

The air was filled with ash and soot, a heavy cloud of smoke choked the sky above billowing out from the still raging fires of the small moon settlement. Pieces of debris lay scattered upon the ground, still sizzling and charred. Men and women scurried about, desperately attempting to control the damage, provide medical treatment to the wounded and cataloging the bodies of the dead.

Scarlett stood amongst this scene of devastation, her armored helmet protecting her from inhaling the now suffocating atmosphere. She allowed her gaze to wander, dismembered appendages strewn about the landscape amidst the wreckage and the faces of passerbys stricken with grief and despair. A part of her twinged in empathy, a bit of shared grief among these people she did not know. But it was a muted emotion, more a whisper than the ravaging chorus of despair and rage that perhaps it should have been. An echo of something lost.

She had seen much suffering in this galaxy, been subjected to it, inflicted it upon others. This was simply the way things were, a trillion wars raged and lost over all corners of the many stars in the night sky. Countless cruelties and gluttonous urges sated upon those without the means to defend against it. You had to be hard and cold to survive in such a place, had to numb yourself to not go mad from the banality of it all.

And in the end, nobody was really innocent anyway. What of these people? Imperial Remnants, trafficking with Hutts and exporting addictive spices to the weak to make a quick profit. Strong arming everyone around them to gain economic and political leverage, selling out soldiers to fight foreign wars in which countless "innocents" surely died. This was smart of course, pragmatic, something she would have done. And that was about as damning a condemnation as any.

There were no guiltless victims here, simply men and women making the hard choices needed to survive and thrive in a galaxy that doesn't give a damn about right or wrong, about what's fair. And the civilians were no better, either condoning these actions outright or vainly decrying them while still profiting from the very things they claim to abhor, too pathetic to dirty their own hands directly, serving as cogs in the institutions that grind out those same selfish cruelties for their own personal gain.

But she wasn't here for all this bantha poodoo, she had a job. Management wanted this place scrubbed for any info potentially left in the wreckage. She doubted there would be anything, it'd be pretty stupid of the Collective to leave evidence in their own false flag attack. But they needed all their bases covered and some of the others had been sent out to survey the more prominent sources of potential intel.

She was glad that at least the people around here did not already know of her, it had made it easy to infiltrate the location amidst all the chaos with her forged emergency responder credentials. Giving a slow sigh she clambered through the wreckage and began the tedious process of picking through every bit of ship tech she could find. If she could get a hold of

anything solid, unscrubbed nav charts, a bit of Collective code amidst the Brotherhood data or hell even a black box they forgot to disable. One mistake is all she would need.

Hours passed, the stumbling masses of survivors and officials passed her by without a second glance. But piece by piece the salvage revealed nothing of substance, just melted slag and charred circuitry. She was about to give up in frustration, go home and drink herself into a stupor, maybe shoot up some glitterstim. But then, out of the corner of her eye, she saw something gleaming beneath a blasted chunk of broken hyperdrive components. Lifting the debris up, she glinted down at her discovery; a glimmer of hope rising inside her. She grasped the object and brought it up to the light.

It was a droid memory core, from one of the astromechs aboard the ships. They wouldn't have had time to wipe their memories before the crash and with their integration into the ships nav charts ... they might just be able to show where these vessels originated from.

Maybe this wasn't such a waste of time job after all.