

Lyra Colony

LyraSec HQ

Amara Cirrus felt incredibly uneasy.

It wasn't just the Brotherhood. It wasn't just the Brotherhood's attacks or false attacks as they might be. It wasn't just the Collective and their smarminess or the fact that the Lyra Colony, its 5th Fleet and Cirrus along with it, were technically in open rebellion against the Severian Principate. It was all of it. There was something weird; facts were missing and none of the shapes fit together.

The Security Chief wiped the sweat from her brow as she looked at monitors in front of her, tracking the battle above. The 5th Fleet had engaged the Brotherhood forces, supported by Collective military forces, including the elite Rose Squadron. The lifelong soldier noticed a pattern with the Brotherhood response to the 5th Fleet's attack and she wondered if she was the only one that noticed . . .

War Room

Thuvis Imperial Shipyard

Major Marwar watched the battle unfold in front of him. He made the decision to mutiny, it was his call. But openly defying the Principate he had come to see as his home didn't sit with him comfortably. But a decision was a decision. Even if the decision was made in anger, it had to be followed through with. Front line soldiers and pilots were who paid for commands' uncertainty. Unless . . . there was no reason to be fighting in the first place.

"Captain . . ." the Major began, trying to get his attention.

“Hmm?” The Collective soldier, Captain Chelsie Crimson, hummed reflexively before glancing in his direction.

“Why are the Brotherhood forces holding in a defensive pattern?” the Major asked the Collective Captain.

The spokesman paused briefly before hurriedly responding, “That’s their tactic. They wait for you to turn your back before their fangs come out.”

“Uh huh,” the Major replied, unconvinced.

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There was a loud crack that saw the Security Chief fly to her feet. She had stood just in time to see her door fly off its hinges. The soldiers in her office began to move toward the door when heavy repeating blaster fire poured in the door, forcing them all to flee. The security Chief belatedly noticed that the blaster fire had scattered her office specialists but had not injured any of them, as if it was intentional and well-placed suppressive fire.

A dark-skinned woman walked through the door wielding the repeating blaster. Following her were two more women wielding lightsabers, one with fair skin and one with blue skin. Following the three women was the Grim Reaper. She knew it was a man in a skull helmet, but his visage and countenance were both terrifying.

Chief Cirrus didn’t even stand. She knew they weren’t here to hurt her or her staff because she knew in her gut that if they wanted to hurt her, she’d be dead already.

“Chief. I wish this were under better circumstances,” an impossibly gravelly voice cracked out from behind the skull mask.

“What is the meaning of this?” The chief asked, wanting to sound commanding but knowing it came out sounding concerned.

“You have allowed yourself to be manipulated and to compromise the safety of your Colony and your Principate. We are here to inform you about a great many things,” Etah said as respectfully as he could, with clenched teeth. “Phobia?” the scary man said to his subordinate, one of the women that had initially wielded a lightsaber.

The woman had incredibly fair skin and pointy ears. Her features were soft and strong at the same time. She nodded in the general direction of her master and began to access the LyraSec HQ’s computer systems. Cirrus didn’t even want to question how they were accessing the coded systems, she just chalked it up to magic.

On the screens came what Cirrus recognized as the Ninox, which was the Severian Principate’s Diplomatic Ship. On the screen was Evant Taelyan, who Amara Cirrus didn’t know by name but did recognise as a highly placed leader within the Brotherhood. Evant was surrounded by fighters who wore dark clothes which seemed to lack identifying features. But Amara recognised the female warriors in Nightsister attire as the Hunters of the Collective.

All of the pieces came together. The false flag attacks, convincing the 5th to mutiny; for the Collective pushing against the Brotherhood so aggressively. They were the holders of every secret, they were the boogeymen behind every door. They were the force threatening to destabilize the Lyra system and the Principate.

“5th Fleet. 5th Fleet. This is the Chief. Stand down. I repeat stand down. The Brotherhood are not targets, the Collective is not friendly. Hold fire, if the Brotherhood forces break off and flee, let them. Arrest any Collective personnel within arms reach,” Chief Cirrus stated into her scrambled comms system with system wide access.

War Room

Thuvis Imperial Shipyard

“Copy that, chief” Major Jorde’ya Marwar stated to his superior as he produced his holdout blaster and pressed it into Captain Crimson's ribs from behind. “I am taking you into my custody. I will shoot if I feel you are a threat, captain,” Major Marwar stated to the slick-talking Collective Captain.

“So they finally got to you, did they?” Captain Crimson asked with a glib tone.

“Not as such. These are your actions catching up to you.”

“Oh, is that what they led you to believe?” Captain Crimson continued in the mocking tone.

“Stand down, Captain,” the major said, moving the barrel of his pistol to point at the back of the Captain's head. The famous Collective officer moved both of his hands into the air with a sigh.

~ (#8075) Battlelord Etah Deimos Kilij-Bloodfyre (Sith) / Battle Team Disciples of Dakhan of House Shar Dakhan of Clan Naga Sadow [SA: XII] [GMRG: I] [SYN: IV] [ACC: Q] [INQ: VIII]

Shadowed