

# Time to Say Goodbye

A Submission to the Competition:  
[RoS: Meridian Phase III] Fiction/Graphics – Fiction III  
Objective 3



Written by  
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## **Aboard *Valkyrie I***

### **36 ABY**

Reiden watched through the viewport as the pilot skillfully evaded incoming fire from the remaining turrets of Meridian station as they made their approach. Outside, starfighters and assault ships from both Krennic and the Brotherhood at large waged war against the forces of the Collective and the station's defenses. Meridian's shield generators had been taken out previously, making the attack possible. The tide felt like it was starting to turn in favor of the Brotherhood.

It wasn't that long ago that he had been on the station before, having extracted Kendra Icasta to be turned over to the Voice for interrogation. He had known that he would be heading back again, but didn't expect that it would be so soon. This time, however, he had a much larger team with him — the full strength of Gundark Company was being deployed. Each troop transport was being utilized to get the Palatinaean troops to their destination. Once again, Reiden had Orion with him, along with Captain Sloane. The other two members of the previous team that Reiden knew, Majors Warner and Davis, were located in other transports, leading their own teams.

Each of the other three transports was heading for a different arm of the station. From there, they would split up with some of them guarding the hangars and their transports while the rest spread through the station, gathering resources that could prove useful. Collective forces encountered by any of the teams were to be dealt with swiftly. Reiden and his team of Orion, Captain Sloane, and other Scholae troops would head to the command center and extract the data core. The team led by Major Davis would collect the resources, while the other, led by Major Warner, would go around setting demolition charges at key points within the station. Today they would strike a devastating blow against the Collective.

The transport veered off sharply to the left to avoid incoming fire before coming about once more. The pilot guided the ship into the hangar and touched down. The door slid open, allowing the team to offload, blasters raised and at the ready.

## **Aboard Meridian Station**

Reiden was the last person to step out of the transport. He glanced around, keen eyes scanning for any potential threat. He stretched out his senses with the aid of the Force, wanting to be certain. Not finding anything, he made his way to the front of his group.

"Okay, men," he began. "You all know the mission. You know how important it is. Those of you that remain behind must ensure that our means of escape remains secure and that any hostiles that may approach are eliminated. We can't take any chances."

The troops all made gestures of affirmation; some nodded, others responded with a 'yes, sir', some even made a salute. Reiden was never one to stress over maintaining formalities, and with time being of the essence, he let any lax behavior slide, simply nodding to them in turn. Just so long as his men knew what was expected of them, they could respond however they wanted today. There were more important things to worry about.

With that, those staying behind took up defensive positions behind whatever cover they could find and settled in. Reiden's team set out down the corridor. Along the way, they encountered fleeing prisoners. Reiden instructed them to head to the hangars and wait for shuttles to come pick them up.

"All troops, be advised," he spoke into his comlink. "There are some prisoners that have made their way up to this level. You're free to let them into the hangar, but be wary just in case. Proceed with your missions as planned."

Trusting in those leading the other teams, and the men staying behind in the hangars, Reiden pressed on. He came upon the first trading hub and held up a closed fist, signaling for his team to stop. The Palatinaean peered into the space. There were no obvious signs of enemy forces, but he didn't want to take the risk.

"Weapons at the ready, guys" he said. "Let's move out."

With the hilt of his lightsaber in hand, he slowly advanced onto the trading floor. His eyes darted about the space, senses on alert. Up ahead, his ears picked out the sound of boots thumping over the floor. He motioned for his team to find cover before doing so himself.

Orion had the best vantage point of them all. He was crouched behind a counter from which electronic parts had been sold. With his blaster rifle perched on top, he gazed into the sight, lining up the crosshairs quickly as he found his mark. He exhaled and squeezed the trigger repeatedly. Three bolts leapt from the barrel of the blaster and closed the distance, striking the first Technocrat in the chest. The man's allies shouted out orders and fired blindly into the area. The rest of Reiden's team began to open fire as well.

Using the firefight as a distraction, Reiden moved quickly to cross the distance, staying low and moving from cover to cover. When he got closer, he sprang up and activated his lightsaber. Trusting in his team to pick their targets carefully and watch their aim, he threw himself into the battle. His viridian blade was a blur of motion as he cut down one foe after another. After he plunged his lightsaber through the chest of the final Technocrat, he and his team continued on.

Reiden and his team pressed on until they reached the doors of the command center. They were sealed shut. The panel that would have granted them access to the room was destroyed; shot by a blaster.

"Karabast!" Reiden swore aloud. "So much for making this a quick mission."

"How will we get in now," asked Captain Sloane.

"If that panel were still functional, I'd have you slice into it. But now...it seems like we have to do this the hard way. Finding another route into the room would take too long, so there's just one option left to us. Stand back," the Force user warned.

Reiden thrust his saber into the door and began the process of cutting open a new entrance for them. It was slow work, but it was the only alternative that he could think of. He had no idea what waited for them on the other side, but the information held within the computer core was too valuable not to collect. After a while, Reiden had almost finished cutting through the door.

"Stand back, but be ready to fire right away," Reiden told his team. They nodded in response, hefting their blasters into a ready position.

Reiden completed the cut and stepped to the side. As he did so, he extended a hand, sending out tendrils of the Force to shove the cut metal inside the room. He heard a cry of terror as the door struck a guard that had been standing at the ready behind it, pinning him against a row of computer terminals behind him. Reiden pushed harder at that piece of door, a sickening crunching noise greeting his ears in response as the guard's cries were abruptly cut off.

Blaster fire lanced through the opening from the inside. Based on the angles, it seemed more desperate than proper aiming. Orion and the rest of Reiden's team unleashed a volley of shots back at the enemy. Immediately after it ended, Reiden made his move.

Reiden sank into the flow of battle as he called upon the Force to augment his movement and bolted through the opening and into the command center. Locating the nearest enemy, Reiden closed the gap and plunged his lightsaber into the man's chest, drawing it upwards. A surprised gurgle escaped the man's lips before Reiden kicked the man off the blade and he fell to the floor in a heap.

Orion and the others poured into the room as well, blasters firing. Orion had switched to his twin blaster pistols while Reiden had cut through the door sealing the command center. Now he wielded them with deadly accuracy and efficiency. He drew a bead on a Technocrat and let loose a flurry of bolts. He rolled for cover behind a bank of terminals and waited for a lull in the fire. Once it came, he popped up and quickly dispatched another enemy.

The security team that had holed up in the command center was a small one, less than ten in total. The Palatinaean force quickly overwhelmed them with their superior numbers. Before long, they were either dead or on their knees, facing the barrels of blasters.

“Sloane, get to work on securing that computer core,” Reiden ordered. “I’ll check in with the other teams and see how things are progressing.”

“Yes, sir,” Sloane replied. He hurried over to a console and took out a datapad.

Reiden activated his comlink. “Major Davis, come in. How are things coming along on your end?”

“Davis here,” the Major replied. “Everything is going according to the plan, sir. We encountered some resistance, but it wasn’t anything that we couldn’t handle. We located a weapons cache and have been sending troops back to the hangar with the things there. I’m talking blasters, slugthrowers, ammo, explosives — you name it, and it’s there. It’s a good haul.”

“Excellent. Any supplies we can get our hands on will be useful in our ongoing fight against the Collective. Of course, we can always use it back home, as well. The Meraxis Empire formed an alliance with the Collective, so there’s sure to be retaliation on their part for wresting control of Maqor from them.”

“I don’t think that’ll be much of an issue, sir,” Davis replied, a tinge of satisfaction evident in his voice. “We’ve also found some credits, and there’s jewelry here that we can sell off. You’ve got some contacts that could take care of that, don’t you?”

“Yes, I do,” Reiden said, glancing over at Orion. Through his bounty hunter friend, Reiden had access to various criminal types that would be happy to facilitate a purchase of such items, for a small percentage of the profits.

“We found some medical supplies as well. Should we load them aboard the shuttles, too?” Davis questioned.

“Those should come in handy,” Reiden admitted. “Take whatever you can carry and load everything up. We should be leaving soon. Reiden out.”

He ended the communication and spared a glance at the captives. He didn’t want to show them any mercy, not during this time of war. However, his better judgment won out in the end, and he decided to spare them. They may have knowledge that could prove useful in the battles to come. Reiden turned to face Sloane, who was working diligently at the terminal, muttering softly under his breath.

“Everything okay over there, Sloane?” Reiden asked the soldier.

"Just fine, sir," the young man responded. "I'm just about finished...now! I've got what we need."

"Great work," Reiden said, clapping Sloane on the shoulder. "We need to move out."

He was about to step through the hole he had carved out of the door when he stopped. He cast his gaze at their prisoners. All three of them were on the young side, most likely of a low rank. He doubted that they had any useful information. He ignited his lightsaber and raised it into the air. As he brought his arm down on the one nearest him, he stopped short and extinguished the blade.

"On your feet, scum," he snarled as he turned away from them, stepping out into the hallway. "You're all coming with us."

Together, they all exited the command center. Reiden and Orion led the team from the front with Captain Sloane behind them. A portion of soldiers followed behind them while another group clustered around the prisoners to keep them guarded. The rest brought up the rear, keeping watch for any enemies that might try to strike from behind as they made their way back to the hangar.

The group was met with no further resistance as they maneuvered through the corridors to the hangar. Once they arrived, Reiden had them load the prisoners onto a waiting shuttle that was loaded with pilfered supplies and told the pilot to leave the station and make the jump to hyperspace. After that, they were to make their way back home to their capital of Caelestis City on Ragnath, where everything would be offloaded and the prisoners taken into custody.

Reiden spoke into his comlink once more. "Major Warner, what's the status of those explosives?"

"All charges are set and ready to go, sir," Davis responded. "We're already heading back to the hangar now. Should be there shortly. Things will go boom in...ten minutes. It should be a good show, sir."

"Glad to hear it, Major," Reiden said. "We're loading up the last of the supplies onto shuttles now and will be taking off in our own transport soon. Get to your hangar quickly."

True to his word, Major Warner and his team made it back to the hangar in which they had landed a few minutes later. The pilot of their transport reported that everyone was aboard and Reiden gave them permission to leave. He contacted the hangar where Major Davis had landed and ordered them to take off as well.

"Rei, shouldn't we, you know, get going now?" Orion asked, appearing at his side.

"Yes, we should," Reiden said with a nod, turning to face the others. "Get aboard the transport, we're leaving immediately!"

Everyone that hadn't boarded the transport already quickly did so. They settled into their seats. The pilot was glancing back at him, and Reiden gave the man a nod.

"Get us out of here and to a safe distance as quickly as possible," the Palatinaean ordered.

With little time to worry about any of the station's defenses, the ship shot out of the hangar. It sped away at the fastest pace it could manage. Once they had reached a distance that should have been more than safe, Reiden instructed the pilot to bring the ship about so he could get one last view of the station. He got up from his seat and walked towards the cockpit, gazing out through the viewport. Using the transport's communication system, Reiden addressed the ships of Krennic that were present.

"All forces disengage and make your way to the rendezvous point. That station is going to blow soon and you don't want to get caught in the blast."

The other three troop transports joined him and TIE fighters raced back to dock with Krennic's Marauder-class corvette, the *Aegis*, and the Decimators of Banshee flight

peeled off of their attack runs to join them as well. No sooner had they regrouped than a brilliant flash of orange and yellow appeared in the black void. A chain of massive explosions ripped through the Meridian Prime station. Reiden watched with a sense of satisfaction as it all unfolded before him.

“Commander Pierce, come in,” Reiden spoke into his comlink.

“Karr, it’s good to hear your voice again, sir,” came the reply from the commander of the *Aegis*.

“And yours as well, Commander. Glad to hear that the wounds you suffered last year before the Battle for Nancora haven’t slowed them down any.”

“Of course not,” the solider replied, a hint of pride in his voice. “I’m not going to let something as simple as that bring me down. Anyway, I think it’s safe to assume that this isn’t a social call?”

“Afraid not,” Reiden began. “I want you to target the larger pieces of debris from that station and light them up with your turbolasers. Is that something you can do?”

“With pleasure, sir,” the seasoned military man responded. From the tone of his voice, Reiden could tell that the older man was smiling. And he had left the comms channel open as well, so the Force user could hear him issuing commands to the operators aboard the *Aegis*. Reiden stared through the viewport once more. The *Aegis* turned about to face the station and, after a moment, opened fire. Giant bolts from each of the corvette’s eight turbolaser turrets speared across the darkness of space and tore through the wreckage of the space station.

*Goodbye, Meridian*, Reiden thought to himself.

He watched for a few minutes before reaching to the console in front of the pilots and punched a button, broadcasting a message to Krennic’s ships.

“Great work, everyone. Our work here is done, and it’s time to go home. Set coordinates for Ragnath and jump to hyperspace.”

Reiden watched each ship make the jump before his own transport turned around. He returned to his seat as the ship accelerated and made the transition to hyperspace. He leaned back slightly and allowed himself a moment of relaxation. Recent events had tired him out, and all he wanted to do now was rest. But it was too early for that. There may be more battles to come, and he still had a report to make to the Empress when they reached home. He glanced around at the men seated around him in the transport. He thought about his fellow member of Scholae Palatinae. Whatever was next, he was certain of one thing: they could handle it.