

## OPERATION: DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

### **SNAPSHOT:**

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

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*Wild Space*  
*Kessel Sector, Halfway to Eadu*  
*36 ABY*

The *Termagant* was not one to be trifled with.

Though its sleek body contained vulnerabilities, the *Strike*-class medium cruiser certainly had quite the entourage. Two DP20 frigates - the *Solace* and the *Scylla* - settled around its flanks, their turbolaser cannons honed on their target ahead. And flitting around among the cosmos were X-wings and B-wings - a dozen each - hovering at a distance with buzzing engines.

Ahead of them, the unnamed *Dreadnaught*-class heavy cruiser continued its trajectory toward Eadu. The Inquisitorius had done well in tracking it; Grot's device had done the job, and many had intercepted the signal code. One person in particular, however, had risen to the challenge. While members of her clan focused on the *Akan* or on seeking out identified people of interest such as Ghafa Ordam, she found the whole idea of rescue to be old-fashioned and charming. In short, entirely up her alley.

Gazing at the ship sensors from the bridge's main controls, Nevim Ningak, captain of the *Termagant*, kept his arms folded across the fold of his uniform. He ignored the scuffling of his officers and the Subjugates on board, instead only paying attention to the transmission from the leader of the X-wing squadron.

"Is the *Wraith* in position, X leader?"

There was a pause, then a hum. "*Wraith*, or Wrath, sir?"

Ningak sighed. "Same answer. The Wrath is in the *Wraith*."

"Apologies, sir. Yes, *Wraith* is in position."

The captain confirmed this by observing the blips on the sensors, then nodded and connected to the *Wraith*. "My lord, you're free to activate your stealth system. We've got you covered."

"Excellent," hissed a voice peppered with sass and just the right amount of alcohol. "Whuloc, you hear that? Let's jump into ninja mode!"

“Roger that!” emerged the voice of the *Wraith’s* wily pilot from a distance. The transmission cut off, and Ningak watched as the blip symbolizing the Ghtroc 720 light freighter disappeared from his ship’s radar.

In the vast depths of Wild Space outside, the black and green-painted ship zipped toward the Dreadnaught, and the X-wing and B-wing squadrons followed. It did not shoot first; it was vulnerable in its stealth mode, and it would let other wannabe aces begin the assault instead. What followed was the typical dog fight among the stars - it hadn’t taken long for the Collective to respond.

As streaks of turbolaser fire began to streak across the viewing portals like comets, Ronovi Tavisæn, the Dread Lord’s Wrath, watched the entire vacuum of space outside light up, as if they were celebrating the rescue of their ally prematurely. She adjusted the collar of her Imperial-inspired uniform and remembered that her former armor was probably rotting away in some closet back on Aliso. Somehow, as she grew older, she felt obliged to do away with pseudo-displays of protection.

At the controls of the *Wraith* was the wild-haired, scarred, and goggle-bedecked Zuser Whuloc, the tails of his robes bristling around his ankles as he steered the freighter toward their destination, his eyes focused hard on the portals in front of him. Standing beside him and observing the foray was Skull, his *KX* series droid, while his astromech droid, Widget, whistled almost as if it were carefree as it managed the ship.

“I don’t see how we’ll manage,” sighed Skull drearily, living up to his esteemed reputation of being an absolute buzzkill built out of metal. “The Collective can’t be that easy to overtake.”

“We’ve got two frigates, a cruiser, and a whole bunch of fighters around us,” Ronovi retorted. “I think the gang’s all here and ready to go.”

“Yes, but we’re vulnerable, and we’ve only got one turbolaster cannon...”

“Don’t remind me, Skull,” groaned Zuser as he hunched over his controls. To their port side, an X-wing erupted in flames as it made contact with gunfire from a Collective opponent.

“Then what’s the plan?”

“Simple!” interjected Ronovi. “We set a crash course for the hangar bay. Fighters should be able to disable the doors so they can’t close, and I’ll hop off and partake in some shenanigans.”

“If I die during this,” Zuser snapped, though still exuding his half-grin, “you owe me a new ship.”

“Why? You’d be dead.”

“Don’t question me, Tavisæn!”

Skull simply exhaled as loudly as his voice modules would allow him to and stepped back. As the cruiser loomed ever closer, Ronovi reminded herself of her objective: Deal with the Collective’s cronies, make it to whatever brig or holding cell they had, and rescue the poor damsel known as Vance Kordall. He apparently had quite the mustache, though, for someone in distress. She looked forward to critiquing it from a purely aesthetic perspective.

The hangar bay, sure enough, was open like a dangling, broken jaw as the freighter dipped in and out of conflict, and streams of fighters poured out almost like swarms of insects. Luckily, the turbolaser fire from both the Plagueis squadrons, the *Solace* and the *Scylla*, and the *Termagant* were more than enough to pull said fighters away from Zuser’s trajectory. The *Wraith* lurched forward, rattling as it attempted to stay preserved, as Ningak’s voice rang throughout the cockpit.

“You’re approaching fast. We’ll hold as long as possible until you guys get back out. But we’ll withdraw so we can redirect enemy fire.”

“Sounds like a beautiful plan, Captain Nautolan,” replied Ronovi.

“My name’s Ningak.”

“Gesundheit,” retorted the Epicanthix. She then turned to Zuser. “Whuloc, get me on level ground!”

The *Wraith* dove toward the hangar bay, like a graceless bird careening toward the earth from the celestial heavens below.

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*Unknown Collective Vessel*

*Kessel Sector*

*Present time*

Vance Kordall was beginning to feel cramped in his tiny, circular holding pod, as well as dizzy from how much it swung about as the cruiser swayed. He assumed it was locked in battle outside, and as he tried to settle his still recovering vision on the railing of fellow orb-shaped prisons around him, he still could not settle his stomach much. He began to wonder what activity went on below, and which loyalists of the Iron Legion and Clans had been prodded and probed before being dangled like dead cattle in the holding bay.

He suddenly missed the smell of the outside, no matter how simultaneously sweaty and sterile the odor was. It had been an awkward combination, but Vance had at least gotten fresh air. The recycled stench of his own perspiration was suffocating, and he could even feel the droplets collecting on his upper lip. Perhaps he should have shaved before this all went down; he was beginning to regret what was quite possibly the most endearing and handsome aspect of himself.

Below him, the Collective worked in sync to tame the enemy threat. And beyond his prison, his soon-to-be self-titled hero was making the rounds.

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“ ‘Scuse me!” bellowed Ronovi, as she swung her activated saberstaff toward a group of Partisans. Their volley of E-11 blaster fire consequently flew straight back at them, and they scattered like confused harpies. “I said, ‘scuse me! Pardon me! Out of my way! Got places to be! C’mon! *Move!*”

She had charged her way through the hangar bay like a maniacal bull, somehow avoiding getting shot or even tackled by fighter ships that were still lifting off and ready for combat. Now it was time to maneuver the endless corridors in search for Kordall. She had read the intel collected by Ohnaka and distributed across the Brotherhood, and it appeared that their enemy had an innovative way of containing their prisoners of war. Now it was just a matter of *finding* them.

Ducking as another blaster bolt strayed her way, Ronovi pushed her body against a stubborn and vengeful Partisan grunt, letting the plasma of her lightsaber cut through his leather armor like dried out butter. He collapsed like a dummy, and the Epicanthix pressed on. The next grunt she seized by the scruff of the neck, lifting him up so that his widened eyes were fixated on hers.

“Where are you keeping them?” she demanded.

The Partisan stammered. His arms hung loosely at his sides, his blaster nearly dropping from his grip. His face was clammy beneath the hood of his cloak. “Wh-what?”

“The prisoners,” Ronovi answered. “Where are you keeping the prisoners?”

“Wh-why would I tell you?”

The response he got was a punch in the nose, hard enough to smash the cartilage beneath the flesh. He began to cry, clotted blood mixing with his saliva and tears.

“T-two levels down! I-I’ll take you there!”

“Good boy.”

The Partisan with a broken nose was unceremoniously dropped to the floor. He pushed himself to his feet and staggered ahead of Ronovi, one hand clutching his shattered nostrils and the other holding his blaster straight forward. The woman remained vigilant, though she deactivated her saberstaff for the time being. None of this appeared normal to her. She had heard many tales of the Collective, had been amused by them. Never before had she taken what she deemed to be a motley crew of misfit toys seriously. Now things seemed different. More malicious. Ronovi could not let her guard down.

The klaxons finally began to blare once they made it to the turbolift, and the entire hull of the ship became washed with red light. Surprisingly, no other Partisans or soldiers appeared in order to stop them. Most likely, they had become distracted with the skirmish outside, directed to their posts to deal with the onslaught from the Ascendant Clan. The two descended the levels of the ship easily, deeper into where the cargo bays and other hidden compartments were awaiting them. The Partisan continued to nurse his face, trying to clean up the blood.

“Maybe I won’t kill you after all,” Ronovi muttered. “You’ve been a good little peon.”

The Partisan said nothing. The doors to the turbolift slid open. Then he let out a small shriek.

Ronovi heard the dart hit the Partisan before she saw it. He dropped like a wet sack of linens, the toxins quickly doing their way as his unintentional role as Meat Shield #1 came to an end. Ronovi burst out of the turbolift with a growl on her lips, and she found herself face to face with three exactly identical Shikari huntresses - dreadlocked, tan-skinned, yellow tattoos streaking their faces. All of them wielded stun batons, and all of them had a synchronized smile.

It was beyond creepy.

“Great!” laughed Ronovi. “Reminds me of the twins I faced on the *Avenger II*. Only there are three of them. And I hate it.”

Her eyes then darted upward to the ceiling. Were those pods above her? And was there some alien cranking a level and making them all rotate? It looked like a mad scientist’s lab; what was he keeping in there? The creature - a Gabdorin, Ronovi identified, and such a “looker” - noticed the new arrival quickly. He smiled a brutal, teeth-brimming smile, as the huntresses continued to stare down what they deemed to be their new prey.

“Well, well,” he chuckled. “The Brotherhood sent reinforcements faster than I imagined. So worried about their buddies, aren’t they?”

Ronovi cocked her head to the side. "Yeah, who are you?"

The Gabdorin hissed with laughter. "My goodness, that's twice that I've forgotten my etiquette recently," he replied. "I'm Bad-Four. As in..."

"As in 'bad for me?'" Ronovi interrupted with a smirk. "Eh. That's overplayed. Clichéd, even. I bet you say it to all the ladies. Anyway, how about you hand over Kordall, and I won't make it bad for *you* instead?"

"I'd *love to!*" exclaimed Bad-Four. "*If* I had my brain scrambled and reassembled. Ladies, take care of this nuisance before we all get an earful from Icasta."

Ronovi blinked slowly. Her saberstaff grew warm again in her hand as the cerulean blades burst forward as if in glee. She pushed her free hand outward, placed her opposite foot forward, kept her elbows tucked in. The ship lurched, as if both trying to escape the assailing enemy and trying to land somewhere.

"Let's play a game, dearies," she crooned. "It's called, 'Who Dies First?'"

The Shikari huntresses raised their batons. And Ronovi charged.