

Discord Phase I Fiction

Objective 2

It was unfortunate that the Brotherhood had been outmaneuvered by the Collective in this instance. Khryso Mallus had hoped the meeting with the Principate would not deteriorate too quickly, but the Collective had made sure to throw a wrench in the plans of the Dark Council. That was why now, as Khryso sat in the cockpit of *Solidago* with the Ascendant Fleet occupying his viewscreen, he had to carefully consider how he would get close to the shipyards without causing a further mess.

Truth be told, Khryso wasn't entirely sure if he was ready to trust the Principate. The vision he'd seen of his father just a couple weeks ago still stuck firmly in his mind. The man had been a staunch Imperial and dead for decades. Yet it was now of all times, when the Brotherhood was on the brink of war with a former Imperial splinter group, that his father came to him in a dream and Khryso was forced to kill him again. It was almost too much of a coincidence for him to brush it off.

Nonetheless, regardless of who the third faction in this conflict was, the fact remained that the Collective had done their best to deliver another enemy to the Brotherhood. Not only that, they had done it through deception and clever tactics. It was a sound strategy and one the Brotherhood could have used on a different day. That's what made it so frustrating. That is why Khryso was now thinking of taking matters into his own hands to see if he could find the crack in their plans.

Of course, there was always the option to simply talk to the Principate. It wasn't a bad option and it would give the chance to point out the logical fallacy in the Collective's plan. Why would the Brotherhood come to a negotiation with several of their own high-ranking members only to instigate a sudden attack? Surely even if that had for some reason been the Brotherhood's plan, why would they then deny it? Good questions that might make for compelling thoughts. Unfortunately, these simple words would never truly be enough. At the end of the day, the one thing that would matter the most would be hard evidence. Which was something that Khryso was hoping to find at the shipyards, one of the sites of the attacks.

Unfortunately, *Solidago* didn't have any extra modifications that might aid him in getting past the Collective's dreadnaughts. He was hoping instead that, since the ARC-170 was just a small starfighter, he might be able to simply go unnoticed. A tall order considering that the Collective is probably expecting an attack. Not only that, but the Principate's fleet would likely be keeping a sharp eye out as well. Although, the Chiss was banking on the hope that the Principate would not be openly hostile and would at least be willing to hear him out if things went south. He didn't expect as much consideration from the Collective.

Khryso carefully began to run his hands over the control panel of *Solidago*, setting up a micro-jump that should put him close enough to the shipyard to begin his investigation. Unfortunately, since he'd yet to find a suitable co-pilot that he could trust to accompany him, things like this took a bit longer than they were meant to. He had experimented with having Ufie as his co-pilot for a few test-runs back after Khryso had purchased the fighter, but the droid had been much too slow and exacerbated the process even more.

When Khryso made the micro-jump, he realized his calculations had been a bit off. He was much closer to one of the Collective dreadnaughts than he'd intended. He quickly pulled back, diving away from the ship and calling on the Force in an attempt to cloak himself as best as able. Unfortunately, as he took a look at the area surrounding the shipyards, the Chiss realized slipping around unnoticed might be even more difficult than he'd hoped.

The shipyards were in tatters, torn apart by the ships that had blasted and crashed into them. Debris was still strewn about like an asteroid field, belonging to both the aggressors and victims of the attack. Some effort had clearly been made to at least partially corral and clean up the mess, but the presence of the Collective and the wariness of both present fleets clearly was causing them to prioritize defense over cleanliness.

While at first glance this could be good for Khryso, as with the debris drifting around it could help to hide *Solidago* as it flew around the shipyards, Khryso didn't see it that way. The debris was still very much drifting and made the place a veritable minefield. There was a reason why flying through an asteroid belt was generally considered a bad idea, and Khryso wasn't sure this was much different.

Unfortunately, simply finding the attackers remains and investigating those was not an option. Khryso didn't have the towing capabilities to drag any debris away and also couldn't risk the danger that came with an extravehicular investigation. Even then, they already knew the Collective had been thorough in ensuring the attackers verifiably looked like Brotherhood agents. Anything he might find that could tip someone off would likely not be enough evidence and, therefore, not worth the risk.

The question then becomes what is it that Khryso could find that could truly be the conclusive evidence? If there was a smoking blaster, the Chiss couldn't be sure of what it was or where to find it. Which made this a truly monumental effort to pull off. Khryso wouldn't be trying to do it if he had any doubts about his capabilities, however. Whatever he might find, it might not even be here.

Which then brought to mind the other attack sites. Khryso had decided to investigate the shipyards due to their relative proximity to the Ascendant Fleet's position as well as its relevance to Clan Plagueis' mission. However, now that he was much more aware of the situation at the shipyards, investigating elsewhere would likely be much less difficult.

Pulling back out of range of the shipyard and dreadnaughts, Khryso pulled up the navigational data on the Lyra-3K-a system. One of the other attacks had taken place at Lyra Colony on Eorilia's moon. That might be a good place to start and it would probably be much easier to approach than the shipyards had been.

Khryso was able to avoid any Collective presence in orbit of the moon of Eorilia by approaching the planet on its dark side. The Collective fleet, even if it was here in its entirety, wouldn't be enough to blanket the planet. There were still easily dead spots in their coverage which is where Khryso was able to sneak through and descend to the planetoid's surface.

There was a lot going on near the colony, so Khryso parked quite a ways off, in the forests that surrounded the settlement. He left Ufie behind inside *Solidago* to keep an eye on it as he traversed the foliage and made his way towards the attack sites.

Unlike the shipyards, repair, clean-up, and rescue operations were in full swing in the colony. There was an atmosphere of unrest and anxiety that permeated the population and people had funnelled that energy into working to restore the normalcy of their lives. Beyond that, however, there appeared to be a Brotherhood presence here as well, although it was not Plagueian.

Getting close to the crash sites without drawing attention was easier than anticipated, as the presence of both Brotherhood and Collective agents helped Khryso not to stand out as much. The tension due to the presence of the two groups was palpable, but it at least helped assure most of the colonists that it was something they didn't want to get into the middle of lest they end up with more casualties.

Upon arriving at one of the crash sites, Khryso was forced to observe from a short distance away, not wanting to cause conflict with the guards and workers in the area. It was clear that what still remained of the ship's wreckage was from ships that could belong to the Brotherhood. Not a smoking blaster by any means, but that was somewhere to start.

Khryso took a moment to observe his surroundings, taking stock of where some of the wreckage and rubble was being hauled to. The colonists were taking most of it to transports that would likely haul it away to some kind of dump site, but most of the pieces of the ship were actually being taken to separate, smaller vehicles that had official Principate signage on them. Evidently, the higher-ups wanted to do some investigating of their own.

Certainly this was a deception and those definitely weren't Brotherhood vehicles. However, Khryso was still unconvinced of the Principate's competence and so there was no guarantee any investigation the organization undertook would lead them to the proper conclusion. Interfering and assisting their investigation would be the way to go, it would seem.

Given the circumstances and the current tension in the colony, Khryso had no idea how well working in tandem with the Principate would go, but he had to try. So, he dusted himself off and

proudly made his way to the most supervisory officer of the Principate he could spot. An older man who was overseeing some of the efforts to clean, repair, and rebuild. With a proper introduction, manners, and the will of the Force, Khryso knew he could make his way up the chain of command until he met the people he needed to and at that point he would render his assistance. Unfortunately, it looked like this would be quite the time investment.

“Good morning, sir,” Khryso said, offering a slight inclination of his head to the human Principate officer, “my name is Khryso Mallus. I was wondering if I might ask you a few questions.”