The JV-7 Escort Shuttle *Tseb’si’tsaerb III* sped through hyperspace, its destination known only by a set of coordinates.

Andrelious J. Mimosa-Inahj thought his days of doing work for the Inquisitorius had died on the day that Karufr fell under attack, but the emergence of the Collective as a credible threat to the future of the Brotherhood, as well as the disappearance of Darth Pravus, had brought the newly appointed Archanis Quaestor back into the fold. His reputation in the Brotherhood had allowed him to rejoin as a Grand Inquisitor, but that meant that his missions were among the toughest.

Operation: Greenwich was easily one of the most difficult assignments that the Inquisition had given out to date. Normally, a mission came with a wealth of information about its objective. Greenwich had nothing more than some coordinates, and the fact that the mission was a rescue job.

“So have any of you come across the Shikari Hunters before?” Andrelious asked. His team consisted of several agents and operatives from the Advanced Inquisitorius Network, along with a couple of Taldryanite soldiers that Andrelious had insisted come on the mission. He wasn’t about to leave himself without backup; he still did not trust the Inquisition enough.

“I should hardly think so. Nobody lives to tell the tale if they do their job properly,” one of the AIN agents commented flatly. “And I think we’re supposed to call them Huntresses. Our records indicate that they’re all female,”

“The fact that we are performing a rescue mission on someone they’ve *captured* indicate that someone has remained alive. Even if by design,” Andrelious responded.

“And they won’t give him up easily. This feels like a suicide mission. Or a trap,” Gregor Valtane, one of the Taldryan soldiers, stated.

“I’d agree with you, Private, but for one thing,” the Quaestor declared.

Valtane raised an eyebrow. “What’s that?”

“A suicide mission means we’d *all* have to die,” Andrelious quipped dryly.

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Andrelious pulled the *Tseb’si’tsaerb III* out of hyperspace as soon as the ship’s navicomp indicated that they were nearing their destination. He didn’t know what he was looking for; there was no intelligence on whether the target location was a planet, moon, ship or space station

The lack of knowledge regarding what to expect bothered the Sith. As a military man, he preferred to have clear and concise information regarding his objectives, what kind of opposition he could expect to face, and what resources he had available. Whilst he had some idea of what his allies would be able to do, the rest was for him to discover.

“The signal’s coming from a space station over there,” Tag Norrie, the AIN agent acting as Andrelious’ copilot, stated, pointing at a light grey dot on the sensor scope.

“Right. Let’s do this. I’ll fly us in. The rest of you, stick to the plan,” Andrelious ordered.

Norrie cleared his throat. “Let’s just hope that the false codes your associate uploaded onto the transponder hold out,”

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Kendra Icasta watched the unknown ship approach slowly. Its sudden arrival had caught the crew of the Capital Enterprises space station off guard, but, under the watchful eye of the station’s senior officers, things soon calmed down.

“The incoming ship is a Delta-class JV-7. An old Imperial design known as an ‘Escort Shuttle’,” a technician explained.

“Imperial? I didn’t think there were any remnants out here,” Kendra replied.

“Apparently so. Their IFF codes suggest that they’re from the Star Destroyer *Greenwich*. We don’t have any records on that particular ship, but of course our data is incomplete. And the Empire did have rather a lot of Star Destroyers…” the technician replied, cutting off his ramble when the Chiss glared at him.

“I don’t like it. Even if they *are* Imperials, I find it a little difficult to accept that they’re here by chance. When it gets close enough, run an advanced scan on it. See if its specifics match anything in our database. I’m sure I don’t need to remind you that there are plenty of Imperials, and Imperial wannabes in the Brotherhood,” Icasta declared.

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Andrelious remained fully focused as he steered his ship towards the enemy station. He could already sense a large number of lifeforms aboard.

Next to him, Tag Norrie prepared himself for the upcoming dialogue with the station’s flight controller. He’d gone over his lines three dozen times, but no amount of practice would be enough if he forgot the script when it mattered.

“Incoming shuttle. Please identify yourselves and state your intent,” a voice demanded.

“This is the shuttle *Cutty Sark*. We are envoys from Admiral Lonka’s Star Destroyer *Greenwich*. Looking to come to an understanding regarding a mutual enemy,” Norrie replied, feigning a perfect core accent.

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“They’re in range. Scanning now,” the technician declared, his gaze not moving from his scanner monitor.

The station’s advanced scanners and computers did not take very long to complete their task.

The technician ran his finger along the information. “IFF code appears genuine. Ship has been modified, has heavier weapons and an advanced autopilot system. Checking database now for known matches,”

“Hurry up!” Icasta ordered.

“And we have a potential match! Ship specs are consistent with the JV-7 *Tseb’si’tsaerb III*. Intelligence indicates that it belongs to the Mimosa-Inahj family,”

“Mimosa-Inahj family? Someone get me their dossiers!” Kendra shouted.

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**“**Looks like they’ve bought our story,” Norrie declared with obvious satisfaction.

“I don’t know why we’re even bothering with the ruse. I thought the plan was to storm the place, retrieve Kordall, and get out,” Valtane stated.

“Sneaking around wasn’t ever the plan. We just needed to be able to approach safely. We had no idea about what kind of facility we were going to be dealing with,” Andrelious explained.

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Kendra Icasta studied the two intelligence dossiers carefully.

“So we’re either dealing with an Imperial fanboy with a serious height problem, or his psychotic Alderaanian wife. The problem is, we can’t be sure which one, and these notes say they have very different ways to attack,” the Chiss complained.

“Simple. You let them think that you don’t know who they are. Lead them far enough away from their ship, and hit them with your girls,” Varryn Antillus stated.

“It’s easy for you. You’re not even here!” Kendra snapped. She was beginning to find Antillus’ insistence on communicating only via hologram very tiresome.

“Are you saying you don’t think that they can deal with a small team of Brotherhood agents? I’m disappointed in you, Kendra. Just ambush them once they’re out of the hangar. They’re not going to be able to handle such firepower,” Antillus replied coolly.

“And what about our prisoner? It doesn’t take a genius to know that’s why they’re here,” Icasta said.

“Once you’ve dealt with the incursion, ready him for transport. Oligard’s ready to meet him,” the hologram ordered.

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Andrelious was first along the boarding hatch once the shuttle touched down. His team followed, ready to quickly grab their weapons at the first sign of trouble.

The hangar was fairly quiet. A squadron of the Collective’s X-Wings sat to one side, their pilots nowhere to be seen.

A single Human male greeted the team. He sported a cybernetic replacement right eye, but otherwise appeared to be mostly natural.

“Greetings,” the man began. “Which one of you is the Admiral?”

“None of us,” Tag Norrie replied. “He prefers to keep himself aboard the flagship. You’ll get to meet him if we can reach some kind of understanding today,”

The Collective agent studied the new arrivals carefully. He was particularly surprised by how short Andrelious was.

“How did you get through basic training? You’re quite a bit shorter than regulation height. The Empire really did become rather desperate after Endor, eh?”

“I had certain skills that allowed me to bypass such requirements. I suggest you don’t insult me again if you want Admiral Lonka to even *consider* an alliance,” Andrelious replied crossly.

“Of course. My apologies. If you’d just come this way, I will introduce you to a member of our diplomatic services,” the Collective agent stated.

“I didn’t think monsters had diplomatic services,” Valtane whispered to Norrie.

As the team exited the hangar and began to make their way down a corridor, a large group of identical female Kiffar appeared from several doorways.

“I’m afraid that I’m going to have to ask you to surrender now. But don’t worry, aside from your Force user, we have no quarrels with you. In fact, we’d like to invite you to join us. All you have to do is help us subdue Mr Mimosa-Inahj here,” the man declared, arming himself with a small blaster of his own.

“Now that is rather unfortunate. Because we knew exactly what you’d try to do. Here is my counter offer. You surrender. You give us Vance Kordall. And we leave. Or my men and I can make a mess of this facility. Which is it to be?” Andrelious answered, unimpressed with the trap.

“I almost hoped you’d refuse to comply. It’s been very boring out here,” Kendra Icasta declared, revealing herself from a shadowy corner.

Andrelious wasn’t going to waste any more time talking. He summoned his silver hilted lightsaber to his hands, activating it and immediately plunging its blade straight through the man who had greeted his team.

“Huntresses! Now!” Icasta ordered as the Sith and his team scattered throughout the corridor.

The Shikari Huntresses attacked with a determined precision, using their energy bows and dart shooters. They didn’t dare close in to attack with their stun batons and vibro-knucklers, especially as Andrelious moved from target to target, his lightsaber easily dealing with the Kiffar’s weapons.

The firefight was a lot more even than either Andrelious or Kendra had hoped. The Sith, having known in advance that he and his team would be facing the Shikari Huntresses, had briefed his men carefully, whilst Icasta’s supreme confidence in her Huntresses led her to believe that a small team of Brotherhood agents would be no trouble. As it was, both teams continued to take losses, but it was Andrelious who held a numerical advantage.

“It’s me who you’re after, Sith!” Kendra shouted, flicking her electro-whip directly at Mimosa-Inahj. The Archanis Quaestor held his lightsaber firmly in the way, but the Chiss stepped back to avoid damage to her weapon.

“Kooki won’t like that. Only she’s allowed to do that to me,” Andrelious quipped, winking at Icasta.

The Hunt master took a few steps back, switching from electro-whip to slugthrower. She fired several shots, both at Andrelious and members of his team. The Sith was forced to dodge the incoming slugs, his lightsaber proving ineffective.

Once he’d dealt with Icasta’s attack, Andrelious noticed that the Chiss had fled into a nearby turbolift.

“Norrie, Valtane, you’re with me! The rest of you, get this corridor secure. We’re going to secure the objective!”

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The station’s klaxons blared out the warning that they were under attack. Vance Kordall, still sore from the ongoing interrogation, managed a little smile, but that was quickly wiped from his face when he saw the form of Kendra Icasta coming towards him.

“It’s time we got you out of here. It’s time you explained your continued fealty to the Brotherhood to Rath Oligard himself. He always *loves* to meet those who willing enslave themselves to the Force users,” the Chiss hissed, releasing the captured Human from his restraints.

“Looking forward to it already. Perhaps we can see if he’s any good in a fight,” Vance replied.

“Silence!” Icasta snapped, punching Kordall hard in the stomcach.

The turbolift doors slid open, revealing Andrelious, Tag Norrie and Gregor Valtane.

Icasta instinctively grabbed Vance, jamming the barrel of her slugthrower against his temples.

“Stay back, or he gets it,” the Chiss threatened.

Andrelious raised his hand. His team nodded and stayed behind the Sith.

“He’s either coming with us, or he dies,” Mimosa-Inahj hissed.

“Thanks a lot!” Kordall responded.

**-x-**

The standoff was exactly what Andrelious had been expecting when he saw Icasta’s retreat. On the turbolift journey, the Sith told his two companions exactly what to do…

He glanced round at Tag Norrie, who spotted the subtle eye movement he’d been waiting for.

“Actually, sir, I’m afraid we have other ideas,” Norrie stated. He and Valtane turned their weapons onto Andrelious.

“We came to a decision. The Collective are the way forward. We’re sick of what basically amounts to slavery,” Valtane added.

“Yes. We just had to get you as far away from the ship as possible to make sure you couldn’t possibly get away,” Tag said.

Andrelious stood his ground. “I will not stand for this. Stop this charade at once,” he ordered angrily.

“This is most unexpected….” Kendra began.

“Oligard’s speeches have really spoken to us. We just thought that we’d deliver you a fully fledged Force user prisoner as a statement of our intent,” Gregor declared.

Icasta started to move away. “But it’s a shame that you’re lying. I know exactly what you’re trying to do. As soon as I let my guard down…”

Andrelious frowned.

“Plan Besh, then!” he cried.

Vance saw his chance and elbowed the Hunter in the chest. Icasta stumbled, but the split second was enough for Norrie and Valtane to move forward and pull the captured Shadow Academy operative to relative safety.

“I will *NOT* be beaten!” Kendra screamed, attacking Valtane with her electrowhip. The weapon almost glistened as current flowed throughout its length. Gregor Valtane stood no chance.

“Now! Go! Go! Get him out!” Andrelious commanded.

Kendra Icasta cursed as Norrie virtuallydragged Kordall out of the range of her whip.

“You’ll pay for this, Force user scum!” the Chiss screamed, again reaching for her slugthrower. As she pointed it towards Andrelious, however, the weapon flew out of her hand and into the outstretched palm of the Sith, who grabbed the slugthrower and threw it to Kordall.

“One final chance. Surrender now,” the Archanis Quaestor demanded.

“Never!” Icasta fumed.

Andrelious was expecting that answer. Without hesitating, he assaulted the Chiss with a wave of Force lightning. As strong as she was, even Kendra Icasta could not withstand the sheer power of the Sith’s electric hatred. Worse still, the amount of current started to overload her cybernetics.

“The Force will *always* prevail,” Andrelious stated as he attacked Icasta again and again.

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Andrelious, Tag Norrie and Vance Kordall found a scene of devastation as they headed back towards the hangar. The firefight had completely wiped the Shikari Huntress group out, and only a single Taldryan soldier had seemingly survived.

The quartet moved silently towards the *Tseb’si’tsaerb III*. They’d have plenty to talk about on the way back to Brotherhood space, but for now, they had little to say.

Andrelious looked back one final time at the trail of death he’d helped to cause.

The Brotherhood couldn’t afford many more victories like this one.