

Objective 3: Take advantage of the chaos caused by the attack on Lyra

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The Raid

Lyra 3K-A system

Thillon geostationary orbit

Shamara groaned and shuffled in the pilot seat again, adjusting the seat belts as she did so. The Devaronian pilot did the same every so often, voicing her discomfort and boredom to the annoyance of her gunner.

Ranik rolled his eyes again before speaking up. "Will you stay put for ten minutes?" They had been sitting in their TIE fighter for nearly six hours now, so the Iktotchi couldn't really blame her, but it was still annoying.

"I would if we knew what the hell we were doing out here," she said angrily, though perhaps not at him.

"Boss said we had to scout and send a message one way if we find the target, an' that's enough for me" Ranik finished the discussion, as he usually did, by pulling the "boss-pin" and throwing the "orders-grenade". Shamara huffed once more before settling in.

Their boss, captain Morgan Sorenn, hadn't given them much to go on in the first place, just coordinates and a ship signature to look for. It was a freighter convoy they waited for, but none had shown up yet.

Shamara gave her passive sensor console a glance once more, noticing only a trail of smaller ships leading towards the mining facility. Outside the TIE's viewport she could see the glowing orb of the moon of Thillon reflected beautifully against the blackness of space. They were in the best position to intercept any large convoy coming their way, or so their captain had thought.

The sensors beeped as they scanned a signature match coming in on the far side of Thillon. Ranik jumped in his seat, as much as the seatbelt allowed for it. "What's going on?"

Shamara pulled pushed several buttons on the console displaying data on the ship, it's escort and trajectory. The convoy was made up of several Gozanti-type freighters, escorted by four gunboats and two Raider-class escorts. A Principate convoy, more than likely. "Oh, this is bad. They're gonna get to the moon way before we reach them."

Ranik gave it some thought as he looked over the data. "Call it in. Everything, including the convoy's exact coordinates. I'm sure the Captain has a plan B."

Morgan bit her thumbnail as she stared out of the bridge viewport. The Limbo was in hyperspace, already circling Lyra 3K-A for an hour before they received info on the target. It came but not in the form she had hoped. The Inquisitorius' intel was only partially correct since the convoy had exited hyperspace on the opposite side of the gas giant. Clearly there was a hyper-route there neither she nor her contacts knew of, but the locals knew very well.

"T minus fifteen to drop, captain," the helm officer announced, giving her a sideways look as if waiting for orders.

Morgan simply waited and mulled over her options. She had changed her orders in the last second, hoping "Plan B" would be enough. There really was no "Plan B", just her hunch. She had trusted the intel too much. Last time she made that mistake.

"T minus ten...nine...eight..." the officer counted down.

"All crew, ready on the guns!" she ordered finally over the intercom. The crew was already set, but that last command always gave them confidence. When the captain was ready, so was everyone else. Morgan gave C'ree a momentary glance just as the helm officer counted down to zero.

The ship rocked with the familiar quake of hyper engines powering down and impulse engines forcing the bulk through the void. They were on the convoy like a hawk on rabbits, exiting hyperspace on a vector behind the enemy ships, pointing downwards towards Thillon. They crossed the convoys horizontal plane mere moments after exit and Morgan already saw a major problem with her plan: they were beneath the convoys plane of movement, away from their tractor beams and ion cannons, and in full view of their turbolasers.

As Limbo lumbered towards the enemy, smoke generators and red illumination banks giving off a visage of a ghost ship ready to devour its prey. Turbolasters and laser cannons opened fire from both sides, peppering the void between with red, green and blue fire. Sparks flew the ordnance slammed against the ship's shields, temporarily blinding the helmsman with every blast. Yet Morgan was unphased. She could stare down a fleet in a freighter and not flinch, and she never moved her gaze from the prize. Sensors finally locked on the target Gozanti freighter and she turned to the crew.

"Full axis rotation to port, gunners ready all ventral cannons." A look of disbelief and mild shock covered the crew's faces before they realized what she was doing. With a wicked grin, the helmsman obeyed.

"All crew, ready for high-G maneuver. Inertial dampeners on, full strength!" he commanded through the intercom as the ship groaned and bucked to port. The behemoth shifted its weight making the bridge crew lean to the right and hold on to railings and hatches. The unnatural speed with which the Vindicator rotated put the whole superstructure under strain.

Finally, the ship rolled on its back mere seconds before it flew underneath the convoy. Ion cannons opened fire, disabling one of the raiders with mass bombardment. Several heavy blasts hit the Gozanti freighters, disabling them. The second raider and the gunboats peppered the Vindicators ventral shields with torpedo blasts and laser fire. Limbo rocked under the barrage, but the shields held.

"Tractor beams, now!" Morgan ordered as she viewed the sensor data, the convoy now invisible to her from the viewport. Four tractor beams attached to the Gozanti, pulling its bulk

away from the convoy as the Limbo flew away. It took the Vindicator a mere minute to drag the freighter into its hold as it continued its rotation. The escorts followed suit, aiming their massed weaponry on the Limbo's blind spot - its weak engine mounts.

"Helm, get us the hell out of here," Morgan gave a final order before her ship changed course away from the planet and left the bewildered and defeated escort ships in its hypertrail.

"Won't this worsen our position with the Severian Principate, captain?" Aza Laanu, one of Morgan's aides and one of the few people on the ship who knew its true mission, asked nervously as she and the Captain walked into the port-side hangar.

"It might, but leaving the crystal in the Principate's hands was not something the Grand Master would risk," she finished their lengthy conversation which lasted since their entry into hyperspace. The Warmongers had already vacated the freighter's pilot and crew onto the hangar floor. Several Warmongers dragged a grav-platform from the freighter's hold. An elongated containment device lay upon the platform with a large kyber crystal glowing through a central viewport. That was their prize.

Morgan smiled as one of her security chiefs coughed grabbing her attention. "What about them, cap'n?"

The pirate queen spared them a momentary glance. They were all no more than twenty-five of age. It was...unfortunate. "They are a liability," she gave the chief a knowing look. She turned on her heel and ordered the grav-platform with her.

Aza, several crew members, and their captain departed the hangar to the sounds of blaster fire and death.