

# SHOWTIME ON PHAROS



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37 ABY

## Pharos Station

### Kiast system

M'eero "Tripp" Trippani smoothed out his borrowed OEF uniform and put on his backpack of explosives before he left his borrowed quarters on the Pharos station, a military installation located within the Kiast system. The door to the hallway hissed open and he started his journey towards the High Councillor's briefing room. As he strolled in a military cadence, his eyes caught the joint emblems of Odan-Urr and the Vatali Empire paired together on official placards. The Zygerrian arched a brow at Vatali standards, wondering how the ancient civilization could allow such filth into their midst. He resisted a dark chuckle as he wondered what they thought of his handiwork with their asteroid field. His only regret was that it would inevitably repair itself back to full strength. Time was not his ally.

Tripp resisted the urge to quicken his pace as he made a right towards a tactical conference room, promptly showing up as scheduled. He stood next to glum-looking ensign, who was also reporting for duty. A captain walked out of the door opposite them and looked at them expectantly. His crisp uniform had a stain on the sleeve. M'eero followed his fellow ensign and gave the older man a crisp salute, straightening his back.

"Ensigns, clean up that room till its spotless," the captain ordered with a scowl. "This is the second time this week my uniform has been soiled."

"Yes, sir."

The officer walked away in a huff, already examining his cuffs. Tripp helped the ensign get out the cleaning supplies and bring them into the briefing room, which was an absolute mess. The Zygerrian shook his head at the chaos of food debris, bottles laid strewn, and strips of somebody's uniform. *It's like a bomb went off her already*, he thought.

"Oh, and do tell your fellow officers this behavior will not be tolerated in the future. This is a military installation for Force's sake," shouted the captain as he finally left, leaving them with a final warning.

"Yeah, yeah...like your fellow captains didn't plan it," whispered the ensign under his breath. "Let's get this damn assignment over with," he said to M'eero in resignation.

"You know, it's not that bad. It just looks like a lot," replied Tripp.

"It's still an hour of my time I could be on a date. So yes, it is bad."

"Why are you here there then? I'll cover for you."

The ensign stared at the Zygerrian somewhat incredulously. "And get yelled at that it isn't done for the next meeting? No thanks."

"Alright, how about you focus on getting the table spotless and I'll do the rest. That way, you can leave early," offered Tripp.

For a moment, the ensign stared at the room and then somewhere past the walls surrounding them. "You got a deal. I'll owe you one."

"Sure thing. Let's get you to your date."

M'eero mopped the floor till it gleamed, spreading whatever fluids were on it plus a mixture of soap across the floor. Every time he approached a piece of debris, he dutifully put it in the closest recycling bin. The ensign was cleaning the table at a remarkable rate, cursing at intervals whenever he had to apply a bit of elbow grease. Tripp had only finished the floor once the young man with him declared himself done, the table gleaming.

"Good luck out there," the Zygerrian offered in farewell.

"Thanks for the extra help. I owe you," he half-shouted in glee as he quickly strode away. M'eero waited till he could no longer hear the ensign's footsteps and then allowed himself the tiniest of smirks. He inspected the ensign's work, both top and bottom. Ducking under the table, he made sure to give it an extra scrubbing, something the cameras would never see. Once it the underside was clean he grinned, reached into his backpack, and got to work.

First, he pulled out an adhesive grenade with a thermal imploder and secured it near the head of the table. Second, he placed smoke grenades, a flash grenade, and a thermal detonator roughly in the center. At the other end of the table, he set up a C-25 Fragmentation grenade for good measure. Lastly, he attached a laser trip mine so that its beam would interrupt whenever someone sat at the head of the table, causing the rest of the explosives to go off in a marvelous cascade. Each explosive was timed and placed so that each would go off in a specific order, the head of the table triggering first.

Ducking out from under the table he cleaned the rest of the room without complaint, only pausing to make sure everything was clean and that none of his various attachments could be seen. He was lucky this was a large enough table. Finally done, he put away the cleaning supplies, some of which went to his now empty backpack, and left for the hangar.

## **1 hour later**

### **Staff meeting**

Military officers filed into the meeting room and took their usual seats, leaving the head of the table empty for the High Councillor, who had yet to show up. Nothing was different today except

for a young officer with a nervous twitch that was replacing someone on assignment for a few months. His fingers inevitably drummed lightly against the table, drawing more than one annoyed glance. Embarrassed, the young man consciously quieted his hands and apologized, except his nervous energy merely redirected to his right leg. He bounced it up and down in a steady rhythm, its noise quieter but still noticeable for those nearby. Each larger bounce almost grazed one of the explosives underneath, unknownst to all each time missing by a few centimeters. Several minutes passed until a senior officer finally spoke up.

“You know, the High Councillor isn’t that scary. Cut it out, Major,” ordered a woman on his right.

The young officer instinctively jumped, his heart beating faster, and banged his knee hard into the underside of the table. As he did so it grazed a hard metallic protrusion. He unconsciously tilted his chair backward away from it, forgetting there was a table to stop him. In a panic, he pushed off hard against the underside of the table, the only purchase his feet could find.

The second his foot broke the invisible beam of the laser trip mine, a small but powerful blast went off, immediately incinerating his leg. In a microsecond after the first explosion, smoke grenades and a flash grenade went off followed almost a heartbeat later by a thermal detonator. The thermal detonator immediately triggered any explosives at either end of the table. In particular, an adhesive grenade triggered, trapping anyone near the head seat. In the next heartbeat, a thermal imploder went off in perfect unison with a C-25 grenade at the other end of the table, immediately killing anyone left alive in the room. Their half-completed screams were drowned out by the noise of the blasts.

### **1 hour later**

#### **High Councillor’s Office**

Aura Ta’var, High Councillor of Odan-Urr, did her best to control her temper. Some of her people had died in what was a clear attempt on her life. Her fellow Councillors' suggestions weren’t helping. Both had already suggested some extreme measures for revenge that didn’t look all that horrible the more she watched the replay of the security footage.

“They didn’t even have time to properly scream for help. Any updates on leads?” she asked her War Councillor.

“Only one at the moment seems viable but it’s shaky”

“What is it?”

“I don’t know who this Zygerrian is but he’s in the room cleaning it the hour before the meeting,” the half-Echani replied.

“Why is it shaky?”

“His captain confirmed his orders for that area and the ensign he was working with didn’t report anything odd. His records show he was a recent recruit. On the surface, everything looks as it should but I don’t get a good feeling in the Force so we’re investigating it.”

“Neither do I, Celevon. Let me know what you find out and if the opportunity presents itself, capture him. I need to go visit the family of the deceased,” said Aura, anger burning away to sadness.

“Aye, High Councillor. We’ll find him,” assured the War Councillor.