

The team:

[#14400 Tahiri Thorn Morte Tarentae](#)

[#14229 Ranarr Kul-Tarentae](#)

The sky stood deeply black, bathing the Moon of Thillon in darkness. A scattering of uncountable stars stood out against the inky canvas, an occasional soft breeze reinforced the tension of the moment. Guards were seemingly stationed everywhere on this moon's surface, the smell of restlessness wafting through the air.

Off the side of the road was a rocky slope which tumbled downwards towards a creek of sand and dust. A barren place in which not even the vilest of creatures could survive. The two Plagueians disembarked their ship, carefully maneuvered themselves downwards and paused on the sandy bank.

Ranarr squatted, kneading the dirt between his fingers. Tahiri kicked away a small rock before taking a look at her datapad. "Yes, this is the place." Pulling out her macrobinoculars to inspect the facility that stood only a few kilometers further down the road.

A loud thud nearby pulled the two back to the moment. The Cathar leaped to his feet, sending a sharp glance towards the noise. While balancing herself on some stones, Tahiri had toppled over in the dust at the sight of the monstrous guard making his way over to them. The huge Zabrak's muscular legs helped him step through the dust with relative ease. Tahiri took a step backwards, up onto a rock as Ranarr approached and took position next to her.

"Whoa, you're a big guy, aren't you?" Tahiri asked the hulking figure coming towards her and Ranarr. The rock she stepped up onto had afforded some height and stable footing against the Zabrak.

"Who are you? And why are you here?" demanded the Zabrak as he leveled his blaster rifle with Tahiri's chest.

"We're representatives from the Brotherhood, and we're here to help," stated Tahiri confidently. She stood to her full height, as the Zabrak stopped, assessing the tiny creature that dared to speak to him.

"How can I trust your word?" the guard asked, never taking his rifle off of the Togruta in front of him. His eyes darted between her and the hulking Cathar standing beside her.

"Well, to tell you the truth, you can't. Or at least I wouldn't in your situation," the Battlelord replied nonchalantly. "However, we can either stand here talking, or we can head into the base

here and get down to work before Collective operatives come crashing in to steal that piece of crystal you guys found.”

“How did you know about that?” The Zabrak suspiciously asked, eyeing the two Brotherhood agents.

“Our intelligence network intercepted a encrypted message, from the Collective. It essentially said they were going to ‘retrieve’ the crystal, your people found in the temple ruins.” Tahiri replied.

In the distance a shadow loomed over the moons surface as a ship crossed the dark sky above them. The Zabrak looked up at the vessel hovering towards them. “How about we cut this shit out, and get ready for business.” Tahiri stated.

“Attention all guards, hostile ship incoming. We do not know precisely who we’re facing, or how many of them there are. But scanners show they’re... Collective! All guards, immediately move towards the facility!” After this emergency call the Zabraks comlink instantly went silent again. “Guess we’re coming with you?” grinned Ranarr.

While the three hurried towards the facility, Commander Ling Dao landed his ship in the distance, creating a giant cloud of sand and dust. As the door slammed open into the dirt underneath the ship, four Collective agents disembarked.

"Sine, you and your gadgets help Cetpek locate that crystal. Siad and Fear lay low until the others request your assistance. Myself, I'm returning to base to prepare for further actions. Call in extraction as soon as you've got what we came for. These are your orders, now get us that Crystal!"

“Inside, quickly!” The Zabrak shouted, motioning to the Togruta and Cather to follow him. They ran towards the facilities entrance. The guard turned back at the last minute, readying himself, and checking his rifle. While Tahiri and Ranarr rushed past him.

“Aren’t you coming inside with us?” Tahiri called back as she paused.

“If these Collective agents are truly here to retrieve the crystal, they have betrayed my trust in them,” replied the Zabrak. “And if you two are here to help us, then it is my honor to help you. Besides, someone needs to stay here to buy you and everyone time.”

Tahiri’s heart skipped a beat, reminded of something a friend had once said. Smiling, she bowed her head in respect, and then turned to continue into the facility. She and Ranarr stepped off to the side as more reinforcements ran to the entrance. Tahiri pulled her Inquisitorious data pad and looked at a schematic of facility. She saw two paths they could take, one more direct and one more subtle.

"So where do we go from here?" the Cathar whispered.

"We're taking this route," Tahiri pointed to the more subtle route.

"Why not this other one?" Ranarr asked.

"Because I'm sure those Collective agents are going that way," Tahiri smirked. "It is twelve levels down and with Principate forces are going to keep those agents busy for a time. We take this lift and we'll be down there before them."

"Hopefully we're out before they get through."

As the lift lowered the two Plagueian Ranarr suddenly addressed Tahiri. "Do you sense that Quaestor?"

The Togruta nodded. The Force ripped through them, Ranarr felt a strong and uneven feeling with the Force. He gestured to the elevator doors. "They're already here."

Tahiri looked to the Cathar in doubt. "Are you sure? How did they get here so fast?"

"Must be another, faster way down here."

Ranarr just knew an enemy's Force signature after the many times coming across paths with them.

Tahiri pulled out her lightsaber. Ranarr followed suit. "Together, Ranarr."

Ranarr nodded, a slight smirk curling on his lip as they approached the lowest level. Standing right up against the doors, they scrolled open, surprising both Tahiri and Ranarr to ignite their weapons. The grey room did not invite either into the room. Instead, they kept to the doorway and prepared to fight off any more surprises.

Tahiri let the Force guide her as she stepped into the room, her saber raised. Ranarr followed, his emotional eyes alerted to everything around them. He sensed something.

Before Tahiri could ask, blaster bolts shot across at them.

Ranarr moved quickly. He Force shoved Tahiri aside, sparing both his Quaestor and himself from the attack. Ranarr swung around, hiding behind one of the pillars that stood in the room.

Tahiri rolled behind another, looking to Ranarr for any injuries. He shook his head, knowing exactly what the Togruta was thinking.

With a nod, Tahiri stepped out from her pillar and Ranarr slid next to her. As they moved together to the center of the room, they both spotted the Collective agents underneath a massive half-dome structure that stood upon a platform surrounded by tall pillars.

Sine and Cetpek strolled to the center of the room, hands linked behind their backs as they took in their visitors. Cetpek's dark eyes regarded Ranarr with disdain to the point that he dared not even give him another second of his moment.

Once they rolled passed the Cathar's contorted face, his eyes landed on the beautiful Togruta. "Plagueians...always a great pleasure seeing you."

"Is it?" Tahiri questioned, tapping her chin in mock thought.

Sine tipped his chin down, sneering at Ranarr. "Well...not for you."

Ranarr nearly charged at them if it hadn't been for Tahiri's hand to stop him. "Wait!"

"Listen to your boss," Sine teased Ranarr. "Unless you prefer to lose some limbs."

Ranarr wanted to lunge at him again, but Tahiri pulled him back once again with a simple hand on his shoulder. "Don't, Ranarr," she said. "Together!"

The Cathar took in a sharp breath, but his eyes still remained furious. Tahiri stepped forward, placing herself in Ranarr's path. "Let me start this."

With a wave of her hand, Tahiri sent a Force shove into their opponents. The Collective agents felt the wave crash into them and Cetpek's feet flew up into the air, ramming his back into the wall.

Eyes blurred from impact, Cetpek tried to get back to his two feet, hearing Sine cry out to him. He heard the swishing sounds of lightsabers. Ranarr was fighting Siad and Fear on the platform.

"How did they get in?"

Tahiri's strength returning, after the huge amount of energy she used for her attack. In the middle of the room, she watched Ranarr maneuver his way around his two opponents. The fighting fierce. Tahiri's heart nearly leapt into her throat. She needed to join. She needed to help Ranarr!

Tahiri ran to the backside, hoping to cut the Collective agents off and corner them. It was then that she noticed a giant crack in the wall. That was how their enemies got in and it was their way out

"Ranarr! This way!"

The Cathar let out an amazing roar as he blew away the, now all four, Collective agents off him. He swiftly made his way to Tahiri and, together, into the tunnel.

"Bye bye." Ranarr grinned as he dropped a Thermal Imploder and the two Plagueians moved further into the tunnel.

The Thermal Imploder took the Collective by surprise. As Tahiri and Ranarr barely made it out of the first tunnel before the flames could consume everyone, they could hear the screams of Collective team. They found themselves in a second room, similar to the first.

"Hmm, almost mirror images," mused Tahiri while she caught her breath.

There were several technicians laying on the ground. Clearly the Collective didn't want any evidence they had been here. Tahiri was surprised to hear a moan coming from a Human technician laying under a table. Both Ranarr and Tahiri ran over to her. Ranarr gently cradled the dying woman's head.

"Hey, can you hear me?" Tahiri asked gently.

The woman coughed up blood, then spoke, "Yes. Who are you? Are you here to help us?"

"We are friends, and here to help."

The woman shakily pointed to a cabinet across the room.

"It's in there, I hid it when the alarm went off. Please keep it safe."

"We will," Ranarr replied gently. The woman took one last breath, smiled and then closed her eyes. Tahiri and Ranarr could feel the life leave the woman's body. Gently setting her head down, Ranarr stood, while Tahiri grabbed the crystal.

"Well we got what we came for, let's get out of here."