

# Kindred Spirits

Another Nexus Fiction

By

Takagari "DarkHawk" KogaRyu (#264)

## **PROLOGUE**

### **Deep Space**

#### **Aboard House Shar Dakhan Flagship**

#### **Marauder Class Corvette Pathfinder**

All of the Clan Naga Sadow is still maintaining their presence aboard their fleet. The Clan is again making final preparations for their raid against the Collective to recapture their brick-and-mortar properties. A final push to rid the system of the Collective. Things are finally lining up and looking to favor Clan Naga Sadow.

Aboard the House Shar Dakhan command ship, Quaestor of the House, Battlelord Etah makes his way down the corridor. His walk exudes purpose, his gaze is locked in. His mind is centered elsewhere as he is a man on a mission...at least for the time being. Etah made his way to crew quarters and passed his own and turned towards his Aedile's quarters. The Battlelord pushed the button to hail his Aedile.

The button garnered no answer, and the Quaestor hailed his Aedile again. Still no response. At this point with everything racing through the Battlelord's thoughts, he just took it upon himself to enter Takagari's quarters. After all, he does run the show.

Etah entered and to his astonishment found his Aedile in a deep trance. His sabers were carefully laid out in front of him. Etah could tell he had been in this state for some time, and regretfully had to break his trance in order to deliver the news that the Battlelord had been carrying with him for almost twenty-four hours. He could not wait any longer to pass this on to his Aedile.

Etah stood before his Aedile and reached out to the Force. He had to make a flexible connection with DarkHawk, as to not to radically disturb his meditation. DarkHawk embraced his meditation time, and his Quaestor knew and understood this aspect. As the Battlelord reached out, he only made his voice known to Takagari, and within an instant, the Quaestor and Aedile's connection became solidified.

*"DH, I am sorry to disturb you, but I have something vital and am in need of your assistance once again..."*

The Battlemaster drew upon that power that consumed him, and slowly he broke his connection and entered back into consciousness.

A blank look hung from the Shaevalian's face, puzzled almost.

"You never did that before Sir; I assume this matter is....pressing?"

A small smile crested the face of the Quaestor, "You will be thanking me for eons on this one DH!" exclaimed Etah.

Etah began to tell him the story of Darth Bane, DarkHawk respectfully interrupted.

"Sir, you know that I am well versed in Darth Bane. What is so important with this?" Takagari asked.

Etah smiled even more prominent, "Well it just so happens that we got good intel, the Collective has been excavating on Ambria, specifically near Lake Natth. So, if they are truly there, they are looking for something. My guess is they are trying to find Luxum crystals and potential artifacts from Lord Bane's time there."

DarkHawk's eyebrows rose in enticement. His full attention completely directed towards his Quaestors next words.

"I thought that you might want a crack at this and possibly disrupt whatever the Collective may have going on. Since you are well versed in all things Bane, you may fulfill some personal...shall we say inquiries to the presence of Bane or any of his artifacts?"

DarkHawk leaned forward extended his arms forward and bowed to his Quaestor, "It will be my pleasure my Liege." Takagari said enthusiastically.

"Good, I have your favorite mode of transport ready, and a crew at the helm, you can leave immediately. DarkHawk, there is a catch though...I can only hold this off for no more than 48 hrs, before that place becomes littered with Clan forces, find what you must in that time and bring it back here."

"Understood my Lord" replied DarkHawk.



## **Deep Space**

### **Corvette Pathfinder**

#### **Hangar**

DarkHawk made his way towards the VT-49, three Rangers were loading supplies. One of the Rangers approached the Battlemaster and walked beside him.

“Sir, all your equipment has been loaded, we are ready for departure.”

“Excellent, let's get this endeavor in motion.” instructed the Equite.

Commander Krill was at the helm, a familiar face and trustworthy Ranger. Takagari had worked with him on many of missions. The four other Rangers were no doubt of Krill's choosing, that gave the odds to the Battlemaster.

“Commander Krill, good to see you again, you and your men ready for a little skirmish?” asked Takagari.

“Without a doubt DarkHawk, ready and willing.” exclaimed Krill.

“Make it so Commander, make it so.”

Krill and his co-pilot pushed a sequence of toggle switches, and the Decimator roared to life and lifted off the tarmac. With a steady hand, Krill guided the VT-49 down the tarmac and blasted off into the darkness of space.

DarkHawk was sitting in the ship's ready room going over mission parameters when his trusted DRK-1 probe droid hovered over his shoulder. “Soon DK, soon...” the Equite spoke softly. Nothing but audible beeps and blips emanated from the probe droid.



## **VT-49**

### **Ambria System**

Krill's voice crackled over the COMM system, “Sir, we have entered the Ambria system, and we are making our descent to the planet's surface.”

“Any signs of the Collective?” asked the BattleMaster.

"A few life signs in the East quadrant near the beach. Shall we make a stealthy approach?"

"Without a doubt Commander," DarkHawk said smiling.

Krill piloted the Decimator just out of reach of any surface scanners and found a sweet open spot in between two rock formations that would hide the ship quite well.

Krill put the ship down with expertise. His Rangers were already gearing up and ready to disembark the ship. One of the Rangers hit the switch, and the cargo hold opened, and DarkHawk's FC-20 speeder glistened in the planet's dimming sunlight.

"Krill take your men through the rock formation and get ready to flank my maneuver" DarkHawk stated.

"What are you planning, Sir," asked Krill

"We don't have much time, and they seem to be the only ones here, I am gonna roll right at them. You and your men will flank as instructed and we can get this over with quickly and get on to business."

"Copy Sir, you heard him, men, move out!" Krill barked.

Krill and his men disappeared in the rock formations. DarkHawk climbed onto his speeder and opened the throttle racing towards the beach. The sun barely hung over the horizon and was nearly gone, perfect timing for an ambush the Equite thought. Darkness overcame the planet's surface as the Battlemaster rounded a rock formation and caught the movement of the beach dwellers. A smile crested his face as he knew what was about to happen. As he approached, the remaining Collective troops caught the movement of the speeder racing towards them. DarkHawk in one fell swoop launched himself from his speeder and into the air. In a motion of pure fluidity, the Equite snapped his Nightsister bow into position, reigning down with a volley of plasma arrows.

The front three Collective members took the brunt of the attack. The plasma arrows pierced their bodies with little effort. The force of the impact buckled their bodies and launched them several feet backward knocking down the incoming reinforcements. As Takagari closed the gap between him and his prey, Krill and his Rangers hit the beach and decimated the remaining forces.

Two men of the second wave made a last-ditch effort towards the Sith. DarkHawk kicked a boot full of sand directly into their eyes, momentarily blinding his assailants. Takagari spared not a second and launched one shot straight into the face of his closest enemy, blood and brain matter splattered the beach with blood and visceral. DarkHawk immediately spun and dropped to one knee directly under the last standing Collective member and launched another plasma arrow. The projectile entered at the bottom of the man's jaw and exited at the top of his skull. The Ranger charging in for backup

caught the entire act and could not avoid the fallout as his uniform now tarnished with blood and brain matter.

"That was almost too easy Sir," Krill said.

"That is not all of it Commander, it's just the beginning."

The DRK-1 moved in on the party and once again hovered over his master's shoulder.

"DK scout the area, find the spot from the archive maps, that is where I need to be" instructed Takagari.

"I don't get it?" asked one of the Rangers.

DarkHawk dismissed the comment and turned towards Commander Krill. "Commander this is where its gonna get..." Krill raised a hand cutting off the Battlemaster before he could finish.

"I know this scenario all too well Sir, my men and I got you covered, do whatever it is...you need to do with all that Force stuff."

DarkHawk nodded, turned and jumped on his speeder following his GPS towards his droid.

"What the hell Commander?" another Ranger exclaimed

"This is stuff you are not smart enough to understand Ranger. When the Battlemaster radios, we cover his six, and regardless of what you see, just do your damn job!" exclaimed Krill.



## **Planet Ambria**

### **Lake Natth**

The DRK-1 raced along the beach scanning the environment. About three clicks away from the beach encounter, the small probe droid hovered near a small cove. DarkHawk had his speeder right on his droid and closed the throttle coming to an abrupt stop.

"Here, DK, you sure?" he asked.

The little spherical droid bounced around and blasted out a string of beeps and clicks.

"You better be right..." DarkHawk said sarcastically.

There on that beach, Takagari's connection to the force would be tested. He was about to attempt something he had never done, something that could be fatal to him and the

others. Though it was a chance, he had to take. The power of the lake resonated through his body, a calling almost.

Krill and his Rangers took up a position about thirty yards back well within the cover of a rock formation. They watched as the Battlemaster went into some ritual formation and was soon intertwining his fingers in different positions. The Rangers could hear faint chants in rhythmic unison with his finger weaving.

"What the hell is he doing?" asked one of the Rangers.

"There is one thing you should get used to real fast in this job kid, there is a lot of weird unexplainable things that goes on around here. All you need to know is that man, is harnessing a power *WE* do not understand. More so, things are going to get real thick here when he finishes contacting who I think he is trying to contact..." explained Krill.

DarkHawk took himself deep into trance, everything written about the lake's power was right. It was full of Dark Side power, and its presence grew ever stronger as the Equite channeled his energy. Reaching out deep into the many facets of the Force, Takagari searched for the remnants of the fallen Sith Lord. As the Battlemaster dove deep into the Force, Krill and his Rangers witnessed the scene with high anxiety and anticipation. Out of instinct and training, the Rangers fingers balanced intently on the triggers of their blasters, ready for any sign of attack. Little did they know this would have no effect on what was about to transpire.

The rocks that protruded from the salty waters of the lake swelled and began to crash with intensity against the vertical pillars. The harder the Battlemaster called upon the Force and the spirit of the fallen, the more violent the waters began to swell. Takagari allowed the Force to drown him in its power. Broken visions of childhood, battles and intense pain raised through the Sith's mind and body. He allowed his internal struggle to subside and just let the Force control him. Small beads of sweat formed upon his brow and ran down his face uncontrollably. His eyes now completely black with red highlights, staring intently into the blue waters of the lake. Voices boomed through his head, but the Battlemaster was only searching for one.

His arms, moving in circular motions, continuing his finger weaving and channeling all of the power he could connect too. The Rangers watched intently, they could feel the air change, the skies seemingly became even more black. The only light was the faint red glow around the Equite as he preceded with his ritual. His chants grew louder, more intense and frequent. Takagari could see visions of the fallen Sith Lord, broken images mostly, battles of Dark Lord of the Sith conquests.

Water crashed intently against the vertical rocks engulfing them. A virtual tsunami seemed to be taking place as the waters raged around the Battlemaster. Just at that moment, a massive flash of light exploded in front of the Equite. The Rangers covered their eyes and tightened their grips on their weapons. The ground trembled, one of the Rangers, screamed earthquake! Krill grabbed the man's arm and put a finger up to his

lips motioning for silence. Water began to boil about ten yards from the shoreline. The ground still shaking, smaller rocks fell from their perches atop of bigger boulders. If the Rangers had not witnessed this event, there would be quite an amount of disbelief and ridicule during the mission debrief.



## **Ambria**

## **Lake Natth**

## **Hour 22**

A giant plume of water rocketed vertically almost twenty-five feet high in front of the Battlemaster. As if mechanized, the water separated leaving a clear but muddy path to the descending plume of water. In a brilliant flash of light, a translucent body emerged from the plume of circling liquid. It floated above the surface and moving fluidly toward the Battlemaster. His eyes now fixed on the entity moving towards him. DarkHawk leaned forward and bowed to the apparition uttering only one word....*"Master"*

The Rangers set their weapon recticle's on the substance in front of their Battlemaster. Krill slowly gave the hand gesture to lower their guns. Krill could hear Takagari speaking, though it caught the Commander off guard as the entity was merely hovering in front of the Equite. DK was scanning the scene above his master's shoulders trying to compute any reading its sensors could facilitate. In a quick flash, a small bolt of energy raced from the being and engulfed the little probe droid sending it soaring backward into the sand.

DarkHawk held his genuflection as the entity now a mere foot in front of the Battlemaster. A deep-voice boomed through the Equite's consciousness.

*"Have you no solace, why do you disturb my eternal rest? Do you know what you have done boy? Do you know who you have beckoned...?"*

The voice echoed through the Equite, the raw power emanating from the entity was felt to the depths of Takagari's core.

"Please forgive me Master, but I had no choice but to summon you. My name is Takagari..."

*"I know who you are boy, you're a meaningless insect, not worthy of my presence..."* barked the spirit.



"Master, I pay homage to you, if you know my identity, you can feel my path, know that I come to you in faith and follower. I represent Clan Naga Sadow, and we are in need of your...abetment" Takagari said.

Before DarkHawk could utter another word, the translucent figure took the Equite in its grasp lifting him several feet off the ground. Again the Rangers raised their weapons to the ready, again Krill motioned for his men to stand down. The spirit held its quarry above him, reading his scheme of totality. Slowly Takagari was turned and twisted, the spirit's grip released. DarkHawk fell to the ground to one knee, in that purest moment, he felt the power surge through him so raw, so unrelenting. The spirit discovered every cavern of Takagari's existence, leaving the Equite feeling exhausted.

*"You bare the mark of Naga Sadow and Gyssh'tyn the Sun God. What is it you seek boy, what is it you wish to obtain from me?"* the spirit growled.

"Master, I only seek to stop our enemies from desecrating your spoils, they come seeking the power of the lake, and more importantly the Luxum crystals you have concealed within the lake. If our enemies retrieve the sacred crystals, it will tip the scales in their favor and desecrate not only your name but the Brotherhood itself."

*"What do I care about this Collective, they mean nothing to me..."*

"Forgive me Master, but as a follower of your theology, they have laid waste to this galaxy and have managed to find and steal your treasures for monetary gains within their organization. It is an insult to your name and the Sith way..."

As DarkHawk carried on this conversation, the Rangers watched everything transpire, they could not explain any of this, all they saw was that the Battlemaster was talking to a floating ball of light. Though this phantasm was far more than a sphere of luminescent to Takagari, it was the embodiment of the fallen Dark Lord of the Sith. After DarkHawk's last statement, the spirit made no response, it just studied the young Equite. DarkHawk held his bow only raising his eyes to meet what he thought was the Sith Lord's gaze.

*"You speak the truth, I feel you're passion, your connection, you have a deep hatred of this Collective. What do you give in return for my treasure..."*

DarkHawk, paused and chose his next response carefully, "I pledge my allegiance to you Master, as a follower, religion and way of life."

The spirit of the fallen Lord pierced his gaze directly through the Equite. He made only one gesture, motioning his arm towards the plume of water. DarkHawk without hesitation stood and made his way into the path that had been miraculously created by the spirit. The Rangers watched intently and kept themselves and their weapons at the ready.

DarkHawk walked the path where at least twenty feet of water once flowed freely. Rocks and broken remnants of shells and bone cracked under his boot as he walked.



Hssiss could be seen swimming in what now seemed a fish bowl. The Dark Side dragons eagerly awaited to make the Equite a meal. The plume of water subsided, as they reached its location the water seemingly pushed back farther, allowing for a deeper descent within the body of the lake. Water dripped from the tower rocks, they were much more significant than expected as only the tops of these massive formations could be seen from the beach.

As Takagari and the spirit walked, he just happened to look back and could not see the beach any longer. A massive rock formation stood erect directly in front of him now. Once again the spirit gestured towards the structure. In between the rocks, an opening revealed itself and DarkHawk entered the subterranean shelter. The cave was barely big enough for Takagari to squeeze himself in to. The smell inside was pungent at best, thick green moss covered the walls. There inside was a raw, undeveloped Luxum crystal. DarkHawk picked it up, and in his estimation, the mineral weighed at least three and a half kilograms.

*“Will this suffice in your quest...?”*

“Master, I have not seen anything like this before, this will most certainly suffice, but more importantly how do I keep the Collective and its forces from excavating these?”

*“Leave that to me boy...”*

DarkHawk exited the cave and made his way back to the beach with little haste. As Takagari set solid footing on the beach, he turned and once again bowed to the spirit and thanked him for the abundant prize. The entity then raised his arms, and in a sizeable downward motion, pushed the rocks deeper into the surface the ground began to quake once again. Water raged once more against the rocks and from the Ranger's point of view the ground fell out from under them. The earthquake was quick and massive. DarkHawk never faltering held his genuflection towards the spirit of the Sith.

“Master, I will retain my oath and live my life in your name, I will protect these lands from anyone who tries to desecrate your treasures.”

*“No one will find these crystals, and I will call on you when needed...”*

As soon as the entity finished its words, a massive flash of light filled the beach and raced across the land. The Rangers, covering their eyes and waited for the eyes to readjust as the light diminished. Krill exposed his head to see over the rocks and discovered the Battlemaster sprawled out face first on the beach. The Rangers moved in immediately, Krill grabbed Takagari and rolled him over. The Equite spit and coughed water from his lungs and gasped to fill his lungs with air.

“What, what happened..” asked DarkHawk

“What happened, are you serious?” one of the Rangers exclaimed.

"From what we saw Sir, you went into your mumbo-jumbo magic trance and had a conversation with a big ball of light, then the waters parted, and you disappeared only to spit you out right here as we found you."

"The crystal..." asked Takagari

The Battlemaster sat up and there buried beneath him and the sand the luminous rock glimmered in the eyes of the Rangers, and Takagari.

"That's what the fuss is about...a rock" asked Krill.

"Not just a rock Commander, this will tip the scales in our favor" replied DarkHawk.

Just then one of the Rangers screamed in agony. Two Hssiss dragons struck and were trying to separate his legs from his torso. Krill and the remaining Rangers opened fire point blank. Blood splattered across the Rangers bodies, DarkHawk kipped up to his feet and simultaneously ignited his saber. The Cobalt blade illuminated and hissed as two more dragons launched at Krill. Takagari struck left then right, cutting the dragons in half. The two reptiles fell to the beach, their tails still twitching from the deadly blow.

Two Rangers grabbed their fallen comrade and headed for the rocks.

"We got to get out of here, Krill our time is expired we need to evacuate and now!" exclaimed Takagari.



## **Ambria**

### **Lake Natth**

#### **Hour 27**

DarkHawk surveyed the scene to cut off any of the Hssiss that emerged from the water. Krill and his men used the rocks for cover and made their way back to the Decimator. The voice he heard next was not of Krill's or any of his Rangers. Takagari turned to find a juggernaut sized Trandoshan adorned in what seemed to be a hodge-podge of Mandalorian armor. Not that reptiles from the waters was terrible enough, now this faced down Takagari.

*"Shiza, I would rather deal with the Hssiss..."* he said to himself.

The Trandoshan carried the flag of the Belsavis' Own, a nasty group of mercenaries belonging to the Collective. The giant reptile slammed the flagpole into the sand, the winds whipping the canvas insignia violently.

"You have something that belongs to me, Brotherhood scum" the reptile hissed.

DarkHawk discredited the comment and never said a word. The Transoshan pulled a double bladed sword from a sheath on its back. Takagari noted the curvature of the blade and made a mental note that both sides of that blade could lop off an extremity with little work.

The reptile made his move and launched himself across the beach swinging his sword in a figure eight pattern. DarkHawk wanting to keep the distance between the two grabbed his bow and launched a volley of three plasma arrows directly at the reptiles center mass. The reptile's berzerker onslaught never faltered. The arching sword easily deflected two of the plasma arrows, the third did reach its intended target. Surprisingly, the third arrow stopped abruptly and dissipated before it hit the sand.

Mandalorian armor or commonly referred to as Beskar has a high resistance to saber and plasma attacks. The Equite scuffed at himself as he should have known that before the battle even started. He would have to look for weak points and openings in the armor. To do this he would have to get in close, and even more so, Takagari needed to dispatch this behemoth quickly.

The Trandoshan made a massive arching swing at the Battlemaster's head. DarkHawk arched his body backward and the blade narrowly missing his flesh. The Equite carrying his momentum backward went right into a back handspring and planted firmly in the sand. The reptiles motion overextended himself and a quick opening presented itself. DarkHawk came across with his left leg and crushed the knee of the reptile, the roared in agony as it dropped to one knee. Spinning with his momentum, Takagari stepped off the reptile's bended knee and flipped over his scaly adversary. As soon as his feet planted in the sand, the Equite executed a devastating roundhouse kick. The kick landed squarely in the face of the reptile and sent him barreling over to his right side. DarkHawk snatched his saber and lept after the Trandoshan and came in for a killing saber blow.

The reptile surprisingly rolled out of the way and came up with a blow to the solar plexus of the Sadowan. DarkHawk struggled to retain air in his lungs from the strike. But it was enough of a stall to get the Trandoshan back to his feet, and though limping from the knee strike, the sword was at his ready. Takagari unsheathed his second saber both cobalt blades hummed in unison. This time the Battlemaster lunged first. His right-handed saber came in low to take the knee, the Trandoshan lowered his sword and executed a secure block. The left-handed saber came in high, and the reptile had no choice but to swing his sword up to counter the attack. That's where the solution to the battle came to light. As the Sword came up to block the saber, it exposed the reptiles scaly flesh in between the chinking of armor. As the block was carried through, DarkHawk lowered his body and drove his dominant handed saber directly into that exposed flesh.

The Equite buried the strike deep almost to the hilt. The reptile roared as the blade cut through his internals. DarkHawk spun and drove his second saber into the base of the Trandoshan skull. He pulled both sabers and dropped back into a defensive stance. The massive reptile fell forward into the sand.

The sound of movement from beyond the rock formations was closing in on the Equite. He knew it would be the reptile's reinforcements. He readied himself for the second wave of attacks. Just as he could make multiple figures closing down on him, the roar of VT-49 ion engines raced over the beach unleashing its blaster fire and decimated the Belsavis' Own reinforcements. Krill piloted the Decimator and brought it in hovering over the beach with the crew door already open. DarkHawk launched himself into the air and into the crew door. One of the Rangers was harnessed in and grabbed the Battlemaster as he landed.



## **VT-49**

### **Ambria System**

DarkHawk pulled himself into a seat and replenished his lungs with air. The Rangers had their fallen comrade on a gurney and one was tending to his wounds.

"How is he?" asked the Battlemaster.

"His wounds are severe, but we have him, stable Sir."

"Good, Krill get us the hell out of here!"

Krill pushed the throttles forward and the Decimator raced out to the darkness of space. Within minutes Krill was already coming over the ship's PA system, "Sir, House Shar Dakhan command ship hailing us to land."

"Let's oblige them, Krill, I am sure our Quaestor will enjoy what we bring him" replied DarkHawk.

Krill moved the VT-49 into its glide slope and expertly brought the ship into the hanger and landed in its designated spot. Battlelord Etah was already waiting for his Aedile to see what the spoils of war may have brought. The crew door opened and Takagari disembarked the ship and walked down the ramp. He approached his Quaestor and bowed never saying a word. Etah just stared at his Aedile as the Battlemaster held up the crystal towards his House leader. A broad smile came across the face of the Quaestor, "Nicely done DH, nicely done indeed. You will reap these rewards and you

will harness this crystal into your very own power source for your sabers, you have my word on this.”

DarkHawk held his bow and returned the smile.

