The approach to Perune was as hazardous as approaching a gas giant could be. Andrelious had to take many things into account, such as much higher gravity, super strong winds, and the fact that he could barely see his hand in front of his face as he gingerly steered his ship towards Halo Station.

“Given how difficult you’re finding it, are you sure that we’re going to come across Vishes’ followers?” Swil Phift questioned.

“You’re the one that broke the code, Swil. I’m guessing that they’re a lot more used to flying here. Or Halo Station’s been a front the entire time, which I doubt. He’s been too obvious since we arrived to have been hiding something for so many years,” Andrelious explained.

“And what of the Collective? I heard about what happened with that scientist. Are they involved with this?” one of the soldiers questioned.

Andrelious was a little surprised to hear the soldier’s question. His recent capture of Torin Morgath, for House Ektrosis and the SRI, was supposed to have been kept a secret from the rank and file of Taldryan’s armed forces. What wasn’t such a secret, however, was the firefight that had killed Captain Sram, among others.

“Whatever’s waiting for us, we need to be ready,” the Sith answered as he piloted the ship towards a landing pad. He could already see several transports and shuttles docked.

“Well, *something* is happening, definitely,” Swil commented.

**-x-**

With a large gathering of all kinds of people from across the Caelus system, it didn’t prove too difficult for Andrelious and his team to blend in. Even the fact that the Ektrosis Aedile was carrying his lightsabers didn’t seem to cause anyone any alarm.

“It seems that everyone’s heading towards the centre of the station. What’s supposed to be there?” Andrelious asked.

“Even after doing some digging, I couldn’t find anything other than what the authorities say is supposed to be here,” Swil stated. “So what’s the plan?”

 “I want you to get into position and be ready with that sniper rifle. The rest of us will move with the crowd. When we’ve found whoever it is we’re looking for, we’ll deal with them. If they should escape, it’ll be up to you,” the Sith ordered.

The large Human nodded and started looking for a way up.

“Right, everyone, let’s see what’s happening here,” Andrelious commanded.

**-x-**

Had things gone a little differently, Mehfraka Din would likely have followed in her father’s footsteps and been an Imperial officer. Instead, thanks to terrorists and traitors, the Galactic Empire was no more and Mehfraka had never even left the Caelus system.

Although she looked very much like her mother, Mehfraka’s personality was far more like her father’s. She was very headstrong, and believed that a strong, powerful military was needed to keep order, no matter what the cost. With little interest in a civilian life, Din enlisted with the Caelus Security Forces, where she was quickly identified for her sharp, tactical mind, leading her to be fast tracked into Special Forces. However, with little traffic to and from the system, there was very little to do.

That was when Vishes pounced. His agents contacted the woman, slowly drawing her in with a carefully selected mix of anecdotes, outright lies and promises of power, wealth and a chance to see some real action.

Soon, Mehfraka found herself with an important assignment. Vishes wanted Astor Ky’lien, the leader of what was left of the Imperial presence, eliminated. Whilst Vishes himself would make the kill, he needed to be able to get away from the scene unscathed. Din offered her expert advice, suggesting exactly how and when to perform the attack, but Vishes seemed distracted. He wanted to get the job done, and fast, but wouldn’t explain why. For the first time, Mehfraka wondered if she’d done the right thing in throwing her lot in with the unusual man, but she was in far too deep to stop now.

As it happened, the attack went remarkably smoothly. Astor Ky’lien was dead, and the C-Sec’s investigation would be almost completely clueless as to what had happened.

There was just one thing that still bothered Mehfraka Din.

Just who were the group of Imperials that had arrived some months before? Since their arrival, things had become noticeably more violently, particularly on Chyron. Even the Bastion prison had been attacked. Something about the new arrivals did not quite add up, not least due to the fact that their commander was an alien.

Mehfraka’s datapad beeped with a message.

*Mehfraka, It is time. You know what to do. You know what to say.*

*~V*

The female gulped.

The time had come to spread Vishes’ gospel.

**-x-**

Mehfraka hadn’t expected to see so many people. She knew that Vishes’ movement was popular, but the dozens awaiting her speech were crowded into a large room that usually served as a storage facility for canisters of unrefined Chlouzon-36. Many of those canisters were still present, with the gathering crowd taking care to not disturb any gas. Several guards moved around the area, making sure that everybody kept their personal weapons holstered.

“I’d feel a little more comfortable if they were coming without their weapons at all,” Din mentioned to one of the guards flanking her podium.

“Lord Vishes’ instructions are clear. Besides, his summons was encrypted using the latest encryption technology. What few slicers there are in the system either won’t have the means of getting here, or simply won’t care,” the guard answered.

“I just don’t like the idea that those new Imperials may be here somewhere,” Mehfraka said, her tone still worried.

“All the more reason to keep loyal followers armed! What fool would attack when they’re outnumbered twenty-to-one,” the guard replied, patting his own blaster.

“Miss Din. The crowd are ready,” a young man declared.

The woman stroked her own hair as if to check it was properly groomed, before moving forward toward the podium. The assembled crowd started to quieten.

**-x-**

“Looks like someone’s about to speak. Everyone be ready. When I get a chance, I’ll ask her a question. When I say ‘action’, we take control of the area,” Andrelious ordered as a black haired female adjusted a small microphone in front of her.

“Children of Vishes, I bring you good news. Operation Kingfall was a success! The rule of Astor Ky’lien is over!”

The crowd cheered loudly.

“In time, we’ll see just how his death is going to change things, but rest assured, they’re going to change. Right now, Vishes needs us! All of you, go from here! Talk to your friends! Talk to your families! Tell them just what Vishes is going to do for all of you!” the woman continued.

“Looks like she’s trying to whip these people up into a frenzy,” one of the Taldryan soldiers.

“It’s working. I can sense the excitement. There’s also a palpable sense of resentment towards Astor Ky’lien and his family. Vishes is looking to exploit that. Let’s see what else she has to say,” Andrelious commented.

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The speech was going as well as Mehfraka could have hoped. The crowd, although nearly entirely unknown to her, clearly shared her view on the future of the Caelus system.

“Just to show you how serious I am about this, let me tell you something! I was there when Vishes killed Astor Ky’lien. I, as a member of Astor’s precious C-Sec, made sure that Vishes was able to complete his mission. Now, it’s time for *you* to tell *me* how serious you are about this!” she announced.

A series of hands quickly shot up across the crowd. Mehfraka pointed at a Human female in technicians’ coveralls.

“I’m only a simple mechanic, but what we can do is simple, too!”

“Correct! All any of you need to do is your job. When Vishes needs more, you will know. Just remember this, children. From each according to ability. To each according to need!” Din responded.

The crowd started chanting, but Mehfraka’s eyes were drawn to a small male Human in what appeared to be an Imperial pilot’s suit. Not only was he not chanting, but he was looking straight at Din.

“Do you have something to say, friend?” Mehfraka asked.

“I’d just like to congratulate you. You’ve got an excellent group of supporters here. I can even say I admire what you’re trying to do. To a point,” the man began. His accent reminded Din of her father.

“You speak as if you’re not one of us,” Din responded.

“You could say that. Let’s say that I’ve recently been made aware of Vishes and what he’s working for. I’m most impressed that you’ve not just stuck to talking,” the man continued.

“Talking wouldn’t have ever been enough! Ky’lien treated us as little more than slaves!” someone in the crowd responded.

The short Human smirked “I agree. And you’ve certainly shown that you’re ready for action,”

As if on cue, several people pulled out blasters. They were spread out in a careful pattern across the room, to cover as much of the area as possible.

­**-x-**

“Now. I suggest that you stand these people down. We don’t want things to get messy,” Andrelious commanded.

“No chance. Guards! Eliminate those men!” Din ordered.

The guards didn’t need asking twice. They started firing at Andrelious and his team, but found their enemies to be a little more well trained than they were expecting. They certainly weren’t expecting to see Andrelious activate a crimson bladed lightsaber and start swatting blaster bolts away.

“Jedi!” A guard screamed.

Most of the crowd started to panic and head desperately for an exit, but a few tried to assist the guards in their fight against the Taldryanite team.

Andrelious moved from enemy to enemy with relative ease, his lightsaber making quick work of anybody unfortunate enough to get too close.

“Keep them busy! I’m going after Din!” Mimosa-Inahj commanded, spotting Mehfraka moving towards a doorway.

**-x-**

*Frakking Jedi!* Mehfraka Din mused as she moved along one of Halo Station’s corridors. It had taken weeks of planning to get all of Vishes’ supporters together in a safe enough place to discuss their next move, but with just a few swings of a lightsaber, a weapon that Mehfraka thought was totally extinct, everything lay in ruins.

“Give it up, Miss Din! You won’t get off this planet alive!” Andrelious shouted.

The female suspected that Mimosa-Inahj probably had the resources to make good on his promise. Even if she could slip away from Perune, she had publicly admitted to taking part in the attack on Astor Ky’lien; she would soon be wanted across the entire Caelus system.

Din retreated into her office. It was a dead end, but, as Andrelious followed her into the room, she already knew exactly what she was going to do.

“You think you’ve won, Jedi,” Mehfraka stated.

“I’m no Jedi, but I will tell you this. You and your friends out there have no idea what they’ve been drawn into. Vishes is using all of you. The only kind of equality you’re going to see under his regime is how you’re all equally oppressed. He’s lying to you all,” Andrelious responded.

The woman’s face contorted in disgust.

“We were warned about your kind. People who would never see what Vishes can do for them. I’m not about to let you destroy everything that he’s worked for, Jedi. You may be able to stop blaster bolts with that arcane weapon, but there are some things that you’ll never stop!” Din hissed, her right hand moving towards a set of silver balls attached to her belt.

Andrelious didn’t answer verbally. Instead, he directed a wave of Force lightning towards the ranting woman.

“I told you. I’m no Jedi!” he roared in between bursts of pure electric hatred.

Mehfraka Din fell to the ground, pain coursing through her body.

“Now, you’re going to help me. You’re going to tell me exactly where we can find Vishes,” Mimosa-Inahj commanded.

“I’ll…tell…you….nothing!” Din spluttered.

Andrelious smirked. “Speech will not be necessary!”

The Sith motioned his hand towards the fallen woman, as if he was about to grab her head and tear it from her shoulders. Instead, he commanded the Force to search through Mehfraka’s mind, looking for any clues as to the location, or even the identity, of Vishes.

*So he likes to keep himself secluded….but I can see him. Yes…there he is. Submerged in an ocean, but it seems frigid, and cold.*

Even as Andrelious continued to force information out of her brain, Mehfraka managed to grab one of her thermal detonators.

“You won’t leave here alive, Jedi!” she breathed, activating the explosive.

The Sith stopped what he was doing at once. He didn’t know how long the thermal detonator’s timer was, but he wasn’t going to take any chances. He stamped down on Din’s wrist, forcing her to drop the deadly device. Spotting a nearby garbage disposal chute, Andrelious threw the thermal detonator, slamming the hatch shut.

“A nice try, Miss Din, but I’m afraid that it’s time for me to go,” Mimosa-Inahj stated, activating his black hilted lightsaber. With a careful, but brutal move, the Taldryanite slit a small hole in his enemy’s throat.

With his mission complete, Andrelious just had to get away.

As he turned to leave the room, the Aedile heard a nearby explosion.

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“All of you! Get to a landing zone. Take whatever ships you can find! Now!” Andrelious screamed into his comlink. He didn’t even know if any of his men had survived the fire fight, but his primary concern was escaping from Halo Station himself. The damage that the thermal detonator had done wasn’t yet obvious, but the Sith doubted that it would survive completely unscathed.

Rushing back through the area where he had first men Din, Andrelious noticed it was completely deserted, other than for several corpses, mostly of guards and Taldryan soldiers.

“I can’t get back to our shuttle, sir, but there’s a beaten up old Eta-class. I think I just took out its owner,” Swil stated over comlink.

“I’ll get there now. Any sign of damage to the station?” Mimosa-Inahj asked.

“Why do you think we can’t get our ship back? That whole landing pad just sheared off the station. I will see you at pad Cresh-3,” the slicer replied.

Andrelious heard another explosion somewhere behind him. He turned to watch part of the floor begin to collapse, sending several canisters of Clouzon-36 into the void.

“Not today, Vishes!” the Sith snarled, sprinting out of the damaged storage room. As he got outside, he could see that parts of the station’s exterior were already ablaze. Many people who had come to hear what Mehfraka Din had to say were trapped on isolated parts of walkway, but Andrelious completely ignored them as he made his way to pad Cresh-3.

“Start it up, Swil!” the former Imperial commanded as he caught sight of his ally ascending the Eta-class shuttle’s ramp.

The larger male did as he was told. The shuttle’s repulsorlifts fired into life as Andrelious sprinted along the ramp.

Climbing straight into the pilot’s seat, the Sith activated the sub-light engines.

As the shuttle began its ascent through Perune’s upper atmosphere, Halo Station continued to burn and fall apart.

**-x-**

“As per usual, your mission resulted in a lot of losses. For both sides,” Rian Taldrya stated crossly.

“The important thing is that I dealt with one of Vishes’ most important spies. And we now know a little more about how he’s been recruiting people so easily,” Andrelious answered.

“A very old method indeed. Promise people the unworkable. They won’t know they’ve been duped until it’s too late,” Halcyon observed.

“What became of Halo Station?” Rian asked.

“The thermal detonator caused a lot of internal damage. Fires destroyed a good portion of what was left, but an automated fire fighting system managed to preserve parts of the structure. The system’s authorities are currently discussing what to do next,” Quejo explained, reading from his datapad.

“Missing person reports are coming in from all over Chyron. A lot of people didn’t make it. Perhaps we’ve actually struck a telling blow here,” Rian added.

**Vishes HQ**

**Iosan**

The would-be Sith watched with frustration as the holo recording showed him the end of Mehfraka Din. Worse still, many of his supporters had died aboard Halo Station after Din’s speech was interrupted.

The fact that Din’s killer was carrying a lightsaber interested him greatly. His men had told him of rumours regarding Force users, but there hadn’t been anything concrete. Until now.

*Perhaps I am going about this the wrong way. Perhaps these new ‘Imperials’ could be allies*.