

A Most Daring Rescue

Hanger Bay Delta-Seven Sky Breach Orbital Platform Kiaist System

Lieutenant Colonel Wynter and Major Tanos ran to Tython Squadron's hanger, barely outpacing a tactical team of security forces. The radio transmissions were odd to say the least. They entered the hanger to see the massive frame of a C-Roc cruiser barely clearing the ceiling. The pilots stood in ranks, looking downtrodden and sullen.

Major Tanos got to the pilots first, "You have all failed! Tython has allowed an enemy tactical team to infiltrate our *home*, and capture our beloved Vulptex mascot?" Wynter was taken slightly aback by the woman's tone. He had never seen her so angry and ashamed.

Mar Sul, Chrome, and Aaleeshah stepped forward. It was Mar Sul who spoke, "Major, we were on deep patrol, only auxiliary flight staff were on duty. The cruiser had entry codes and signaled a distress..."

It was Wynter's turn to browbeat his pilots, "Aaleeshah, please tell me you were able to make out who or what exactly infiltrated our base while we were looking after the Clan mascot? I need answers, now"

The blue skinned Togruta stepped forward. "Sir, yes sir. I was able to verify two transmissions were sent out when we came into vicinity of the unknown craft. One was sent out of the system...and received on the Dajorra System."

Wynter nodded and pulled Major Tanos aside. "Lock down this hanger and get the Director and Executor on the horn. They will want to know that our erstwhile allies in Arcona have pulled a deadly prank. Oh, and assemble a few of our Jedi and prepare your personal craft for launch."

VT-49 *Retribution*
Dajorra System
Arconan Territory

The silence on the bridge of the *Retribution* was deafening for the crew. The makeshift assemblage was as makeshift as the mission itself. *Perhaps this indeed was a trap*, thought Wynter. He knew what the rest of the team thought. They had let the Clan down.

From the moment the transmission came in from Arconan territory opinions were divided. Normally, Arcona was an erstwhile supporter of the Resistance. Why, now, would they concoct such a deadly ruse and offer such bad blood? With victory in the recent war with the Collective, Odan-Urr had gained much. Trust and knowing one's enemies from allies was not one advantage, however.

He had brought Zeline, Ranarr, and Tyraal because they were Jedi. But, also because they were new enough not to cause any rupture of morale if they ended up not making it back from this mission. And so Zeline and Tyraal sat inside the laser cannon mounts on the ventral and dorsal sides of the vessel as Ranarr sat with Major Tanos and Lieutenant Colonel Wynter at the helm.

The *Retribution's* stealth mode was activated, forcing her to sit helpless against the silhouette of the Arconan Star Destroyer. They waited for the right moment, for the right transport. Fighter escorts were very minimal here at the heart of their territory. They would have just enough time to make their mark and get out alive, perhaps.

"There, the cache is inside that shuttle. We need to bring back our Vulpex alive" stated Ranarr. Major Tanos barked an order for Tyraal and Zeline to be ready on their laser cannons and to call out a target of the two TIE fighters that leisurely followed the shuttle. Wynter armed the torpedo launches as Tanos primed the engine and donned her helmet. "All personnel seal up." ordered Wynter. The hatchway opened less than a foot, and cabin pressure and oxygen began to bleed from the cockpit.

The *Retribution* shot onward, her superior speed impressively on display. Wynter breathed heavily as he saw the first few flights of

intercept fighters launching from the Star Destroyer and support vessels ringing the system lumbering towards them. "Fire on Ranarr's mark!" barked Wynter. Within an instant two concussion missiles launched from the VT-49. The deadly birds of prey easily detonated on impact with the shuttle, shredding debris languidly expanding outward. What the shockwave did not destroy, the laser fire from the two young Jedi did.

"I've got it...close the hatch in mark five." Ranarr offered from his commlink. On queue, the ramp closed shut as a small container was pulled inside by clever use of the Force. Major Tanos feverishly handled the vessel as it approached hyperspace vector eta-gamma-rho. In an instant, their vision was warped by the dazzling white and blues of the lightspeed jump. "Easy as pie." Tyraal cheered from the topside cannon.

Wynter shook his head, wondering if perhaps this *was* too easy.

"Perhaps. Perhaps not. Major, set a course for home. Oh, and open up that container. Our little friend will be hungry and scared...but not cold." The Human laughed to himself, somewhat, knowing that the crystal fox's physiology and the life-support cage that encapsulated her was the only reason this hair brained scheme had worked.