**RoSM Phase One Fiction – Objective 2 -** [**SNAPSHOT**](https://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/members/13299/snapshots/1177/2335)

***Orbital Station Cresh***

***Oba Diah System***

*Why do I still go to these places?*

Arden couldn’t help wondering why still felt the need to go on some missions personally, particularly ones to slimy backwater stations like this. He had people for this sort of thing, but sometimes, when you’re dealing with certain people, it helps to do it yourself. The Pyke Syndicate was precisely such an organization as they could be a cautious bunch. After interrogating some Collective agents with ties to Ghaffa Ordam, he’d discovered that they’d often use this transfer station as a meeting point and refueling stop en route to some place called Meridian. Marrick and Telaris seemed rather interested in finding it, Ghafa, and some artifact the slimy tentacle head had taken. While he didn’t really care about the artifact beyond what Marrick would possibly pay for it, Ghafa had made it personal for Arden by arranging the recent problems on Aliso. Getting a crack at her directly was more than worth the risk of dealing with the Pykes.

Much to Arden’s surprise, dealing with the Pykes had been the easy part. Plagueis had some troublesome slaves that the Pykes could make use of. For that, they’d promised whatever information they’d had on Ghafa’s whereabouts. After sending the Saraask’ar ahead with the payment, Arden had been promised a meeting with the capo in charge of the station. In truth, he didn’t really expect the Pykes to have much of use on Ghafa’s location, she was the careful type and probably had also paid off the Pykes. What Arden was counting on, and in fact hoping for, is that Ghafa had left agents on the station to deal with anyone who might come snooping or want to capture a high value target such as himself. In order to lure them out, he’d come on his personal ship, the *22nd Rule*, and had only brought his personal security droid, Fours, and two Ravagers for security. That said, he’d arranged for some of the Saraask’ar to remain on the station, blending in with the scum and slavers that populated the place. Arden could spot a couple amongst the patrons in the non-descript cantina he’d been waiting for the capo to send for him. He’d also positioned a substantial strike force just outside the system with instructions to move in if they went a given time without a signal from Arden or Fours.

Arden had been nursing a glass of low grade Sullustan wine (which was the best beverage this hole served) for the better part of an hour while watching the unnerved stares some of the patrons gave the two hulking troopers standing behind him. They gave him some comfort, but it was only a matter of time before whoever Ghafa had left here made their move. As he finally finished the drink, a decently built and well-dressed male Umbaran approached his table and spoke.

“Mister Karn, I am Slayn, Capo Von’s assistant. He has collected the information you requested and asks me to bring you to his office now.”

Arden stood and adjusted his cloak. “Would have expected a Pyke honestly.”

Slayn responded without a second thought, as if the question had been expected. “I’m an old personal friend of Von’s Mister Karn, he trusts me more than some of his relatives.”

Arden chuckled and gave a knowing smirk. “I’m sure that’s true. Let’s not keep Von waiting then.” Arden gave a nod to the Ravagers who made ready to follow as did Fours. This immediately got Slayn’s attention.

“I apologize Mister Karn, Von would see it as an insult if you did not trust in his hospitality and asks you leave your escorts here.”

Arden was already suspecting where this was going, but that comment really convinced him the trap was being sprung. He glanced subtly at Fours and then gestured for the troopers to remain at the table.

“Fours, make sure the tab gets paid. I believe it was at 33 or 35 last I checked. Lead on Mister Slayn.”

Slayn gestured down a hallway and Arden followed a couple steps behind. Once Slayn was clearly not looking at him, Arden slipped his hands inside his cloak and keyed a command into the commlink on his wrist. As expected, Slayn led Arden to lift which they boarded. As the lift started heading up, Arden carefully noted the commands Slayn entered. Arden didn’t visibly react as the lift started to ascend, but he did key another command into his concealed comlink. When they had almost reached their destination, Arden reached for the command console, pushing the stop button with one hand, while his other pulled his blaster and pointed it at Slayn.

“Nice try, Slayn.” Arden said as the startled Umbaran jumped back against the lift wall.

“What…what do you mean?” Slayn was acting surprised.

“The Capo’s office is on Level 27. You keyed in 23, a cargo storage and offloading area as I recall,” Arden answered. “My Trandoshans are thorough.”

Slayn’s face turned from a look of shock to smugness. “Doesn’t matter, you’re still not getting off this station, especially when the Capo finds out about this.”

“He already has, as well as my Trandoshans,” Arden said with a smirk. “Ghafa pays well, but I actually provide useful resources. I’m still curious what your plan was though. Oh, let me guess, three goons with stun rifles that would shoot both of us when the door opened.”

Slayn said nothing and Arden shrugged and keyed the lift to go down to level 17, his weapon still pointed at Slayn’s chest. As the lift started to decend, Arden produced a pair of stun cuffs from beneath his cloak. “My men will be rather disappointed if you weren’t wearing these when we arrive. I also suggest you tell them where Ghafa is before they start to get creative with your interrogation. Unless you’re a fan of Ithorian Opera that is.”