

Main Bridge
The Avalerion¹
Deep Space

Creon had never been in command of so many people before. He wasn't an officer during his years in the First Order², and he never thought of himself performing the duties of a Moff. Maybe it was just his presence that was needed, as the bridge was filled with naval officers to assist him in the coming fight.

"The nest³ is deploying Lieutenant Commander⁴," one asked.

"Good, follow suit with our own firebirds. Hold the others." Creon replied.

He received a salute and was again left alone with his thoughts. He knew this would eventually be his station if death didn't take him in the field. Alone, without a weapon and in an officer's uniform, telling others what to do on a large ship in the middle of nowhere. Creon belonged on the field, where he could see the faces of others caught in the chaos of war.

The T-65Bs scattered in disarray into the swarm of fighters that circled around the Meridian Space Station. Creon thought that he wouldn't have to see the station again after infiltrating it with the O.T.F. Hopefully, after this day, it wouldn't be seen by anyone ever again. It's defenses were crumbled, due to the entire Brotherhood cooperating against it before Creon had arrived. Archenksov's naval fleet was here before him as well. The JTF Hoth Response Fleet's primary duty was to assist in eradicating the Meridian, as well as protect the O.E.F. Naval Forces from attack. They were dangerously intimate with the Sith clans of the Brotherhood in this fight. Anyone of them could misfire a torpedo cannon and no one would notice.

"Alright, send out the Ash Angels and their escorts," Creon muttered. The point behind the Response Fleet was to host multiple fighter squadrons. The Porg Patrol for training cadet pilots, the Firebirds to fill the dogfight, and the Archon Sentries to guard and escort the Ash Angels. Once a weakness in the enemy ship, or station, in this case, was found, the Ash Angels would bomb it. Simple enough, and versatile to work on just about any station. Creon's duty was to monitor the progress, and to use the larger vessels to safeguard the Navy vessels.

The single-squadron of BTL-A4s kept in a tight formation with the Archon Senties surrounding

¹ A ship belonging to Hoth. See optional links or Hoth's Possessions.

² It's in his Wiki, but Creon was a First Order troop before joining Odan Urr.

³ This refers to The Phoenix Nest, a ship belonging to Hoth.

⁴ Lieutenant Commander was the name of rank I chose for him to be addressed as Aedile of Hoth.

them. It was stressful to watch, and boring in a way. All he could do is place faith that the trained pilots in those ships can do the work. Just like the officers that ran his bridge, because Creon had absolutely no clue on how the Avalerion worked.

Though an idea did cross him on how he could be of assistance to the fighters. The dogfight, it seemed, was a mess of ships destroying ships. Too many vessels to distinguish enemy from friend, and the Odanites specifically had very little friends in this place. Creon sat in the commanding chair of the bridge. He let both his arms fall to the arms of the chair and closed his eyes. He visualized the battle as a whole, and moved through the Force in ways to influence the squadrons as a whole⁵.

The Firebirds who had enemies on their tail each trailed away from the Ash Angel formation. They were leading the enemy ships away from the bombers, giving them a more clear line towards the Meridian. It wasn't perfect, as some straggler ships from the Collective broke away and fired at the Angels. It wasn't anything that the Archon Sentries couldn't handle, however. Once he felt that the bombers were closer to the station than they were the surrounding fight, Creon shifted his focused to them and their search for an exploitable weakness.

The best place to fire would really be at the tube hallways connecting the station to the hangar. This would prevent people from entering, and those who wanted to escape would be forced to find an escape pod, if there were any left.

"Grey leader⁶ to Avalerion," A pilot called into the bridge's comms.

"This is Avalerion," Creon responded without moving or opening his eyes.

"Target is the connecting paths between the main hangars and the upper hub, permission to engage?"

"Granted."

It took the Ash Angels a few circling rounds, but eventually their torpedo launchers were able to break down one of the hangars, causing it to rip itself off from the rest of the station. A few ships left the floating hangar's magnetic field, but it wasn't long until the entire thing became decimated.

"Avalerion, Grey Leader, need to refuel and re-load before engaging-" the comlink was shut off once a massive wave of electromagnetic energy surged from the Meridian. The static of radiating particles expanded into a spherical wind that expanded throughout the entire area of

⁵ Battle Meditation on just a few of the Firebird ships.

⁶ The Ash Angel's Squadron leader.

space the clans were engaged in. Everyone on the bridge felt a gust of wind brush over them as the phenomenon pass through them.

Creon opened his eyes after it had finished. He looked deep into the bridge's window at the battle. Everyone was in a light suspension of silence before they resumed the fight. Creon tried to tap back into his battle meditation, but something was off. All he could feel was the inside of his eyelid. Usually attuning his mental frequency through the Force with that of the pilots would have been enough, but he wasn't able to. Whatever that wave was; it cut off Creon's connection to the Force.

Shocked, and in horror of what just happened, Creon stood up from his chair and called for a hologram to High Councillor Archenksov.

"Alethia, what's the status on the nearby Force Users around you?" Creon asked from a tiny holographic display on her center console. The silver-haired woman turned to Aura, her Proconsul. The Zeltron woman was knelt near the floor, with a hand to her head as if she just got out of a huge migraine.

"I can't feel it," she whispered in horror before looking to Archenksov. Whatever happened, it disconnected all of the Force Users' from the one thing that identified them. Was this what the Collective had been harboring all along? Word of an artifact spread from intelligence resources and the meeting of the Consuls under Vyr. Was this what it was capable of? If so, then it needed to be destroyed. Not recovered, not captured, gone.

"Creon, can you send your team in there to destroy whatever caused that pulse?" Alethia asked into the hologram display. "I believe it's an ancient Sith or Jedi artifact that made this happen. No matter who owns it, it's only going to be a problem. I need you to destroy it, can you do that?"

Creon took a deep breath. This would be the second time he went into the Meridian, and now without the Force. It was decimating to think that something so intimate and intertwined with his being was now suddenly gone. It was like losing one's spirit. It already hit him, his abilities in the Force were gone. But that doesn't mean it should happen to others outside of this chaos who are born with that gift. That was enough for Creon to accept the mission.



Command Center
The Black Harbinger
The Avalerion Hangar

"This is our second time in the Meridian, but this time it's being torn to pieces. We could die any second we remain there. There is no loss of honor, nor is there judgement of cowardice should you decide not to come. This is a suicide mission, but it's one that could mean the preservation of many generations to come."

There was a moment of silence before Jetsam Walsh gave an apology. He gave a sad bow and left the command center. Dral was about to speak to him before Creon gave him a hand to stop and shook his head. He was allowed to leave, and would still be the demolition specialist whether Creon came back or not. Walsh was just getting married, after all. There was much to live for.

No one else left. The rest of the O.T.F. team remained to go into the fight: Kah Tarvitz, Len lode, Dral Falgorth, and Terry Fletcher. Creon smiled at them, with a sad exchange with Tarvitz, knowing he too lost his connection to the Force.

"And just where do you think you're going?" Lucine's voice said with an upset tone. Creon turned to see her standing at the ramp of the Black Harbinger, with Areticus Altainatus and his two students beside him.

"You can't come with us," Creon said, "And why are *they* here?!" Creon asked her to accompany him on the Avalerion, but he said nothing about the rescued former-plagean prisoners.

"Areticus has something important he wants to tell you," Lucine said and motioned for the blind mind to approach.

"Creon. I know what you are about to do. I meditated on this moment and the artifact that impacted us all," Areticus began.

Creon didn't like Areticus one bit. His background was with a clan of slavers, and he always had an air of ego about him. Now he is using this parable of the Force to see into possible futures and is regarded as wise. Lucine listened to him, and took his words like fate was predetermined.

"I believe the disconnection to be temporary. Something we can learn to reconnect from. However, I must warn you. I have foreseen many outcomes in this situation you are about to enter. There are a lot of ways it can go right, and wrong. But each outcome I saw all had sacrifice."

"I knew it in my gut this mission would be one of sacrifice. So do they," Creon says motioning a hand to his team. "We're fully aware, and didn't need visions of the Force to tell us that."

"Then you're not going without me," Lucine stated.

"We aren't doing this, Lucine."

"Creon fraking Saldean, I am ****NOT**** going to go back to a life without love. I love you. So you ****WILL**** let me go with you, because if you go down so will I."

Creon had never heard her be so angry with him before, enough to where she lost her typical debutante composure. This was also the first time she said she loved him, which was enough, in his eyes, to make up for the loss of the Force. She lost it too, and now the only thing they had left to cling to was each other. He nodded and invited them on board.

"Be sure to keep that thing pted at the same people I point mine at," Creon said to Lo-Kain. The Zabrak chuckled from beneath his hood in response, "If you are able to see it from standing behind me."

"Get ready to get into those pods!" Tarvitz shouted as he turned the steering drive of the



Black Harbinger to a heavy left. The O.T.F. didn't have their usual support staff onboard. The primary pilot, along with the other crew members had the choice to volunteer on this mission. A good majority still stayed, knowing that they simply needed to get in, launch a pod torpedo, and get out. However the Black Harbinger wasn't a warship. It was meant for quiet infiltration, and would be very exposed in the middle of mess going on outside. This is why the pilot felt unconfident in taking them. Tarvitz was the only one with the best experience. He unclipped his belt and turned the ship onto auto-pilot with a hyperspace lane primed.

"No, I need you to stay," Creon told him as he approached the rest of the team getting in their pods.

"Apologies, but that is out of the question."

"Tarvitz," Creon sighed, "After the Ash Angels tore down one of the main hangar bays, the rest of the Clan Navies followed suit. The Harbinger's torpedo pod is the only way on and **off** the station, now."

Tarvitz took a moment to think about it. The torpedo pod was designed to breach armored hulls and drop off a small squad element of troops. Though most of those pods are a one way trip, and not designed to extract.

"After we're dropped off, get extractment equipment from Alethia, she'll approve it. Give us half an hour, and then pull the pod out. Then you'll have to manage through this fight and get us back to the Avalerion. If anything, my friend, I'm asking you to do the most dangerous task out of all of us."

Tarvitz nodded and saluted before returning to the pilot's chair.



Len, Dral, Fletcher, Creon, Lucine, Areticus, Lo-Kain, and Ilios all sat in grim silence to the hum of the traveling torpedo pod. Lucine placed her arm on Creon's shoulder, and gave a reassured smile. She couldn't see it behind his helmet, but Creon smiled back and took her hand in his.

The impact from the artifact was traced to a particular section of the command center area of the meridian. O.E.F. Navy intelligence sent coordinates on a predicted area of origin within the facility. This information was transmitted to the Black Harbinger, which allowed Tarvitz to hone in on his target for launch.

The pod landed with a huge slam. Everyone had been kept in their seats from the harness belts. There was no immediate blaster fire from the outside, but that didn't stop Dral from turning on his shield generator and loading up his heavy repeater. Once the doors came open, everyone came out and scanned all directions with weapons drawn. What Creon saw, however, took this day in a direction he did not expect.

The room was a massive computerized chamber that had a large stalactite-like technological formation around a small table platform. There was nothing on the platform, but beside it was

the corpse of Daggo Mouk. Standing above him was Marick Tyriss, the Grey Wolf.

"Uhhh... High Councillor," Creon called into his comms, "The Inquisitorius leader is here. Alone."

"Do NOT engage!" Alethia screamed into his helmet.

"He has the artifact."

"We can get a hold of through politics and destroy it then. Do NOT engage the Voice of the Brotherhood."

Marick turned to look at Creon's team. His eyes were empty. There was no reading what went on in his mind in his stare. Was he going to run? Wait? Why was he alone?

"No offense, Alethia. But there is no way you can convince the Council to hand it over. If they decide not to destroy it, who do you think it's going to be used against?"

There was a brief pause between their commlink, "Do you think you can take him?"

"He lost his connection to the Force too." Creon replied and signaled his team to walk with him towards Marick.

"Creon, I need your confidence in this. If you don't, he would have the justifications for the Council to go to war against Odan-Urr."

"It's nothing new. They will always come after us, Alethia. Whether they need justification for it or not, they want to kill us. But yes, I feel confident about it."

"May The Force Be With You, High Councillor out."

When they were just a few steps away from the Grey Wolf, Creon's team paused. None of them had their weapons pointed, but each were in hand. The Hapan still remained motionless, with his unblinking blue gaze at Creon's helmet.

"We're here to help you destroy it," Creon said.

"This artifact goes to the Council. You can help by destroying the station," Marick replied in monotone.

"Why does the Council want something that can disconnect people from the Force?!"

"To prevent it going into the wrong hands."

"Every hand with that artifact is wrong!" Creon shouted. "We just lost our connection to the Force, the universe! If the Council keeps it, they can use it on whoever they wish. Be it Jedi or any of the Clans that disagree with you. The Sith would use it on the Jedi, and the Jedi the Sith. We as united Force-Users will just go back to fighting each other!"

Marick shrugged his shoulders, it pissed Creon off.

"That artifact goes down with this station. You can either help us destroy it here an now, or join Mouk."

A slight hand rested on one of the dagger's at Marick's side. He made his choice. If he wanted the artifact to not be used, he would have agreed to help destroy it. There wasn't any convincing of this man. Creon tried, but now he had to take the hard road and draw his lightsaber.

Marick weaved under Creon's initial swing to the head, and pressed his palm at Creon's hip. A blade was felt inserting itself into his flesh, and poison swam into his system. Creon dropped his saber, and bent over to stop the leaking blood. Marick rolled his back onto Creon's bent back, landed behind him, kicked Creon to the ground, and drew two daggers to address the others. Creon witnessed from the floor Marick's fluid movement. Dral drew his pistol instead of firing his repeater at close quarters. Marick's dagger was brought to the area of trajectory from Dral's pistol, and deflected the bolt back to the mandalorian. He also took a low squat and threw a dagger at Len's stomach before the chiss could fire. Creon's eyes widened in realization; Marick could still use the Force.

Creon tried to scream "Run!" to Lucine when she drew her saber. But any motion, and contraction he tried to make with his body was failing. Without his ties to the Force, Creon couldn't control the flow of poison from his body. He was a prisoner in his own flesh.

Marick's blade sank deep into Lucine's abdomen.

Creon screamed inside his own head. He forced his body into a convulsion of rage and the desire to GET UP. The potion was effective, but Creon's anger seemed to have helped overcome it. He could feel the awareness of his bodily functions slowly returning. Was he gaining control once again? Or does the potion wear off that fast?

Creon got up and crawled his way over to Lucine, who was being watched over by Areticus and Terry. Areticus' apprentices, Lo-Kain and Ilios, were in an engaged dance with Marick behind them.

"She'll live, so as long as we can close the wound," Terry said.

Areticus' face was in a deep frown, "There is death here."

"Shut up!" Creon barked, "Fletcher just said she was going to live!" He looked around to Len and Dral, who were crippled like him but still breathing. Everyone was still alive.

"She will live yes," Areticus said with his hand over her wounded abdomen.

"But there is still death..."



Creon's heartbeat felt like thunder. Each beat was a ringing bang against his chest that tightened into a knot. The knot made him sick to his stomach, and the pain made him cry into his helmet. Areticus rose from where he was and walked slowly around and behind Creon. Creon took off his helmet, and looked at Lucine. She was in hard tears and quick breaths. She slowed them down when Fletcher told her to take it easy as he opened up his supply kit.

"Why didn't you say anything?" Creon asked.

She could barely wince out words in her high pitch voice filled with pain and loss, "I-I'm sorry." She didn't say it, she mouthed it with her words. Or at least he couldn't hear her. He couldn't hear anything, save a small ringing in his ears.

Then he heard a voice.

He can take your heart. He can take your breath. When he pries it from your



COLD.DEAD.CHEST.

"What did you do to him?!" Lucine asked Areticus as Creon got up and walked away. Areticus was standing directly behind Creon, with his hand hovering over Creon's head.

"I brought out his anger. It may be difference between victory or death, in this case."

"What if he goes too far?" Lucine asked with concern.

"I wont allow it."



It was a full-on saber fight, with Marick's dark purple blade twirling with Lo-Kain's crimson red and lios' blue. Creon completed the color arrangement with the ignition of his green saber. He walked in between Lo-Kain and lios and gave them both each a knowing nod. He smiled when he could feel their presence in the Force again, even if it was mostly the Dark Side. Regardless, he had to work with them as efficiently as he would his team to take down Marick. Creon focused his mind to meld with the others, to coordinate and act with their respective strengths and cover each other's defenses at a given moment. Creon was angry, heartbroken, and shaken. This distorted his battle meditation. Normally battle meditation infused through anger would put the coordination in disarray. But Lo-Kain and lios were well familiar with his rage, and the Dark Side that came with it.

With a cheek to cheek grin on his salivating teeth, Lo-Kain rushed forward at Marick. His attacks were sloppy, but had an edge of ferocity that Creon could work with. Each time Marick would try to take advantage of Lo-Kain's exposure, Creon would bring his blade up in defense and try to riposte against him. Marick fell for the combo, but was too quick on his feet to get caught by Creon's blade. Marick jumped back to gain some distance, though it was only for a second with Lo-Kain at his heels. He sent a series of throwing knives at Creon to keep him busy and then went for Lo-Kain once again. The Grey Wolf planned to go back and punish Lo-Kain's lack of defense now that he had a moment with Creon out of the way. However, the flash of a blue saber demanded him to reply with a block. lios had been circling the area throughout the fight, and waited for a chance to insert himself when he was needed, or when an opportunity arose. Marick would need to keep two distracted and then take them down one at a time. He needed a quick plan on how to do it too, he only had so many knives.

Anger grew in Creon, and the Force amplified him in it. Marick was the target. Marick needed to die. Lo-Kain grinned and summoned his rage from the Dark Side as well, fueling it into his strength and speed. The two darted at Marick in tandem, with Lo-Kain on the offensive, and Creon covering him. Marick could evade them again, but lios' attempts from behind kept the Voice scatterminded in the fight, making it difficult to collect himself for a plan. What finally threw him off was seeing a red whirling blade followed by a green one in the air. Marick spun from a block at lios and addressed the flying sabers. He then took a hard fist to the jaw and staggered back. Creon moved to the side after landing the hook and let Lo-Kain grab and chokeslam the Voice into the floor. Creon then jumped on him in a rolling tackle, found himself sitting on top of Marick, and repeatedly met fist with face in a fit of fury.

"YOU.KILLED.MY.UNBORN.CHILD.YOU.BASTARD." Creon screamed with each blow. When he looked, he could only see a bruised face with leaking blood, no longer the renowned assassin of the brotherhood. Creon rose to his feet and pulled out the pistol at his hip. It was time to end this. As he aimed the blaster to Marick's head, the edge of a sword slowly lowered itself to the end of Creon's barrel.

"You don't want to do that," Areticus said while holding his blade to Creon's pistol.

"I'm pretty sure I do. Don't lecture me about Jedi principles, Sith. I've killed before, and this man deserves to die."

"That may be, but you've never killed out of hate before. If you do, you won't come back to the man you were before."

"So what?"

"Lucine fell in love with that man, and will need him now more than ever after this. Hoth needs that man, and the galaxy needs that man to be something they can follow."

Creon cursed to himself and holstered his pistol. He wanted to kill him. But because of that, he couldn't be the one to kill him. Instead, Creon simply retrieved the artifact from his foe with telekinesis. "Don't make me regret this," he told Marick before turning to address his team.

"Gather who we can, make our way to the pod," Creon said as he slowly slumped back on his helmet. "I'll tell Tarvitz to ready us for extraction."

Terry lifted up Lucine, with Lo-Kain and lios collecting Dral and Len. After everyone had been secured and made their way back into the boarding pod, Creon called in for extraction.

"Apologies, it's going to take me a minute to get there. I just now acquired the equipment and staff to use it in order to extract you. We'll be with you shortly." Tarvitz relayed back.

Creon closed the drill door and airlocked the torpedo pod once everyone was inside. "Tarvitz said we are going to have to wait." Suddenly after his words, the Meridian rumbled from an external explosion. Everyone was in silence at this point. They were either waiting for extraction, or waiting for their deaths.

Creon pulled out the artifact and observed it closely. This one thing could cut the Force away from others, break their oneness with the universe. It was heartbreaking to think that anyone would want to develop such a thing. Even if its effects were temporary, Creon assumed it was intended to do permanent damage.

When he looked up he saw Lo-Kain, Ilios, Areticus, and Lucine all staring at it too. They shared the grim weight that the presence of this device gave off.

"If... When," he corrected, "We get back the Black Harbinger. We are taking this to a remote planet and destroying it. No reports. We tell the leadership that the blast impact destroyed it, and we get rid of it for good so no one can ever use it. Agreed?"

There was no argument in the room. Only a silent agreement until Tarvitz came into the comlink asking if they were ready for extraction.

"We're ready. Pull us out," Creon replied. He then switched channels to send comms back to Archenksov. "High Councillor this is the O.T.F. Director."

"Go ahead, Lieutenant Commander."

"The artifact in question was destroyed by that wave we took. Marick isn't dead, but I believe he's incapacitated. If you destroy the Meridian now, you can take him down with it."

"Roger roger, are you clear?"

When Creon felt the torpedo pod shuffle from being extracted and pulled in the Black Harbinger, he responded with, "Yes. We're clear. Eradicate the Meridian."