

Dominion - Phase 1 -- <https://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/competitions/13974>

Mauro Wynter stepped into the chamber of conference; an unnecessarily fancy name for the hold of a Vatali airship. It was a relatively hasty choice on the part of the Empress' forces, and it showed by a decidedly small security force.

"Ah, commander!"

The room rose respectfully for a moment, and then sat back down, before Mauro had a chance to wave everyone back down. He walked through the doorway, and two of his four companions halted: one being Tyraal Bitshiver, the other being seer Junazee. They set themselves on opposite sides of the doorway, cloaks off. Talis DeMorte had made it plain that this was an instance of "aggressive negotiations". The twosome brandished their lightsabers, making it clear to the gathered room that Odan-Urr, and especially Tython Squadron, did not play with the training wheels.

Mauro and the other two sat at the table: on his left was seer Constantine and on his right was Ethan Martes. Mauro settled into the durasteel chair, and steepled his fingers on the table.

"Members of the Guilds," he began, and immediately felt the tension in the room spike. Behind him, he could sense Tyraal and Junazee lay uneasy hands on their weapons. Ethan took a swig from his flask nonchalantly, which was plain enough for the rest of the Odanites present towards their shared uneasiness.

"I have been *informed*," continued Wynter, undeterred, "that with the ascension of House Satele Shan to equal footing with the rest of the Guilds of Daleem, we will experience reduced tensions--"

"Equal footing!" Scoffed someone. It was a thoroughly insulting gesture, and the Satelites knew it.

Constantine shifted uncomfortably, and exhaled quietly. Tyraal's grey eyes flickered dangerously, glaring out across the room. He heard Junazee humm discontentedly.

"Yes, equal footing," shot back Mauro, his neutral mood evaporating into something a touch more aggressive. "And with the addition of Satele Shan to the table of power alongside the Guilds, we will *experience reduced tensions* between Daleem and Kiast..."

Everyone heard the steel in his voice. Tyraal grimaced. He hummed back to Junazee, who gave the most microscopic of nods to acknowledge him.

"Stand by, Seven," whispered Tyraal into his comlink. A whistle on the other end of the line answered him.

"The situation is NOT resolved!" Snapped the summit member from earlier. Tyraal and Mauro both raised an eyebrow. "Adding a new power into the mix does not fix anything!"

“Especially a power that is invited by the Empress!”

The room erupted with various voices chiming in. Mauro frowned. This was not the peace summit he had been promised.

“Members!” He shouted, but his voice wasn’t even acknowledged.

Slynn Keldra rose, and slammed his pike on the floor.

“*Silence!*” He roared. There was a wave of sound from those gathered, and then the hold went silent. “This summit was called to bring peace to the volatile state of Daleem! If such a peace cannot be brought about, there *will* be consequences.”

The silence intensified. Then, the same member raised his voice defiantly.

“WHAT consequences?” He sniffed.

Mauro and Tyraal swallowed in synchronized concern. Slynn hesitated for a second, a second too long.

“*WHAT* consequences?” Snapped the member again. “You are BLUFFING, Noble!”

Keldra opened his mouth, but it was too late. Chaos had broken out again, and a guard approached the commander and whispered something to him. Junazee leaned over to Tyraal. “This doesn’t bode well,” she murmured.

“You’re telling me?” returned Tyraal.

“If the threat of the Empress crushing them can’t be held while it’s a real possibility, there will be utter rebellion once this summit ends.”

“Agreed,” mused Tyraal. “It doesn’t look promising.”

Keldra looked up suspiciously, first at Mauro; he seemed to know Mauro wasn’t the one he wanted, so he looked to Tyraal. The Clawdite met his eyes, and for a split-second, he felt a bead of sweat on his brow, wondering if this was all a ruse to remove authority figures from Satele Shan. Then he realized what Slynn was referring to.

Unfortunately, so too did that blasted summit member.

“What’s going on here?” He thundered, leaping to his feet.

The room went from hostile to bloody in less time than it took to compute it. Before any of the Odanites had time to react, the Royal Guards were on the floor, Slynn receiving a heavy bash to the skull. Junazee and Tyraal dove forward.

"NOW!" Hissed Tyraal, landing on Mauro, who was falling backward. Beside them, Ethan and Junazee were on the ground.

Constantine leapt up, flipping the table and dipping to the Force. The Shan felt the pressure build in the room and suddenly explode. Tyraal, at that moment, clutching the four on the floor together, released a darkness over them. A shrill whine echoed through the room, and then the blackness faded away. The room still shone a vibrant white from Constantine's attack.

"Blinded?" He asked.

"I'd say so," replied Ethan. "I could've done better--"

"Not now!" Snapped Mauro.

He and Tyraal joined the crowd, vaulting the tumbled table to Slynn Keldra's body. He lay on the floor, his skull bashed in and blood dripping.

"This isn't going as planned," Mauro growled, stooping to the body.

"He knew it was a risk," replied Tyraal. "We just hoped it wouldn't come to--"

Someone grabbed his neck from behind.

"MARTES!" Snapped Mauro.

Ethan leapt the table; Junazee and Constantine ignited lightsabers, and cleared a way towards the door. Tyraal brought an elbow back, and smashed into someone's rib cage. He heard a groan and flipped his assailant over his shoulder.

"Seven! Get down here!"

Ethan and Mauro were out of the hold, carrying Slynn between their shoulders. Junazee was deflecting blaster fire from a nearby frigate, while Constantine was sparring with a pair of armed summit members. Tyraal brought up the rear, blaster firing.

"Fighters, watch it!" Called Junazee.

"Four, tight formation!" Seconded Martes.

"TYTHON SQUADRON, WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?!"

The question was answered as the four fighters were met by a barrage of TIE Defender fire as four Tythonians rocketed past.

"*We're watching the skies, Tyraal.*" Radioed Chrome.

"Where is our ride, Tyraal?" Demanded Constantine, stumbling into their group, a bloody nose from the fighting.

"Here she is," grunted Mauro.

The sleek yacht swooped in, *Harbinger*, and lowered a ramp for them. Tyraal and Constantine each took a running start and bounced into the hovering yacht. Inside, Tyraal leapt into the pilot's seat, overriding the controls from 7V-LN.

"You're a little later than I would have liked," he commented to the astromech. He lowered the ship to near contact below to give Mauro and Ethan an easy entrance. "But I'll let it go. You got us out of here intact."

The Nubian shook.

"So far intact."

"Go Tyraal, we're all on!" Shouted Junazee.

Tyraal pulled up, lifting the ramp, and throttling away.

"Tython, escort please. I want three rear guard watching the chaos."

"*No can do, they're pouring in fighters now!*" Called Warpath. Talis DeMorte had gotten into the fight late with the second flight of Tython pilots.

"Damn. All units, disengage. Cover *Harbinger* and let's get out of this mess."

"*All according to plan?*"

Tyraal glanced back at Slynn's unresponsive body, Constantine desperately attempting to heal him to a less critical point.

"Not quite. But close enough."