

## **The Odanite Expeditionary Force Academy Kiast, Kiast System**

The horror was evident on the Chiss man's face. Around him the nebula protecting the Kiast System was burning off as the morning fog did most mornings at the Academy.

Len Iode had been instructing new OEF cadets in the finer points of small unit tactics when all of the displays in the lecture hall flashed red and switched to video feed of a massive Collective ship firing on the nebula which protected the system from intrusion. This time however, the nebula reacted violently, turning entire sections of gas and dust into flame.

Everyone in the room was awestruck, the Councilor of the Roll included.

*How did Oligard have something on par with a Death Star?* The soldier wondered, but turned his attention to the students uncomfortably shifting in their seats.

The man mustered his self control and took on his command persona. "Get to your evacuation stations, immediately. I must contact the Council."

One of the older cadets, a Mon Calamari, spoke up. "Sir, we cannot simply..."

Len was having none of it. He would not allow his students to fall victim as the KUDF ones did. "To your evacuation stations, everyone. We cannot attack something like this head on." The Chiss clasped his hands behind his back, looking at the class. The students came to attention and filed out of the room orderly, not a whisper could be heard until the cadets were in the hall.

As the last one left, Len sealed the door and opened a comm channel to the Capitol. A holographic version of the Council of Urr appeared before him.

"Excellent, we are all here." a holographic Archenksova looked nervous, "Edgar, you had just said there was no early warning?"

The Counselor Edgar Drachen nodded, "None whatsoever. There is nothing to indicate the fleet was cloaked, or otherwise undetectable. I just don't understand how they evaded our sensors."

Alethia nodded. "We must evaluate this gap in our protection when we can safely. Commander Erinos, status?"

"According to our scans, it appears that the Collective will complete their 'burning off' of the nebula in approximately 2 hours." Joint Task Force Hoth's Commander, Celevon Edraven Erinos, responded from the bridge of the Rohlan's Vision.

The High Councilor sighed, "Nowhere near the time we need."

Len thought for a moment. "Commander, how powerful is the weapon they are using?"

The half-human looked away for a moment then at the Chiss. "It's not as focused as I expected. It looks like our shields could deflect it easily."

The Mauro Winter, Director of JTF Shan, gave a half smile. "We could deploy the Navy and use it to buy time. At least we can evacuate the civilians"

Councilor of War Aura Ta'var looked to her superior. "Alethia, I will lead the evacuation here on Kiast. Each Joint Task Force should designate a Councilor to lead the charge on their worlds."

The former Imperial agent nodded and looked around the Council. "I need everyone of you to do what you do best. Our objective should not simply be to evacuate, but to obliterate this weapon."

"We can't risk it. We can prevent this from becoming New Tython by simply evacuating." Daniel Stephens, usually the instigator of combat, conceded, "If we don't. Lots of people will die."

"Agreed," Len replied, "We can send a strike team against the fleet, but we might as well write them off."

"Very well," Alethia seemed to be regaining some of her composure, "Everyone to their tasks. Councilor of the Roll Iode, I have a special mission for you. Report to the Capitol at once, full combat gear."

"Yes ma'am. Can you share details?"

A cold intensity engulfed the response "No."

Stunned Len simply nodded, "On my way. Transmission terminate."

The holograms disappeared and the Chiss departed for his quarters.

### **Transport en route to Kiastian Capitol City Twenty Minutes Later**

Since the meeting, the Collective fleet had intruded faster than expected and was now only an hour away from a breakthrough. The plasma flames in the nebula could be seen from the planet's surface now. Len mused how much beauty could be in such enormous destruction. Civilian transports were scrambling to orbit, disarray was evident on the civilian side of things, however the police and military of the Vatali Empire were just as organized as ever. Recon flights by Raava and Kappa Squadrons had indicated that multiple drop ships would be right

behind the Collective's corvettes. Poorer and injured civilians had been directed to "safe houses" across the city. The locations were selected because they were some of the most easily defended and could quickly be extracted by repulsor craft and shuttles.

The Chiss felt odd as he passed over the defensive points. He wanted to be there to help defend the innocents that couldn't afford to or physically leave. But his mission was still a mystery. As he came to the Odan-Urr command center a small formation of troops was assembled, about 20 troopers of various species in uniforms similar to Len's. In front of them was Aura and as he approached, the soldier heard her issuing orders.

"Third Squad, you will assist Zim Company of the Imperial Guard. Fourth, you will provide overwatch for a VIP extraction team Downtown. Details for your assignments are on your datapad. Good luck."

The formation took a step back and turned to face the transport the Councilor of the Roll had just departed. As he approached the Zeltron, Len could see her smile fade slightly.

"Good you're here." The Councilor of War forced a smile. "Quickly we don't have much time."

Following behind the Jedi, Iode felt a wave of uneasiness. Memories of New Tython and his failed mission to recover casualties in the Zumbro District plagued him, and well New Tython in general. Entering the Council Building, a loan from the Vatali Empress, it's majestic halls now filled with troopers ready for close combat. Two guarding the door to the War Room came to attention as the two senior Councilors approached and the door slid open. Aurora stepped aside and gestured for the Chiss to go first. As he did, the Zeltron put a hand on his shoulder.

"This is where I leave you Len. This is your path to walk, not mine. May the Force be with you."

The soldier started to realize what must be coming next. He smiled and patted his friend's hand. "Thanks Aura, you too."

The War Councilor withdrew her hand and the door closed. Len began to fear that he would not be leave this battle alive. Always a possibility, but this seemed like a battle to end all battles brewing. As he exited the antichamber and entered the main war room he could see Archenksova and several OEF officers, all wearing full battle dress. Slight amount of relief came over the High Councilor's face.

"How was the flight?"

The man could not hide his feelings from someone who he worked with since the beginning of his career.

“Unsettling, if I am honest. I feel like this is going to be New Tython all over again.” He paused and looked down then back to his friend. “I don’t fear what will happen to me. I fear what will happen to Odan-Urr.”

“That is a reasonable fear. If you weren’t concerned, I would be worried about you,” The High Councilor moved around the desk between her and the Chiss. “Len, you are familiar with Councilor Kituri’s ability to see the future correct?”

“Of course. But she is unconscious or in a deep hypnotic state.” He paused, “And since when do you believe in the Force?”

“She awoke briefly. Len, this is the end of Odan-Urr, possibly the Brotherhood as a whole. The ship is only using partial power and will slice through our entire fleet.”

For the second time for the day, the Chiss could not hide his horror. “What do we do then? I mean we just committed troops and ships to this fight.”

The woman held her hand up. “A’lora mentioned one thing. ‘Men from the future’s past shall strike the beast’s heart before it is born. The Force will guide you.’”

The soldier went over the words in his mind. “You want me to lead a strike team against the ship?”

Alethia sighed resigned to the insanity she was about to tell the Councilor of Roll. “Not exactly.”

A display shifted from showing the situation in space to a sphere made up of small octagons covered in symbols and aurebesh.

“A parting gift from the Krath. Recovered by the Imperial Reclamation Service forty-two years ago. During Mako’s and my time as Director and Executor, one of our collections teams stumbled across it. We kept hidden from all but the highest levels of government.”

The man looked at the schematics and notes from the IRS researchers. “What does it do? Kill you faster?”

Alethia held back a chuckle. “It appears that the device if activated properly, will send four people through time.”

Len scrunched his eyebrows together. “You have got to be joking?!”

A dead serious look took hold of Archenksova’s face. “A team has been assembled. You will strike on Nancora three months earlier than our operations there. Disabling the ships.”

The Chiss sighed, "What is the catch? Krath technology always exacts a price."

"Three items: Everyone who goes back must be in the destination time period. Second, the past version of yourself will be displaced to now until you return to the present. In theory, there should be no memory loss. Lastly, if the Force does not will any changes, then the reality you leave now is the exact moment you return to."

Len nodded. "A fair price. Did the Empire try this scheme after Yavin?"

The woman gave the Chiss a cold gaze. "Actually, they did. It failed each time it was used."

The soldier raised his eyebrows. "Where is the device?"

"Ten meters below us." Archenksova moved towards the turbolift in the room. "The rest of your team is assembled."

The Councilor of the Roll nodded and followed his superior. "For freedom and the Light."

"One last thing." Alethia stared at the soldier. "When you return, we will most likely not notice your absence. Your datapad will be the only record."

"Wonderful, easier to not mention it probably."

"Perhaps," The High Councilor looked off thoughtfully, "But some in the research department wish to see if information can be passed through a loop."

The Chiss nodded. "Understood."

The turbolift doors opened and the building rocked below their feet.

*"Command, this is the Solari." A heavily distorted call came through the command center speakers.*

"Go ahead." A Sullustian technician replied.

*"The enemy has breached the nebula. We are sending all squadrons. The Proxia was badly hit. That beam is stronger than we thought..."*

That statement hung in the air as the doors seal shut and the cab plummeted into the lowest portions of the city. The cab rocked more and the lights in the cab went red. A feeling of unease now crept into Len's mind.

*It's all coming true. We are the best shot then.*

The doors opened once more in the dimly lit room, the sphere from before was resting in a cradle surrounded by at least 10 technicians working quickly. One came to attention and greeted the senior Summiters.

“High Councilor, Councilor of the Roll, Welcome to Project Rewind,” Turning to face the technician gestured towards the sphere, “Sir, we need to get you suited up. See Petty Officer Flax.”

The soldier nodded and headed off at a jog.

“Good luck Len,” Alethia said quietly, “Time remaining?”

The technician looked at his chrono. “Five minutes. The Solari should be heading toward Daleem’s surface about now.”

The silverhaired woman shook her head. “If we are right about this. No it won’t be.”

### **Project Rewind Pod Three Minutes Later**

Len had been sealed up in a modified TIE Pilot’s uniform. His gear properly stowed in the special compartment under his seat. On either side of him were OEF troopers hand picked to assist on this mission.

As the hatch was sealed, the soldiers did a final check on their own equipment and their buddies.

Alethia’s cool voice came through their headsets. “*Charging main reactor. Commence countdown.*”

“Are we really doing this?” The young trooper next to Len asked to no one in particular.

Some of the glyphs on the interior began to glow a dull eerie red.

“Yeah,” the Chiss replied, “Hold on tight.”

As the glyphs began to glow more intensely, the quartet felt a tugging in their stomachs. To Len it felt as though someone was trying to remove his innards through his belly-button. Straining with all his might, he fought the feeling until nothing.

The tugging was gone, but so were his comrades. In fact everything was gone. The soldier was completely enveloped in a void. A sliver of light cut through the darkness around him. Before the

Chiss was no longer darkness, but the Battle of Kiast. Rather, the end of the Battle of Kiast. OEF Navy ships were crashed or crashing into the closest planets whose gravity sucked them in. Len watched in horror as the *Remembrance of Seher* was violently shredded apart by the Collective's new toy.

He was tugged again and given a front row seat to the front lines of bloody urban and close combat in Kiast City. Thousands of dead and dying, civilians and soldiers as explosions and blaster bolts ripped through cover, skin, bone, armor, and metal.

The man, who had endured New Tython, Nancorra, Florrum, and other battles, was sick. His anger rising. The darkness enveloped him once more.

A voice called out to him softly. *You seek to change the present and future?*

The voice was neither man, nor woman, nor droid and more disorienting, it was in his head.

"Yes," Len said aloud.

*Your anger is strong, yet there is not as much hate. You seek to save them?*

Before Len frozen in time was a family huddled behind the remains of a wall. An OEF soldier standing in the open returning fire at her Technocrat counterpart.

"Who would not?"

*There are those who let their anger consume them. They kill indiscriminately, to climb corporeal chains. Balance cannot be achieved if that is the case.*

"Indeed. I simply wish to right a wrong done to innocents."

"Are they truly innocents?" A familiar voice asked.

"Dad?"

"These people have committed atrocities in the name of power. They call it democracy, but they still desire to lead." A likeness of Kenneth Iode stood before him, walking over the ash and dust of the battlefield. "Your uniform, my uniform shows us apart of a good that became evil."

"This is only because we did not have time to develop our own suit that integrated with th. You wear that uniform not as a symbol of oppression, but as reminder that not all who wear it are or were evil. Who are you?"

Clasping his hands behind his back, the impostor lode continued walking towards Len. "You are correct, or at least as far as your father has told you. He wears it, I wear it, to remind myself of the stated mission of the Empire: to bring peace to the galaxy. The dark side corruption fostered by Palpatine and the High Command were what prevented the Empire from being a force of good."

The Chiss leveled his weapon at the apparent human. "Who are you?"

"I am an embodiment of what you call the Force. I am here to warn you about what you seek to accomplish. I figured a person you respected, like your father, would be a better appearance than a voice in your head."

Skeptical, the OEF officer kept on his target. "Fair enough, but warn me about what?"

The man waved his hand, as he did so Len's DH-17 vanished. Immediately, the soldier dropped to his IMAS stance.

With a sigh, the impostor snapped his fingers and the Chiss was lashed on a stretcher.

"Now, I do not have much time. If you go through with this mission, you will succeed in destroying the ship before it is completed. However, the Collective will learn a secret about the future and exploit it."

"What will they discover?"

"Ken" shook his head. "That I cannot tell you."

Len thought a moment. Who knows what kind of disaster they could unleash, but the direct threat had to be addressed first. At least by knowing it, maybe Odan-Urr could prevent the future event.

"I will go through with my mission."

The man snapped his fingers and Len saw himself and his team just outside of the compound where the ship was being constructed on Nancora.

"One last chance Len, many will be lost in the exploitation." A look of sadness crossed the man's face.

The Chiss replied flatly, "I have my orders."

The impostor nodded and everything went black.



**Nancora, Nancora System**  
**Three months and four days before the Invasion**  
**Mission Time: T+2 hours**

Len opened his eyes from blinking. The planet's sun was just as oppressive as he remembered.

*Had all of that been a daydream on his march?* He thought.

Shrugging off the feeling, the soldier turned his attention to the task rapidly approaching them.

The Badlands brought back many memories. It was odd to see the landscape not littered with dead or wreckage. The blistering heat, that was a constant.

The trooper who was covering the four person team's rear piped up. "Hey sir, how much further? I am getting the itch to blow something up."

Len chuckled, "We are about two kilometers out. Everyone hold up."

Before the team was an industrial area converted to be a ground based shipyard. The shipyard had been one of the first targets of the Brotherhood forces in the assault on Nancora. Pulling out his quadnoculars, Len and his team took a knee and surveyed the site.

Len scowled as he took notes. "Wow. Intelligence was severely wrong about this place."

"Name one time they are ever right?" One soldier scoffed.

"Any mission that you aren't apart of." Another retorted.

The Chiss handed off the quadnoculars to the closest team member. "They have way more troops than expected, but the command center is located closer to us."

The team sniper brought his rifle off of his back. "No problem sir. I'll set up a watch here."

The heavy gunner checked her rotary cannon. "What's the plan?"

The Chiss brought up a map littered with red dots on his datapad and popped it out of the custom holder.

"The enemy has weak points between these two guard towers," Len gesturing first at the map then towards the real towers, "We hop over the barrier. Eyes will keep a lookout, taking down anyone he can stealthily between us and the command center.

"Once we are in and clear, I'll set charges while you and Keys slice the central computer. Locate what data they have on these reactor components and delete it. See if the parts physically exist

yet too. We exfil the command center to the location of the reactor components, secure and destroy them. Then time to go back to the future. Questions?”

All of the team members were a bit off put by the last sentence. Especially Len, he hadn't mentioned his vision or “trip” to anyone. The silence was broken by Eyes.

“We should wait until sundown, sir. Better chance of not being seen.”

The officer nodded. “We will commence with the operation two hours after night fall.”

**Collective Naval Proving Grounds**  
**Nancora, Nancora System**  
**Mission Time: T+6.75**

The infiltration phase had been successful. Slowly making their way across the compound, Len and his team were in the command center. The minimal amount of guards outside worried the Chiss commander, once inside he saw why.

The Technocratic Guild had fitted the entire command center out with auto-turrets, laser grids, holo-cams, the works.

“Keys, any chance you can slice this?”

The human shook his head. “I could get part way through, but more than likely this thing will fail into a to ‘kill everyone’ mode. A couple of teams encountered, will encounter, that in three months, pay the ultimate for it too.”

Something twinged in the officer when Keys said that, but they could not risk contaminating the timeline further.

“Alright. Any alternate plans?”

The slicer thought a moment.

“No, but there is a command and control node here.” Pointing to an access port across from the entrance from where they were. “If you can give me ten minutes, I should be able to get this place to give me everything.”

Len nodded and took point, signaling for the heavy gunner to move opposite him. Simultaneously the two looked down the opposite halls that connected into the entrance chamber. They would be exposed for much longer than Len liked, with almost no cover, which he hated, but this was better than destroying auto-turrets that had no chance.

Keys settled in by the port, with Len blocking the man in to protect him and the heavy gunner across from them. Every now and again Keys would swear and mumble under his breath.

Seven minutes in and Eyes delivered some bad news.

*“Better hurry up. Some big wig just showed up with, four guards. Heavily armed.”*

The Chiss rolled out one of the dentonite charges across the hall and grabbed the detonator. As the doors opened the charge exploded sending the five men flying and alarms blaring.”

*“That woke them up.”* Eyes snarked.

*“I count at least 20 converging on you.”*

“Copy, Keys how long?”

“I can tell you they haven't made the components yet, but,” The human paused, “I can't access the full schematics here. Not after the alarm.”

“Great.”

Blaster fire slammed into the walls around Len and his team. The two in front returned interlaced fire against the enemies attempting to assault the main entrance.

“Actually, it is.” Keys shouted over the enemy fire proceeding their next assault.

“How so?” Len replied taking quick accurate shots as the gunner laid down a wall of bolts.

“The whole computer mainframe was purged.”

*The Force is with us.* The leader thought.

“Okay how do we get then?” Len asked.

Eyes cut in. *“Clear this wave and push back to the gap you entered in, there are three left. I will keep any pursuers off of you.”*

One by one the collective troops fell until the quick response had ended. Now the truly prepared troops would be coming next.

“Form up!” the Chiss shouted.

Each member formed a point on an invisible inverted triangle as they began moving towards the door. As they came out of the structure, the early dawn was evident. Two technocrat soldiers

broke from behind cover, only for one to be taken by a Eyes and the other to be lit up by the rest of the team.

Len suddenly felt the feeling again in his belly button as did the others and in an instant they were gone.

### **Kiast City, Kiast**

An alarm was blaring in the background. The Chiss' head throbbed as he stood up. The control room of the sphere was just as he remembered, save for the sphere. OEF troops burst through the turbolift shouting for everyone to freeze which the Odanites did. Alethia Archenksova emerged from the turbolift her and Len used in the alternate timeline or rather hopefully the alternative one.

"What happened?" She asked with an edge.

"Class XK end of the Clan."

"Ah. Good work. Glad it was a success and glad you are alive. I expect a full report."

"Yes Ma'am."

*What would the price be.* Len thought back to what the impostor of his father said.

*Only the future will tell.*

### **Three months before the Battle of Nancora**

"Sir from the data we gleaned it appears that our assault will fail. They will drive us off the planet!"

*"I hope you have good news then."*

"Better I have how we won..."