coming and rolled forward and away from it. DarkHawk allowed his momentum of the kick to carry him around to close the gap from the distance she just created.

Cal and the Rangers watched this exchange go on for what seemed like a long duration, but in all actuality, the exchange was over before it even started. The two mimicked their movements making sure there was no available opening. The Sith would move left to right, the Rattataki would counter with the same movement keeping her directly in front of the Shaevalian. She came at him with a barrage of overhead strikes, DarkHawk diligently parried those strikes and snapped a front kick burying his boot into the woman's solar plexus. She folded over and gasped as the air left her lungs and she fell to her knees.

DarkHawk circled his prey and came in to end the skirmish. The Rattataki once again rolled forward and came up swinging her saber with violent backhand strikes. On the third parry, the Battlemaster's saber stayed steady as he locked in on his female quarry snatching his quarry's forearm with his left hand and coming underneath her twisting her around and launching her across the bridge. The female warrior crashed to the floor, blood spilling from her mouth. Takagari raced in again to finish her, but the Rattataki would not have it. She sprung into the air flipping over the cobalt blade landing behind the Equite. As she turned left for a killing blow of her own, DarkHawk dropped to one knee and spun right, coming in below her strike and cut right through her midsection. Blood sprayed like a paint bomb just went off, the female dropped

to the floor.



Mining Vessel

Bridge

DarkHawk extinguished his saber and clipped it back onto his utility belt. He knelt over the fallen Rattataki, slowly closed her eyes with a slide of his hand. Taking her saber in his right hand and studying it. He was impressed with the craftsmanship and placed it on his utility belt as well.

Cal approached the Battlmaster, "Master you alright?" he asked.

Takagari looked at his apprentice with a blank stare, "Few bumps and bruises but alright none the less."

"I see the captain did not fare too well in the exchange."

"No Sir, unfortunately, he did not," Cal replied.

"Well, gather your Ranger's Cal, you're going to need help."

"Help with what Master?" asked Cal.

"You're going to have to fly this ship outta here."

Just then comm's squawked alive, "Takagari, Cal, give me a status report" instructed Etah.

DarkHawk informed his Quaestor of their status. The biggest concern right now was that Warrior Erik Cato, Marcus and the rest of the house were engaging straggling Y-8's that were hidden deep in the debris field. They stood no chance against the X-Wings

"They jumped out at us when you guys started to engage the mercs aboard the mothership. DO you know who the Rattataki is?" asked Etah.

"No Sir, but she is part of the Collective and Belsavis' Own. So the Collective seems to be expanding themselves, Consul Strahoes will sure need to be aware of this. She killed the captain Sir, so Cal and the Rangers are gonna move her outta this debris field so we can get her outta here."

"Well get it done ASAP, we got what is most likely their reinforcements in route, sensors just picked up ships coming out of hyperspace and moving in. So hurry the hell up and let's get out of here," the Battlelord instructed.

"Copy"

DarkHawk instructed Cal and his Rangers to jump in seats. Cal called back to the engine room to get a status update and ops check. Cal got an all clear and a ops check good. He studied the control console and flipped what he assumed were the correct toggle switches, the ION engines finally roared to life. Cal pushed the throttles forward slowly as one of the Ranges steered the vessel clear of the debris field. Marcus and Erik made a quick pass in front of the bridge as the X-Wing's raced back to the Malevolent.

The Malevolent hailed back over to the mining vessel, Etah appeared on the bridge's main viewing screen. A surprising look fell upon the Quaestor, "I see you been busy, nicely done with the Rattataki DH."

The Aedile of House Shar Dakhan simply bowed to his Quaestor. Takagari was never one to boast of his conquests; it was simply part of the mission parameters.

"What kind of haul did they get,?" Etah asked.

"Very extensive Sir, we have a mass amount of resource for our utilization," replied DarkHawk.

Cal and the Rangers were successful in moving the mining ship out of the debris field, Etah sent over a fresh crew to pilot the ship as well as a fresh team of Rangers to scour the ship and find the remaining crew. This was executed with very little haste, both the mining vessel and the Malevolent made the jump to hyperspeed just as the Belsavis' Own flagship appeared, firing in on the two Brotherhood ships. Caton Gehr, the leader of Belsavis' Own, stood infuriated as he watched his spoils of war make the jump to lightspeed.

