<https://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/character_sheets/8008>

**Peace City Spaceport**

**Dragostae**

**Karufr**

**34 ABY**

Mant Brafin examined his quarry carefully. The Mon Calamari checked the hatch, but wasn’t at all surprised to find it locked tight. Taking a long drag from his cigarra, Brafin continued to look the ship over. He had only arrived on Karufr the previous day, but he was already realising that the locals were a little unusual. He hadn’t spotted any fellow Mon Calamari, finding that the majority were Zeltrons too busy partying among themselves, or Humans interested only in their own lives. Nobody seemed particularly interested in Brafin, other than the owners of the various cantinas that he had visited overnight.

Peace City Spaceport was not Karufr’s main spaceport. In fact, it was little more than a large open expanse with half a dozen small ships scattered throughout the area with no uniform pattern. That made Brafin’s job much easier, but he still took great care in making sure nobody was watching before he started to pick at the XS-800’s entry hatch.

*I swear this keeps on getting easier!* Brafin thought. He was already a veteran in the acquisitions game, having stolen ships to order for nearly two decades already. Even as he aged, he still enjoyed the buzz of escaping with tens of thousands of credits worth of ship and being gone long before its legal owner even knew what was happening.

Mant smiled. The lock on the XS-800 was stock; whoever owned it clearly wasn’t anticipating thieves.

Stepping aboard, the Mon Calamari quickly made his way to the cockpit, and started fiddling with the control panel. He whipped out a datapad, connecting it carefully to a few of the newly exposed wires. As usual, he worked quickly and quietly, familiarising himself with the ship’s controls as his datapad sliced through the ship’s security systems.

With a series of whirrs, beeps and buzzes, the control panel lit up. Mant’s webbed hand pushed on the lever to activate the repulsorlifts, allowing himself another smile as the ship lifted effortlessly off the ground and began its ascent to space.

Brafin slid across the cockpit to quickly check the scope, expecting to find the small collection of capital ships that defended Karufr. Instead, the screen showed multiple large capital ships were now present in the system. To the Mon Calamari’s horror, the largest of the new arrivals bore the unmistakable shape of an *Executor-*class Star Dreadnaught.

*But I thought all the Super Star Destroyers were dealt with decades ago!* Mant panicked. He couldn’t identify the other ships, but noted their similarity to the old Empire’s Star Destroyers. His immediate thought was that an Imperial remnant had arrived to annex Karufr. Brafin, like most of his species, hated the Empire, but, more unusually, he was no fan of the Republic, either. The devastation of the Clone Wars, followed by two decades of oppression, had left Mant Brafin believing that every system was better off on its own. Now, it appeared that a crazed, albeit powerful offshoot of the Empire was going to bring war to the seemingly peaceful Karufr.

Turbolasers started to fill the sky above. The scope indicated that the system’s defence force, though completely overwhelmed, was doing its best to hold off the worst of the fire, as if it were sacrificing itself to allow at least some of the locals to escape before the planet’s settlements were levelled. Mant did his best to steer the ship around the incoming turbolasers, but, as they became more intensive, one bolt slammed into the engines. Warning alarms sounded, immediately telling the Mon Calamari pilot that the damage was fatal.

By now, the XS-800 was high enough in the sky to avoid crashing back into the city of Dragostae, but as its engines burned, it started to lose height, fast. Brafin wrestled with the controls, flattening the ship’s trajectory as best he could.

*I’ll get into that mountain range. Perhaps the Imperials are only going to destroy the cities. I’ll just hide in the snow. Some ships are bound to survive*!

As he steered the descending ship into the mountains, Mant spotted a group of Escort Shuttles heading in the opposite direction. He watched them carefully as they split from their formation. Three of them sped away to the far side of the mountain range, but the fourth started its landing sequence nearby. The Mon Calamari wondered if they had seen him, and were getting ready to finish him off, but his ship’s engines were now almost completely out of action.

Mant closed his eyes, bracing himself for the inevitable crash.

**-x-**

The XS-800 crash landed unceremoniously, briefly skidding across some snow before grinding to its final halt. Mant Brafin was almost out of the hatch before the ship had stopped moving. He carried his blaster in his left hand, but he was hoping to avoid any conflict; though he could shoot fairly well he did not enjoy getting involved in any kind of fight on the ground.

Mant headed in the direction that he had seen the Escort Shuttle headed, and, sure enough, he spotted it over the next ridge, its wings in landing configuration and its boarding hatch down.

*Time to play this carefully*

The Mon Calamari snuck towards the ship in the snow, watching as several armoured soldiers filed out, followed by a pair of officers. The uniform did not match that of the Galactic Empire, but Brafin suspected that they had simply changed things at their commander’s whim.

One of the officers started to bark orders at his men, but Brafin was too far away to hear anything but the occasional word. He thought he heard things about ‘no survivors’ and that ‘even children’ weren’t to be spared, but he rather hoped he hadn’t.

The troopers began to spread out. Thankfully, none of them seemed to head towards Brafin, who suspected that other squads were covering the exits from the city. Escort Shuttles didn’t carry a large enough amount of men for a fully effective search.

The more junior of the two officers joined the search, whilst her superior headed back towards the shuttle.

Mant smiled. One officer wasn’t too much trouble. He could easily overpower him and steal the Escort Shuttle, giving him a working vessel, with the correct codes to get past the attacking fleet to boot.

“I hope *you’re* not thinking of taking that ship,” a female voice called out. Brafin turned around to find its owner.

He came face to face with a fairly tall Human woman, whose cloak and long black hair blew around in the breeze. He thought she was alone at first, but to his amazement he spotted two small children behind her. He noticed immediately that the two younger girls were identical twins.

“I did see it first, sweetheart. But I’ll do you a deal. I’ll fly you and your girls away from here. For a price,” Mant began.

“No! Fishman not nice!” one of the toddlers whined.

“It’s nothing personal, but I don’t pay for rides. Not *that* kind of ride, anyway. Speaking of that, we’ll be waiting for the girls’ father. I suggest you make yourself scarce,” the woman added.

“I’m going to have to insist. I heard something about those soldiers being ordered to spare *nobody*. Did you really want to risk your daughters lives over a ship?” Mant hissed, pointing his blaster at the Human.

“How unfortunate. Cover your eyes, girls! This won’t be pretty!” the female snapped. Brafin readied himself to fire, but hesitated for a few moments. He remembered his own wife, Barja, and their two children.

That hesitation was all the female needed. To Mant’s horror, he heard the *snap-hiss* of a lightsaber. He found himself with an amethyst blade pointed at his throat.

“This ship belongs to me. And my family. Have you got that, fish boy?” the woman snarled.

“Alright, fine! I’m not about to argue with some crazy witch. Just make sure you actually do get clear!” Brafin spat, readying himself to walk away.

“That’s a long walk downhill. Let me help you!” the female taunted, her lightsaber slicing through the Mon Calamari’s upper left arm. As he screamed out in pain, the woman kicked him hard in the back, sending him careering down a snowy bank.

Things faded to black.

-x-

Mant Brafin awoke in what felt like a hospital bed. He could feel a strange metallic feeling all along his left arm, but he otherwise felt warm and comfortable. As he opened his eyes, he saw he was indeed in a medical centre. A quick glance out a nearby window told him that he was aboard a ship. A ship in hyperspace.

“Welcome back, Mr Brafin. I apologise for taking the time to perform the corrective surgery before getting your consent, but I think you’ll like your new arm. It comes with several custom accessories,” a Twi’lek in a long white doctor’s coat stated.

“You can leave us alone now, Doctor. I will explain everything to our newest recruit,” an Ithorian ordered. The ‘Doctor’ nodded and left the room.

“Right. You’d better tell me how I ended up here. Last thing I know, I got into a row with some Jedi wannabe,” Mant began.

“That was no Jedi, Mr Brafin. By the sounds of it, you ran into Kookimarissia Mimosa-Inahj. You’re lucky that you survived,” the Ithorian replied.

“You know me, and you know her. Who are *you*?” Brafin questioned.

“My name is Daggo Mouk. It was thanks to my men that you were rescued from Karufr before the *Suffering* finished its job. I will make no bones about it. You were saved because we have a use for you. We need someone who knows how to get hold of ships,”

“And what if I decide not to help you?” the Mon Calamari asked cautiously.

“Accepting is in your best interests. Not only have we provided you with an improved arm, but we have also wired three hundred thousand credits to one Mrs Barja Brafin. Do as we ask, and your family will simply think you’re working harder than ever. I believe they think you’re a legitimate starship salesman?” Daggo queried with a smile.

“You’ve got me. If I refuse, you’ll simply dump me back home, and make sure everyone knows exactly what I do. If I accept, my family will never need to worry about money. That is a pretty impressive business model, Daggo. But I do have one condition,” Mant answered.

“We know. We tell you what to get, and where to put it. Nothing else. You don’t like to know. But, rest assured, Mr Brafin. Your efforts will be making a difference. And they won’t be helping any galactic governments. Our own leadership wants to bring that whole rotten structure down,” the Ithorian explained coolly.

“Then it seems we have a deal. Now, about this new arm. What exactly can it do for me?” Brafin questioned.

Daggo Mouk just offered a big smile.

“You’ll find out,” he answered, eventually.

*FIN*