**Captured Collective Shuttle**

**Approaching Taffarel system**

“So what do we know about this Sith? Apparently she was recently involved in a fight on the *Matron*.” Greale Enva asked.

“Yeah. She actually lost from what I was told. But her opponent was Kookimarissia Mimosa-Inahj. Guess she didn’t get the memo about avoiding anyone from *that* family. In fact I’m a little surprised that she survived. The Mimosa-Inahj family don’t tend to leave many alive,” Tag Norrie replied.

Granta Prackx strode into the shuttle’s cockpit, finding she had to duck a little to comfortably make her way towards the seat usually reserved for the ship’s commanding officer.

“I gather we will be arriving at our destination soon?” Granta questioned.

Enva nodded. “About five minutes. The garrison is on the third planet, or so says our intel,”

“Third planet? Are you sure? That thing’s just a big ball of water,” Tag stated worriedly.

“95% surface water. There’s a lot of tiny islands dotted around the planet. With the right people you’d easily be able to build something there.” Greale explained.

 “From what I know about the Collective, they definitely have the skills. It’s a shame they’re all crazed zealots,” Prackx added.

“Well, I’m sure they’ll prove that as soon as they see you. They tend to go absolutely potty when they see anyone with one of *THOSE*,” Norrie said, his gaze drawn to the lightsaber attached to Granta’s belt.

**Liberation Front Garrison**

**Taffarel III**

Lieutenant Colonel Moira Ganimeed hadn’t expected to be thrust into command of the Liberation Front’s newest garrison. At the age of 27, she was among the younger members of the Liberation Front, but her rank suggested she’d seen far more than most of her age.

A Partisan, a member of the Liberation Front’s rank and file soldiers, entered the room, greeting the officer with a quick salute.

“We’ve got word that one of our shuttles is inbound,” the Partisan stated simply.

“I’m going to assume that there’s something unusual about this one,” Ganimeed replied.

“You’re correct. This particular shuttle missed its last check-in. With the recent incident with the Meridian, anything like that is of course considered highly suspicious. Shall I make sure that we follow Protocol Six?” the Partisan questioned.

Protocol Six was one of the many contingency plans that Rath Oligard had instilled across the Collective. This particular plan was tailor made for bases that followed the Collective’s preferred modular layout. When in place, it allowed the central command hub to control all parts of the base, without possible override from any kind of computer spike, droid, or skilled slicer. It also authorised lethal force against anyone who found themselves in the base without the proper authorisation. In short, Protocol Six placed the entire base under lockdown.

“Put Protocol Six in place. Do whatever’s necessary to keep any Brotherhood forces back,” Moira ordered, hoping her ability to motivate her men masked her almost complete lack of tactical knowledge. “This is going to be a tough one,”

**-x-**

Granta Prackx and her team found little difficulty in landing their shuttle in the garrison’s landing zone. Given they were flying a ship that they had acquired from the Liberation Front only hours before, the chance of being blown out of the sky by the garrison’s turbolaser tower was seen as unlikely. Nonetheless, Greale Enva had kept the shields up until the last moment.

“Interesting. This garrison is located among the largest archipelago on the surface. See how they’ve combined dry land with artificial structures to build a fairly defensible facility,” Tag observed.

“Never mind all that. What do we know about the garrison?” Prackx demanded.

“So by the looks of things, the garrison is a very modular structure. I’d imagine that most of the individual sections can be operated both locally and from the command hub. That way, if they do come under attack, they can seal the access tunnels and frustrate progress. Best plan is for us to stick together. Don’t let them isolate anyone,” Norrie continued.

“I agree. What kind of seals are we talking here? Normal blastdoors? They won’t be an issue,” Granta announced, patting the hilt of her lightsaber.

Tag nodded. “Normal blastdoors on the outer areas. But according to our intel, they use laser gates to protect the command hub. Which are of course lightsaber proof,”

As the team prepared themselves for their attack on the garrison, a loud electrical sound echoed overhead.

“What was that?” one of the soldiers asked.

“That’s the base deflector shield. Pretty standard procedure,” Norrie explained.

“Or they know we’re here. Not that that will be a problem,” Prackx declared.

**-x-**

Moira Ganimeed examined the security monitor. The team of ten enemies didn’t seem large enough to overpower her forces, but she was far too savvy to assume that things were going to be easy.

“How many of the enemy are Force users?” she asked.

One of the men operating the security monitors zoomed in on Prackx’s group. He examined each for a lightsaber; the tell-tale sign of a Force user.

“Looks like that tall woman is the only one. I wouldn’t want to run into her on a dark night, that’s for sure,” the operative stated.

“See if you can find a dossier on her,” Ganimeed ordered.

**-x-**

Prackx examined the landing area. There was a single doorway into the rest of the garrison, which she was not surprised to find sealed behind a durasteel blastdoor.

“Norrie. Go and try the door controls,” the Juggernaut ordered, expecting to find it locked.

The rest of the team moved into position as Tag Norrie carried out the order. Sure enough, the door remained shut.

“I don’t even think there’s power running to this panel,” Norrie stated. “If they’re running a deflector shield, a turbolaser *AND* laser gates, they’re not going to have much to spare. You’ll notice that there’s no lighting either,”

“I didn’t figure we’d need it! It’s broad daylight out there,” Greale responded.

“Alright, cover me whilst I deal with this door,” Prackx ordered, activating her lightsaber. She plunged its blade deep into the blastdoor and started to cut through the durasteel.

The blastdoor was strong enough that it took around five minutes for the Sith to cut a large enough hole for her team to comfortably pass through.

“Norrie. You first!” Prackx ordered.

Tag Norrie obeyed silently. He gingerly climbed through the opening, uncertain as to what he’d find on the other side.

“Area is clear,” Tag declared.

Prackx and the rest of the team entered the corridor. The immediate area in front of them was indeed clear, but Granta could sense people nearby.

“Hmm. Looks like we have a choice to make,” the Juggernaut stated, pointing at a T-junction in the corridor up ahead.

“It’s your call,” Norrie replied simply.

Prackx relaxed a little, allowing the Force to flow through her clearly and strongly. She focused on the junction up ahead, trying to ascertain if she felt a stronger prescience in a particular direction.

The rest of the team waited for their commander to make a decision. Even as they waited, they could feel themselves drawn to follow her orders closely; as though she had some kind of hold on them over the Force.

“To the left. But they’re going to try to hit us from both sides when we reach the junction. At least, they will, unless…” Prackx stated, reaching for her sniper rifle.

“Oh. I see. Nice idea,” Greale observed as the large female aimed carefully at a holocam directly in front of them. With a single shot, Prackx destroyed the surveillance device.

**-x-**

One of Moira Ganimeed’s men was watching the security monitors intently as the Brotherhood’s team began their infiltration. As he watched, one of the monitors flashed brightly, before its output was replaced by an error message.

“We just lost one of our holocams. Whoever’s leading this group knew exactly what we were about to do,” the Partisan stated.

“Just maintain the lockdown,” Ganimeed ordered.

“With the laser gates, main deflector shield and other defences, we’re running at 105% of the recommended power output. I’m not sure how long the power’s going to hold out,” the Partisan replied, examining a status monitor nearby.

*It’ll hold. It’ll HAVE to!* Moira thought, careful to hide her concern from her men.

**-x-**

Led by Tag Norrie, Prackx’s team reached the junction in the corridor without meeting with any kind of resistance.

“I suspect that things will start to get a little harder from now on. The important thing is to make sure we stick together,” Granta stated.

The team all nodded in response with such synchronisation that they could have been mistaken for a group of droids.

Sure enough, the door to the left burst open and a group of Liberation Front’s Partisan soldiers burst through, shouting loudly and firing their blasters. The attack looked to have been timed well, but the soldiers appeared a little disorganised and unsure of themselves.

Prackx charged at the nearest enemy, easily cutting him down with her lightsaber, whilst her team picked targets and began firing with such accuracy that they even surprised themselves. They quickly despatched the onrushing enemies with seemingly no trouble.

“Sir, I feel as though I’m being guided. As though *SHE* is personally picking my targets for me,” one of the soldiers told Norrie.

“That is the will of the Force. It wants us to beat these monsters,” Prackx explained

“Is anyone hurt?” Tag questioned.

“I’ve been hit in the arm. It’s not bad, but I could do with a medpac,” another soldier declared.

“If we find a medical facility en route, we’ll take a break there. Otherwise, let’s keep moving!” Granta commanded, unsurprised to find that the blastdoor in front had closed itself after allowing the enemy through.

**-x-**

“Oligard told me that the Partisans are top men! The way they went out there, I’d think they were Cadets!” Moira Ganimeed complained.

“We were hoping that they’d at least thin the enemy out a little. As it is, they’re mincemeat – and the enemy are still at full strength,” Major Nuy Vexus, Ganimeed’s second in command, added.

“If things are going to go like this, Major, I think we need to consider leaving before they get here. You and I are a lot more valuable that the rest of these people,” Ganimeed whispered.

“It won’t come to that. Even a lightsaber can’t get through the laser gates. And they can only be disabled from in here,” Vexus explained.

*Unless we run out of power*. Ganimeed thought.

**-x-**

Having cut her way through the blastdoor, Prackx found herself in a large, mostly empty room. It appeared to serve as little other than a meeting point between several corridors.

“So which way now?” Tag Norrie asked.

“That one,” Granta ordered, the Force once again helping her pinpoint a larger collection of enemies.

As the team approached the door that the Sith had indicated, the blastdoor opened and a large team of enemies charged in and opened fire. Once again the attack was timed in an attempt to maximise its impact, but the Brotherhood’s soldiers pressed on, almost completely unfazed. Prackx almost seemed to be enjoying herself as she slew the final pair of enemies.

“Everyone ok?” Tag questioned again.

“We’re never going to finish this mission if you keep asking that. You’re not their mother,” Granta admonished.

Norrie just shook his head in disgust at the Sith.

“Looks like we’re one down. Gregak took a hit square to the chest,” Greale announced, gesturing over to a fallen comrade.

“Is he definitely dead?” Prackx asked.

“Why does that matter?” Norrie demanded.

“Collective policy for enemy survivors. They don’t lock them up. They heal them. They change them. If Gregak isn’t dead? You’ll be facing him in combat soon enough. Now I don’t know about you, but I’d rather die than serve these monsters,” Granta explained.

“Then it’s probably a good thing that he is already dead. Because I’d not want to have to witness you finishing him off,” Greale replied.

**-x-**

“Every time we send a team in, they just fall apart as soon as they see her. I just don’t understand why. They’ve all been trained to fight against Force users,” Vexus said as he watched the latest clash between Liberation Front Partisans and the Brotherhood attackers.

“They’re highly trained. But they’re also *cannon fodder*. Fanatics are good for very little else,” Ganimeed replied coldly.

“Oligard would probably feel similar about us. Especially if we end up losing this garrison,” the Major explained.

“That may be, but he told me himself that the two of us are more important than the garrison. Or any of the foot soldiers here,” Moira stated.

The Major shrugged. “I’ll have to take your word for that. I’ve never actually met him. Anyway, would you say that it’s time to activate Protocol Fifteen?”

“Yes. But be careful. If the rank and file get wind of what we’re trying, they might attempt to mutiny,” Ganimeed ordered.

**-x-**

Cutting her way through another blastdoor, Granta Prackx charged down the corridor beyond only to come face to face with a large red wall of plasma.

“Laser gates. Looks like we’ve found our way to the command hub,” Prackx stated.

“Even you can’t get past those. It’s kind of impressive that they’re able to draw on so much power in such a remote facility,” Norrie added.

“Parts of the garrison are of a different design. I think they’ve taken over and upgraded an old Imperial facility,” Granta replied.

“Is there anywhere that the Empire *DIDN’T* build something? Every backwater planet I’ve been to seems to have some kind of former Imperial presence,” Greale observed.

“If you were fighting against a group of fanatical terrorists, you would want bases everywhere,” Prackx answered crossly.

“That’s interesting. Look, there’s the landing pad where we touched down. Seems it’s sinking,” Norrie declared, pointing at part of the transparisteel wall.

Sure enough, the landing pad was moving down into the water. In no time at all, the shuttle that the team had used to arrive was submerged, but still protected by a shield.

As the landing pad moved, the laser gate that barred the team’s progress started to flicker.

“Looks like they’re using too much power,” Norrie declared.

The power outages increased in length.

“Wait for a gap. Then we go through. One by one!” Prackx commanded.

Tag Norrie went first. He sprinted through as the laser gate continued to flicker, but he felt far from safe, especially for the first few moments where he was isolated on the ‘wrong’ side. Prackx came next, followed by Greale. The rest of the team started to make their way through.

“Once that landing pad’s down completely, the laser gate won’t have to share its power. It’ll be fully active again so I suggest we-“ Norrie was cut off by the sound of a man crying out in agony. With dread, he looked up to find that the last man through had been a split-second too slow.

“Just be glad you don’t feel the Force like I do. That felt ten times worse than it looked,” Prackx declared.

**-x-**

“Protocol Fifteen is complete. The primary landing facility is submerged. Our escape ship is ready on the secondary pad,” Major Nuy Vexus announced matter of factly.

“Where are the enemy?” Moira Ganimeed asked.

“Put it this way. We need to move. Fast. They made the most of a few power outages and got through one of the laser gates. Most of them, anyway,” Vexus declared, barely able to believe what the laser gate had done to one of the enemy soldiers. As much as he hated the Brotherhood, to see an enemy die in such a gruesome way made him sick to the stomach.

“Flood everyone into their location. I’m not giving this place up without a fight,” Ganimeed ordered.

**-x-**

With the team into the inner part of the garrison with a loss of only two men, Prackx was feeling pleased with herself.

*She might have bested me on the Matron, but I’d bet that Alderaanian bitch wouldn’t be able to get this far. My little Inahj will be mine again if I can just prove myself in the field!*

The Sith was distracted from her musing as a trio of blastdoors opened up, each revealing a team of Liberation Front Partisans.

The sheer number of enemies proved a much greater challenge for Prackx and her men, but the Juggernaut remained unfazed as she charged from target to target, her lightsaber easily despatching anyone unfortunate to find themselves in its path.

Tag Norrie had managed to find cover when the enemy had arrived, but the rest of the team were not so fortunate. After a protracted fire fight, only Norrie and Prackx were unhurt.

Norrie rose from cover and surveyed the scene, his eyes casting along the death and destruction. He spotted the Sith executing a wounded Partisan nearby.

“You’re probably right about that one. From what I know about the Liberation Front, their foot soldiers are pretty useless as prisoners,” he observed.

“I’m glad that you’re finally starting to agree with my methods. Perhaps there is hope for you yet,” Granta replied with a smirk.

Tag ignored the remark.

“So we should try to find whoever’s in charge of this place. That attack we just faced was their last stand. If they’ve not already got out of here,” Prackx ordered.

“The primary objective is to render this facility unusable. Killing or capturing any senior personnel is only a secondary concern. You told me that yourself,” Norrie replied.

“Correct. But if you’re anything like me, you’re going to want to find whoever’s in charge. Remember, it’s them who are responsible for this,” Granta stated, casting her arm over the dead bodies.

**-x-**

Moira Ganimeed and Nuy Vexus climbed into their escape craft. The ship was little more than a large starfighter with room for only two passengers, but it was also fast enough to get through most blockades.

“Whoever that woman is,” Vexus commented. “She absolutely destroyed our men. Let’s just be thankful that we survived,”

Ganimeed frowned. “Running away doesn’t kill Force users,”

-x-

Granta Prackx and Tag Norrie found no further resistance as they reached the central command hub.

“Cowards got away. Let’s see what we can find out about them,” Prackx declared.

“I’m not really a slicer. But this facility’s abandoned. We could use their comm system to speak to Arx. Get a team who knows what they’re doing here,” Norrie explained.

The Juggernaut nodded. “Do it,”

Granta Prackx smiled to herself. With the loss of just eight men, she’d successfully led the attack on an enemy garrison. Her reputation within the Inquisitorius would be a lot higher.

Soon, she’d finally get her dues.

*FIN*