

## OPERATION: GLORIFIED SCAVENGER

### **SNAPSHOT:**

<https://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/members/9676/snapshots/1128/2277>

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*Meridian Prime*

*Wild Space*

*36 ABY*

Well, slap me across the face and put me on New Raxulon, 'cause I guess I'm scrounging for goodies like a scavenger.

Don't get me wrong - it can get a bit boring when I'm just playing sentient battering ram all the time. I do a lot of going in, cutting up skin and metal with a lightsaber and using, "Pew, pew, pew!" mechanics with my blaster, and running back to my little ship with at least a dozen droids and soldiers trailing after me. It's sort of become routine, like a tired vaudeville act. Now that I'm dealing with a Consul with a penchant for boring economics and a strange affinity for certain marine mammals, however, I guess priorities in my clan have shifted.

Basically, Karn wants treasure. A lot of treasure. Weapons, food, ores, other provisions we usually get on the black markets in the Aliso system and beyond. But why do that when we can raid this place for free? So I, the mighty Wrath to the Dread Lord, am to lead a small team into the lower levels of the Meridian Prime station and snatch some stuff up. Yeah. Hero escapades, this ain't.

Still, this place is impressive. Correctional facilities, multiple levels for trade and commerce. I've said this multiple times, but maybe I shouldn't have underestimated these Collective guys. Sure, they definitely look like they belong on the Island of Misfit Toys, but they aren't pushovers. So now I have to make the most of my assignment. Or mission, should I have chosen to receive it. Which I have, obviously. Anyway.

It's easy to breach the first line of defenses. As usual, Whuloc has proven himself to be somewhat useful in my grand scheme. He's allowed me and three Wraiths to huddle in his...well, *Wraith*, his freighter...and made his ship vulnerable by putting it on stealth mode as he descends into the hangar bay. We step onto the lower levels with ease, and I'm frankly amazed by the bustle of the station. There are a lot of corridors down here, but an intense amount of people - and shady looking people at that. The cantinas are plentiful (not now, Ronovi; no leisurely drinking), and so are the shops. In one corner, a guy is selling quite an array of hold-out blaster pistols; I didn't even think there was such a wide variety. Another vendor - Togrutan, by the looks of it - is selling boxes of Jogan fruits for dirt cheap. Some Zeltron is

peddling holo-comics and holo-videos on various datapads. Not exactly what I'm going for, but I keep snooping, hoping to find something worthwhile.

I must be giving the impression that I'm some sort of eccentric rich person with my crew of armored, black-visored minions, because the seedier-looking types aren't bothering me. You know, the Weequays with bandanas and beady eyes and the Near-Humans with weird antennapalps sticking out of their foreheads - Balosars, I think they're called? Anyway, they leave me alone, practically scatter as I pass ramshackle depots and shops. Besides having the perks of the back-up team I have, sometimes, being almost seven feet is more convenient than annoying.

The smells, I think, are more alarming than the sights. As far as my nostrils can detect, everything's got the odor of stale body odor and grease. An overweight Human sits on a stool outside what appears to be a miscellaneous pawn shop, clipping the toenails of his bare right foot with rusty forceps. He reeks of dairy - what dairy, I'm not sure. Rotten blue milk? I crinkle my nose to block out some of the stench as I continue to scope this mess. The Wraiths behind me keep their blasters close to their chest, their faces blank beneath their helmets. They do a good job of looking menacing, and, given their conditioning, they should be good at *being* menacing as well.

Before I can make it to the next turn, I'm suddenly interrupted by what appears to be a Technocrat Soldier. He - or she? I can't tell, given how much they look like shaven scientific specimen in armor - is silent at first, beckoning me to follow. This is sudden, unexpected, and I'm not sure how to process the information at first. I first contemplate sticking a vibrodagger in the exposed part of the soldier's non-cybernetically enhanced throat, right where the jugular should be. But I decide to humor them instead, stab later. The strange androgynous soldier leads my men and me to a turbolift, and in the next minute, we soaring up to the upper levels, where I can already feel a shift in the atmosphere.

When the doors slide open, I'm greeted by a Muun, of all sentient. Tall and thin, with a face that looks like a caved in potato. But he smiles a putty smile at me as I approach him, nodding to the Technocrat before reaching out to shake my hand.

"It is a pleasure to house you on *Meridian*, my lady!" he croons. "Always good to see our elite Capital Enterprises members join us. No need to walk among the filth downstairs - we've been expecting you."

I blink. This seems absolutely off - possibly even a trap. Why would an agent of Capital Enterprises - a broker, by the looks of it - simply allow someone like me to step into the upper levels of the Collective's largest trading hub without even checking for identification? I think about my blue eyepatch and wonder if simply my cybernetic has done the trick. Then I see *him*, out of the corner of my eye: A man with red hair, dressed in a tattered suit, with glowing green eyes. He stands a distance away from the Muun, arms folded, looking as professional as he

can given his ragtag appearance. But his fingers are twitching on his right hand, something he does when executing illusions or tricks of the mind. I look at the Muun again and notice something off with his eyes. Like he's seeing something that isn't actually there.

I stare at my fellow Plagueian, whom I knew was going to be a part of this raid. He grins. As far as he's concerned, the mental tapestry that he's woven is working. In this Muun's vision, I'm a respectable broker of Capital Enterprises.

Thanks, Dralin.

He walks alongside me as we step into the "Corporate cage," which is significantly different than its inferior cousins below. The spiraling terraces flank us as various groups and conglomerates manage their wares, and immediately, I'm entranced by what I see. I see mining ore so rare that I think I only last gazed upon it once during the siege on the planet Prakith, back when I was a member of Tarentum. I spot blasters and rifles - DT-12s, MWC-35c "Staccato Lightning" repeating cannons (actually, it looks like there are a lot of Morellian goodshere), other military blasters and firearms - all available despite being typically limited to only military forces. Foodstuffs, including expensive brandies and whiskeys, line the walls in crates and boxes, which elites paw at as if they're hungry felines. I notice a near mountain of Whyren's Reserve to my right and grin.

"Focus, Tavisael," Dralin whispers to me, using my last name to keep me on high alert.

The Muun takes us to a round table in the corner, where other Muuns await me. They shake my hand and call me by a name I don't know: Maurie Haster, who must be some sort of fancy-pants person from Capital Enterprises I haven't heard about. Dralin concentrates to keep the illusion working, and I smile as I sit down, my left hand placed on my commlink.

"You wouldn't mind if I brought any more guests, would you?" I asked with a grin.

They say no. I pull the comm off my utility belt and bring it to my lips. Captain Ningak of the *Termagant* is on the other line.

"Captain, send in the *Solace* and the *Scylla*. We've got a pick-up."

I then lean back and sneer, waiting for the aerial barrage to start.