

Story Elements:

- torin morgath threatens to Trigger an explosive in her head.
- Rian orders Raist to siege the SRI headquarter with the Retribution
- Rian clears the hangar using his brand new speeder. Than runs an Obi-Wan havoc as on Utapau.
- Rian meets Andrel who is in a killing spree for morgath's argument but agrees to let him go as he can handle the situation with Justinios.

Rian wasn't in his office aboard the Paragon when the message was delayed to him. Accepting the datapad with a sigh aboard his personal starship StormCloud, the Consul skipped over the brief message, expecting it to be one like the many he had already received over the past days – requests for material or personnel from one or the other officer who had been ordered to inspect the sector of Chyron the local government had given to the Clan just a month earlier. All the more he was suprised when he realized when he gave the message a closer look.

"Can we be sure about this?"

"To my knowledge Quaestor Drake had never been seen faking any important Data, master." The Droid that had handed him the datapad said.

"Nor did he ever lie to me about any assets of his House." Rian countered, his mind wandering before he continued. "Seems I have to remind him in time about trust and loyalty."

Addressing the Droid directly he said. "Inform Master Raistline, i need him and his ship."

"Yes, master." The Droid turned at once leaving the Consul with his preparations while delaying the message to the other Taldrya.

Aboard the Retribution, the two Taldrya watched the image provided by the small holoprojector between the two pilot consoles showing the secret headquarter of the Sphere of Research and Intelligence under attack. Several small transports had landed on the bridges connecting the centralized hub with the surrounding parts of the complex that. The glass on the hub had been cracked and smoke could be seen curling up from where the glass was broken. Occasional lightnings from within the various parts of the complex indicated that the battle had for some time now moved from the outside to the inside of the building, though the blueish image didn't show whom the battle was favoring at the moment.

"We checked the arriving vessels of the last three days and no suspicious ship arrived during that time so can we be sure it's the Collective that is attacking the facility?" The Gatekeeper asked.

"Justinios had been quite sure about that in his message." The Consul replied, his voice heavily distorted by the mask of his armored robe.

"Rian, you know what this means."

"Yes, our secret isn't a secret anymore." The Consul sighed. "The question is for how long have they been here already."

"My lord, we are entering the atmosphere of Iosan now." One of the pilots called from his station.

Raistline nodded, turning toward the exit of the cockpit to follow the Consul. "Proceed with the descent and level the ship onehundred meters above the facility. Let's make sure none of that scum can escape."

"Yes my lord."

Walking the corridors of the Corellian Gunship to its cramped cargo area the Gatekeeper asked Rian. "So what are you going to do about Justinios."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, this is only Iosan but if its really the Collective, do you think we can handle them if they decide to launch a fleet like they had on Nancora on us?" Raistline asked.

"We are in a much better shape like when the Clans attacked Nancora. The Paragon currentlygets resuplied on Chyron like the Revenant. Also I made a deal with Drayen, in exchange

of phasing out our frigates, they grant us control over their cruisers and the corvettes I have ordered from Arx should arrive soon as well."

Rian could feel the other Taldrya crossing his arms before his chest. "This doesn't answer my question Rian"

The pair had reached the cargo area and Rian petted the small black speeder in its center.

"Well, Justinios is ambitious, he reminds me much about myself when I was younger. He may make a great Taldrya one day." Rian smiled behind his mask. "But until then, I will have to teach him a lesson."

"Alright, I will keep the sky clear for you." Raistline said, waiting for the Consul to climb into the speeder's pilot seat before pushing the release button of the cargo bay.

Rian's speeder broke through the dark night toward the centralized hub of the SRI's secret headquarter. Accelerating the speeder to its top-speed, he broke through the glass, scattering the ground underneath in a shower of glass.

Before the Collective troopers within could adapt to the situation, Rian activated the speeders hover mode and jumped onto the ground. Rolling over the ground to reduce his landings force of impact, his lightsaber found its way into his hand and sprung to life with an angry hiss, bisecting the nearest Collective soldier in a smooth arc at waist height.

The next soldiers didn't fare any better as the Consul mutated into a blur of motion surrounded by a streak of sky-blue light cutting through armor, flesh and bones without stopping for more than a blink. By the time the last soldier fell had barely a minute passed.

Looking to either side, Rian reached out with his mind, feeling for familiar presences. He found one not far to his right. Breaking into a confident stride, Rian set out for the presence, thinking about whether to worry for the presence or those he was facing.

He found him along a squadron of Taldryan troopers pinned down behind a makeshift barricade trading fire with Collective troopers equipped with heavy blasters.

Coming up from behind the soldiers, Rian was able to cut down two of them before the others turned, concentrating their fire on the Consul.

Their shift in focus of half the soldiers gave Andrelious and his man the opening they had dared for for the last thirty minutes since they had been forced into a fire fight where none of the involved parties were up to give any room to their opponents. Rushing over their shelter, Andrelious red blades ready to strike ending the conflict quickly.

Andrelious greeted the Consul with a nod. "Justinios had expected you would send reinforcements, but I don't think you would have come personally."

"Extreme situations call for extreme measures." Rian replied. "What's the status of the facility?"

"They hit us when we were still preparing for their attack, overwhelming our initial defenses with their sheer numbers. Justinios has set up an security parameter in the western wing from where we started to regain control over the facility."

A shuddering roar cut their conversation.

Rian focused on the Aedile, demanding an answer for a question unasked.

"They must have found the stables."

The answer didn't satisfy the Consul and Andrelious gave a more detailed explanation: "The former owner of this facility experimented with Wampas, mostly he wanted to tame them by inducing them with altered biochemics so they could be used as weapons."

Rian added this as another point he would have to address to Justinios but first he had to make sure they secured the facility. "Andrelious, you and your squad will continue to secure the facility, I will make sure those Wampas won't get released. Where do I find them?"

"The fastest way would be back where you come from and then take the other hallway to the left wing of the facility. But if you want to set for a better score, the long way leads that way through the rest of the facility, though there you will meet heavy resistance from the Collective."

"For as much as I like a good challenge, I think time is of essence here." Rian said. "Inform Justinios that I will take care of the Wampas. You will go the long way and continue to secure the facility I will close in on you from the other side as soon as I have dealt with the Wampas."

Andrelious nodded at the Consul before turning to give orders to his squad.

Rian on the other hand turned and rushed back the hallway he had come from. Just when he arrived back in the central hub, he saw a group of soldiers inspecting their fallen comrades before turning their attention to the speeder still hovering mid-air.

Extending his mind, he grabbed one of the fallen bodies, moving it just as if the soldier was still alive drawing the attention of the soldiers toward the fallen body.

"I thought you have checked if anyone in here was still alive." One of the soldiers said to the one next to him.

"I did. He's dead."

"Than why is he moving. Go check him again." The first soldier ordered impatient.

The other soldier kicked the dead ones leg. "As I said he's dead."

"Are you blind, he just moved." The first one demanded again, his impatience turning into anger.

Using the distraction, Rian burst through the room unnoticed by the pair.

Once in the left wing, it took Rian only a couple of minutes to reach the stables where a female soldier was fun torturing one of the beasts with her electrostaff.

The shakled beast howled, raging against his restraints.

"Hey, how about dealing with someone who can actually defend himself." Rian shouted at the woman.

The woman turned surprised but got back her composure immediately. "Oh I will first deal with you and then return to have fun with the big guy again.

She whirled her electrostaff around once, inviting the Consul to come at her.

Rian didn't left her invitation unanswered, charging her with his blade ready.

They clashed once, twice before parting again but it even this brief exchange made it clear to the Taldrya that she hadn't received much training with her weapon. Rushing in again, Rian fainted left then ducked right under her initial slash only to come back up again where she exposed her left side to his blade. The azure blade first bite through her leg, leaving a deep gash before Rian rotated around himself, riding his blade through her stomach.

Retracing his blade from her body, Rian closed the doors to the hallway he had come from before deactivating the controls by burying his blade through it then proceeded the same fashion with the other door once he left the stables.

Following the other hallway, Rian eventually met again with Andrelious and his squad and by the time the soldiers saw themselves confronted with the two veteran Force-users, many broke from their formation, seeking to escape only to find their demise on the outside by the skilled gunners of the Retribution.

By the time the Collective soldiers have been dealt with, Andrelious and Rian returned to the facilities command office where the Mimosa-Inahj twins immediately rushed to their father.

Walking past the Sith and his children, Rian removed his helmet. Justinios bowed slightly before the Consul. "My lord, Andrelious already told me about you having come to our aid."

"Yes, I did. Now tell me, how all this happened."

Justinios weighed his words, forming a reply Rian would satisfy but before he could say something, the air was split by the laughter of Torin Morgath. "Because he was blinded by his own abilities. He assumed he could turn me into his puppet but he failed. He failed like all of you will fail."

"And you are." Rian asked the shackled woman sitting in a corner.

"An asset that has exceeded its expiration." Andrelious said, one of his lightsabers lit in his hand,

ready to kill Morgath.

"No," Rian stopped him, I have more questions for her. Bring her to the Paragon for interrogation."

"I will spare you that." Andrelious said. Ready to probe Morgath's mind.

"Do it and everyone in this room will be dead." Morgath spat at the Force-users. "There is an explosive device in my mind. Whether you kill me or you do your sith magic to get into my head, it will trigger it and this room goes boom.

"In that case you will learn that there are things far more worse than torture or getting killed when dealing with Taldryan." Rian said. "Call the Inquisitorius, tell them we captured a Collective agent."

~The End