

Lyra 3K-A System
Thuvis Imperial Shipyard - Assembly Plant 7X-TYR
Bay Station #42

Landing the *Squid* by herself proved to be a tough challenge for the young Zabrak. Stesa Armani's knees felt shaky after the hard impact, but she was quick to exit her beloved ship to take a proper damage report. The *Squid* was given to her by her two older brothers on her eighteenth birthday as an indoctrination into the Armani Union, a criminal syndicate in loose cohorts with the Shroud Syndicate.

"That wasn't so bad, Syrah," she said as she looked back towards her Cythraul, "we've definitely had worse." The Zabrak's canine partner quickly jolted to her side, as was customary in new settings. Syrah had a rough upbringing and was often skittish in new environments. "Right, now let us take a look around, see if we can't find these spare parts and get out of here."

As part of her association with the Shroud Syndicate, Stesa picked up a quick job to sneak into the abandoned Imperial factory and secure a list of core parts to repair Iron Throne ships that were in the system already. Initial intelligence reports indicated that the majority of the Shipyard facilities that produced capital ships were restored, but the smaller segments were left abandoned.

Stesa and Syrah kept a brisk pace through a few corridors before reaching a partially opened blast door. "This is it, Syrah." The pair slowly crept through the entryway, with Stesa keeping low to the ground. The room was filled with various conveyor belts and empty shells of fighters that were in production.

A few moments passed after the Zabrak and her Cythraul entered the room when a blaster bolt roared through the room. Stesa instinctively hit the ground to gain cover, grabbing for her two pistols from her hips. In the short distance, a bright reflection bounced off of the bright red chrome armor plating of a stormtrooper. The trooper began to chuckle as she let off a few more rounds from her rifle, each one whipping past Stesa and Syrah into the stacks of spare parts around them. "What a runt! Would have thought they'd send someone bigger for me!" the trooper bellowed.

Stesa quickly caught her breath as she quickly scanned the area around her for a better point to stand and face her attacker. "See her, Syrah?" she managed to utter lowly at her companion, not expecting an answer. She brought herself to her knees and quickly jolted to an adjacent pile of parts that shielded her from view. Another flurry of blaster bolts was thrown her way as Stesa ducked once more. It was clear that the enemy fighter was having a blast as she chuckled away.

"What's your name even, ya runt?" the red armored woman yelled.

“Stesa Armani!” Stesa quickly answered back, insulted by the name she was being called. “Here to just pick up some spare parts, I have the bill of sale with me if you’d give me a chance to grab it!” she yelled, trying to trick her opponent.

“Armani? Why didn’t you say so?” the woman yelled back from across the room. “I’ve got them right here. Thought you were one of those Dark Brotherhood scumbags.”

Stesa looked towards her canine companion once more and signaled for her to creep slowly between the aisles of conveyor belts towards the brightly lit office, to sneak behind the crimson armored woman. She placed one blaster back in its side holster, and the other on the back harness of Syrah. “Coming out now, don’t shoot!” she screamed as she stood slowly, placing her hands above her head. Much to her surprise, she wasn’t met with another volley of shots. Instead, the woman was quickly walking towards her, aiming her rifle at the young Zabrak’s head. After seeing that Stesa was unarmed, the stormtrooper clipped her rifle back into its holster and slung it behind her back. She grabbed ahold of her baton instead and grabbed Stesa by the back of her neck.

“Come on, this way,” she said as she forcibly ushered Stesa towards the office.

“Here, check my datapad, everything should be in order, Miss -” Stesa replied.

“Captain Crimson, of the Liberation Front.”

Stesa gulped audibly. Crimson’s name was familiar aboard the *Godless Matron*, and now Stesa knew why. She knew that if Crimson found out her true ties, she’d be slaughtered. Hopefully, she hadn’t noticed Syrah when the two entered the facility. Stesa was doing her best to keep the status quo intact, and not force anything to happen that she couldn’t control. Upon reaching the brightly lit office, Stesa slowly handed over the datapad to the crimson-clad warrior.

“Let’s take a look here,” Crimson offered as she began to scroll through the screen. “Ahh, here it is, under ‘Thuvis mission’.” Stesa watched intently as her eyes scrolled down the screen and began to widen. “Mission assigned by Selikah Roh! A known Dark Councillor!” Crimson’s attitude shifted once again towards the offensive as she threw the datapad to the ground and struck Stesa with a backhand swing of her baton. “You lying runt!” she yelled loudly as she brought another swing down upon Stesa’s back and shoulders.

Instinctively, Stesa reached for her holstered pistol, only to be met with the boot of the taller Human, sending the LPA NN-14 skidding across the cold metal flooring. The boot connected once more with Stesa’s stomach as she was kneeling on all fours, resulting in a loud scream from the Zabrak. Knowing she wouldn’t last long against her foe, she managed to muster up enough air to scream for her Cythraul. “Syrah!”

Almost instantly, the small wolf flew through the room and leaped right at the head of Crimson, knocking off her helmet. Syrah quickly landed on all four feet and proceeded to attack bite at the hardened armor of the stormtrooper, barely making a dent in it. The Cythraul backed up to protect her Zabrak companion, allowing Stesa to grab the weapon that was holstered on Syrah's back, before lunging once more towards Crimson. In the brief moment, Crimson was able to compose herself and duck the attack and slam the canine down to the ground, whilst pulling out her sidearm pistol. Crimson stood quickly and took aim at the downed Cythraul, offering a small smirk before she pulled the trigger, hitting Syrah in one of her back legs.

Before she could turn around and finish off the Zabrak, Crimson felt a severe burning sensation on her back and shoulders and instantly fell to the ground. In the shuffle, Stesa was able to grab both of her blasters and let out a flurry of shots directly into the back of the red trooper. Without wasting a second, Stesa moved as quickly as she could to scoop up her friend and start to run back to the *Squid*.

"It's alright girl, you did great. You did great baby, let's get out of here." Stesa cried as she carried her whimpering Cythraul, unsure if she would survive.