

***Redemption and Honor***  
***Competition: [House Shar Dakhan] Wartide***

***Ending the Reign***

Fiction By:

Takagari "DarkHawk" KogaRyu #264

***Orian System***

***Aeotheran Sub-Orbit***

***Above Sang Karash***

House Shar Dakhan and her fleet had just made the jump out of lightspeed over the capital city. The Vindicator and her task forces Aurek and Dorn entered the system, immediately engaging all targets within the fleet's vicinity.

The three Collective ships that were engaged were comprised of one M50 Strike-class medium cruiser, one Ton-Faluk Carrier and two Lancer-Class S20 Frigates. The new fleet held its own against the Collective forces. The HSD fleet had a solid plan of attack for when they came out of light speed. The Vindicator attacked the M50 Strike cruiser, while the rest of the fleet targeted the S20 Lancer-class frigates. HSD had the element of surprise, though that did not make the task any easier. It delayed what they planned for. Hitting them immediately did catch them off-guard, giving them the window of opportunity the fleet needed. The Collective forces were more than formidable and they punched back...hard. The Vindicator took the brunt of the Collectives retaliation. The M50 packs a powerful punch, rendering about thirty-five percent damage to the Vindicator overall. The four Raiders and the Ton-Falk suffered an equal amount of damage. The fleet drew first blood, rendering a catastrophic blow to the Collective. These events, these battle scars, embody the fleets initiation with its first career battle.

"Commander, damage report," barked DarkHawk.

The young commander was engrossed in the terminal readout. He gathered his intel before he spoke.

"Sir, shields are down to forty percent, the main reactor is operating at sixty-five percent. We have hull breaches on level seven and eight starboard side. Crews have begun to isolate those quadrants. We will have to repair the hull before we can send our teams to the main reactor. Starfighters numbers are still coming in real-time Sir " replied the commander

"Get a detailed injury assessment of our personnel. Dispatch all maintenance and medical support teams and get the rest of the fleet to send their damage reports. In the meantime lets help our fighters out and target those remaining Collective fighters." DarkHawk instructed

"Copy that, sir. Anything else?" the commander asked.

“Eliminate those fighters commander. I want to deploy the ground assault immediately. Ready the assault teams we launch on your word...” DarkHawk said in a stoic tone.

The commander snapped to attention, “Affirmative sir,” he said.

The commander began broadcasting throughout the Vindicator, dispatching the teams and personnel throughout the ship. Once the commander addressed the Vindicator crew, the communications officer opened up the hailing channels to the entire fleet.

“HSD Fleet this is Task Force Besh, status report.”

“Task Force Besh, this is Task Force Aurek. Minor damage to report so far. One Corvette extinguishing fire in engine room two. Corvette two, nav system has been damaged and shields are down to forty percent.”

“Copy Task Force Besh. Deploy your maintenance and medical personnel. Expedite your repair procedures. Maintain firepower on the remaining enemy fighters. Status update every twenty mic. Prepare your ground assault teams.” the commander instructed.

Immediately following the commander’s instructions, another voice boomed over the comms.

“Task Force Besh, this is Task Force Dorn. Both Raiders operating at fifty percent, shield generators are down. Hyperdrive unit and engine one damaged. Radar intermittent. Carrier suffered minimal damage.”

“Copy, Task Force Besh. Carry out maintenance and medical procedures. Engage all remaining enemy forces and prepare your ground assault. Launch on my command.”

The remaining Collective fighters were now flailing about. Some were trying to make a hasty retreat, though they were quickly destroyed by the Raider’s and Vindicator’s turbo lasers. The fleet’s fighters continued their run on opposing fighters. One by one, the Dakhani star-fighters took the fight out of Collective forces.

The audible alarms bellowed throughout the Vindicator. The bridge, ridden with smoke, the heavy smell of burning electrical components accentuated the arcing electrical sparks. Which, in some areas of the bridge, that was was the only resemblance of light that could be seen.

“Any word on the ground assault commander?” DarkHawk asked as he continued to intently peered out the Vindicator’s large viewports.

“Indeed Sir, the Sadow’s, and the main force of the assault has begun to push Collective forces back towards the outskirts of the city.” replied the commander.” replied the commander.

“Has there been any movement from their HQ?”

“None, sir. Throughout the entire assault, no one has either entered or exited that building.” replied the commander.

“Interesting...”

The Quaestor turned and looked over towards where the commander and two of his ensigns were hovering over a computer terminal intently observing its display. DarkHawk turned back and watched out the viewport for a moment.

“Commander, I am leaving for the surface. Carry out your orders as instructed. Maintain all repairs and medical procedures as needed. Bring the fleet’s weapons systems back online. I have a feeling they will be required for the success of this engagement.”

“Immediately, sir.” replied the commander.

DarkHawk began to leave the bridge and stopped short of the turbo lift. “Commander...you have the Con,” he said as he entered the turbo lift.

---

### ***HSD Vindicator***

### ***Aeotheran Orbit***

### ***Hangar Bay***

As the Quaestor made his way to the hangar bay, he activated his comlink and hailed his good friend Tytus O’Baieron. “Ty, you up?” asked DarkHawk.

“Of Course I am you dolt. What the hell has taken you so long? Are we headed to the surface now?” Ty said in his sarcastically regal voice.

“Yes, Ty, I will be there momentarily. The ship loaded and ready. Ty looked around his cargo hold, shaking his head while taking another mental inventory. “Of course your highness, can we go now?” Ty replied.

The turbo-lift doors whisked open in the hangar bay, and DarkHawk made his way towards his Decimator. The damage from the fleet battle had hit the hangar in a significant way. At first glance, one would think that several large incendiary devices had exploded in several sections

of the hangar. But through the smoke and damage, the crew that remained were moving like a well-oiled machine. Teams were assessing and evacuating the injured crew members, along with maintenance crews working diligently to repair damaged systems throughout.

DarkHawk walked passed the crew nearest his ship, "Chief, clear this area and clear my ship for launch..." the Quaestor instructed.

"Copy that, sir!" replied the chief. The chief and his crew broke immediately and began to ensure the Decimator was clear for its take-off. DarkHawk walked up the ramp, hit the switch, and the ramp began to close behind him. DarkHawk could hear Ty speaking with tower control as he made the way up to the flight deck.

"Let's go, Ty, something's not right on the surface." DarkHawk said ominously.

Ty could tell by the tone that his good friend and Quaestor was bothered by something.

The Duros made some last-minute adjustments to the Navcomputer. Tower control gave the green light on launch. Ty flipped a sequence of toggle switches and the ion engines roared to life. Ty pushed the throttles forward and the Decimator raced down the tarmac and into open space.

A pair of Collective Z95's that were still engaged with the HSD forces broke off from their pursuit and targeted the Decimator. Audible alarms started echoing throughout the Decimator, as the laser blasts bounced off the VT-49's hull. DarkHawk looked at Ty almost in a disgusted manner. "Like I can control what they do..." Ty exclaimed.

"Are you not the one in the pilot's seat?" asked DarkHawk sarcastically.

Ty responded with a one-finger gesture before he pushed the throttles to top of their quadrant. Ty nosed the ship down and executed a series of barrel rolls. Bringing his ship under the belly of the Vindicator and then pulled straight up and over the HSD Command ship. The Decimator had already put some distance between itself and the Z95's.

"Taron I, this is Yellow Leader, we are in pursuit of your headhunter and clearing your six."

"Copy, Yellow leader, they are all yours," Ty replied.

Ty's little maneuver had put the Z95's directly in the path of the HSD starfighters. The two Dakhanian pilots lined up their shots and let three bursts of laser fire against the Z95's. The darkness of space momentarily shed light against the Vindicator as the Z95's exploded against its hull. "Taron I, this is Yellow leader, you are clear, repeat, you are clear." the voice rang true through the Decimators's flight deck.

"Copy Yellow Leader, much appreciate the assist," replied Ty.

"Now get us down to the city and get me as close as you can get to their HQ. And Ty, don't get us killed in the process."

"Pfft, please..." Ty replied.

---

***Aeotheran***

***Sang Karash***

**Outside Collective HQ**

Parts of the city looked like a wrecking yard at this point. HSD forces had pushed Collective forces towards the outskirts of the city, where a surprise would be waiting to be sprung on them when the time was right. Too early and the enemy would surely dig-in somewhere and try to wait it out. HSD was looking for a slaughter, only key prisoners would be retained. The rest was nothing but fodder and target practice.

The sounds of that battle could be heard from several blocks away. HSD leaders were making sure that all civilians were not in the streets and hunkered down out of the way, safe for the time being. A lot of explaining and diplomacy negotiations will need to take place after the city is secured with Sang Karash Parliament members. Though that was not on DarkHawk's concern. He kept a keen eye on the command post that the Collective was utilizing while they occupied his former home. No one tried to escape, nor did any ships or forces come to protect it. The only thing running through the Battlelord's mind, "Either they are waiting this out waiting for us to storm the building, or it is abandoned..." he thought to himself.

Ty put the Decimator down about fifty yards away behind some rubble of one of the buildings that had been leveled from the campaign. Ty shut down the engines and the crew door began to open. "Ty get yourself to a spot nearby where you can cover the front door of the building. Anyone besides me comes out, you know what to do...." DarkHawk said.

Ty nodded his head in agreement.

"I have a strange feeling about what is in there, so cover your six and get ready to get out of here quick-fast and in a hurry...savvy?"

"Savvy, good sir..." Ty replied.

DarkHawk left the flight deck and peered into the battle-ravaged cityscape from the top of the crew ramp. Pausing for a moment, Ty watched his Quaestor plunge himself into the night. DarkHawk traversed his way over broken building debris and unearthed dirt. This was slightly different from his "normal" covert missions, as he would use every inch of cover available to him. However, since all the protection he would have utilized is now rubble, DarkHawk strategically kept some cover between him and the building to his twelve o'clock position.

Quickly and carefully, the assassin made it to the front entry door of the building. "One way in...great" he thought to himself. He reached into a pouch of his utility belt, procuring a smoke grenade. Gripping the handle, the assassin pulled the pin, closing his eyes and clearing his mind. He could feel the presence of others inside. "Just as I thought..." the assassin smiled behind his helm. Hitting the door's control pad, the steel door slid open. DarkHawk tossed in the smoke grenade and immediately filled the room with a thick cloud of dark grey smoke.

Figuring whoever was still in there would have the door covered, the assassin came in low and with the aid of his helm's HUD, easily avoided the obstacles around the door. A bone, chilling war cry could be heard immediately. The Technocrat Huntress, aka "Shikari" launched her attack. She was in mid-air and coming down-firing her Nightsister bow. DarkHawk rolled to his left out of the way of the incoming plasma bolts, which narrowly missed his massive frame.

Popping up to his feet, DarkHawk immediately executed a spinning heel kick, but the Shikari ducked underneath it. Feeling the bootheel of the assassin graze across the top of her head, the maneuver wafted her dreadlocks. The huntress came up with her repulser dart shooter and took aim on the wraith. Just before she fired, DarkHawk grappled his arms against hers, twisting his frame out of the line of fire. The dart shot directly into the adjacent wall and the distinct smell of poison-filled the room with its aroma. The two combatants were merely dark shadows against the thick smoke still lingering in the room.

Twisting the Shikari's arm and pulling her off balance, DarkHawk kicked the huntress's ankles out from underneath her. She slammed to the ground, DarkHawk maintained his steady grip on her arm and continued to apply pressure until he felt the bone snap. Her radial bone protruded from her tan skin and spewed blood over the assassins helm.

The huntress screamed in pain as the assassin now moved his grip to her throat and lifted her off the ground. "Who else is here with you witch...?" demanded DarkHawk.

Her dark eyes were baron of emotion, she laughed and spat on the helm of the Battlelord. That move was a mere ruse, as she brought up her stun baton and buried it in the right side of the assassin. The stun baton sent resonating waves of electricity to the assassin's right flank, causing him to release his grip on the huntress. She gasped for breath and hit DarkHawk with another shot from her stun baton. The huntress planted the baton at the base of the wraith's spine, once again flooding his body from head to toe with pain. Pain, pain was temporary, he thought. His rage grew as the huntress landed a solid kick to the ribs. That rage evolved into a berserker rampage. DarkHawk channeled his feelings and focused it on the huntress. Rolling to his back, the assassin struck the huntress's left knee with a hard bootheel kick, causing her to stumble. The assassin kipped up to his feet and immediately threw a devastating leg kick to the huntress's left thigh. The blow launched her over a dilapidated desk and rubble.

DarkHawk moved in on the huntress, she struggled to get up and managed to block his incoming blow with her baton. The sparks bounced across his helm, as she was trying to push the electrode of her baton into her assailant's neck. DarkHawk locked her arm, and bent her elbow inward, drawing her weapon to her chest. She screamed in agony as the assassin purposely left it there with all his weight behind it locking it tight against her chest. The smell of burning flesh began to fill the room.

DarkHawk raked the fins of his gauntlets across the baton and snapped the weapon in two. Immediately the assassin closed in for the kill and grappled the huntress into a chokehold. Releasing all his rage upon the huntress, the assassin tightened his grip, closing off her airway. He could feel the huntress's body begin to shut down from the lack of oxygen. Just before DarkHawk felt her pass out completely, he snapped the huntress's neck and let her fall to the ground.



"If there is one, there is bound to be another.." thought DarkHawk. Exiting what used to be an entryway, DarkHawk moved down the corridor to the only other door available to him. Carefully cracking it open, a plasma bolt exploded the door. Rolling away and towards the opposite side of the door, he could see the other huntress racing up the stairwell. "If they are here they must be guarding something or someone..." thought the assassin.

She would have the higher ground unless DarkHawk could cut the distance between them. Drinking from the Force, the assassin called upon his ghosting ability and slowly faded from sight. Continuing his connection with the Force, the assassin raced up the stairs on a dead sprint.

The huntress securely placed her feet on the last landing and was about to open the roof door when the assassin caught up to her. DarkHawk dropped his shoulder and hit her left flank. You could hear the air leave her lungs as DarkHawk hit her, sending her slamming into the adjacent wall. Out of sheer desperation the huntress executed a front kick as she came off the wall and landed it squarely to the helm of the assassin driving him back to the edge of the landing.

The huntress was on all fours when DarkHawk regained his bearings and went in for the kill. Just before the assassin reached her, she shot uppercut to the groin and brought the man down to one knee. She scrambled to her feet and executed a roundhouse kick to her assailant's head. The blow sent the wraith tumbling to his right. Slamming up against the guardrail, the long drop down was a bit fuzzy as DarkHawk tried to once again regain his bearings. The snap, crackle and pop of the stun baton's electrode could be heard as the huntress brought it down onto the black-clad figure. Rolling forward and up to his feet, DarkHawk reached for his own split coupler electro-staff. With both halves in hand, the assassin moved in. The two combatants clashed weapons that echoed through the stairway. The rhythm and speed of their assaults mimic the sound of fully automatic blaster fire. DarkHawk elegantly slid his body to the right as the huntress came down with baton strike. Collapsing his right baton over hers, DarkHawk brought his left baton across and caught the huntress square in the jaw. Blood spewed across the wall as she spun and twisted from the blow. Her baton falling over the railing that she now desperately held onto.

The huntress pulled herself up to her feet and foolishly went on the attack. She executed a repetition of kicks trying to garner enough room to get one kill shot off with her bow. Between her kicks, she made attempts to reach for the bow but was cut off each time. Though her wits were still about her, she used the attempts at reaching her bow as a ruse. Landing a solid punch to the abdomen, the Dark Age Sith Armor dissipated some of the blow, but she was bred to be a warrior. She knew wear to land the blow. The huntress wasted no time and fired her dart launcher at the assassin. The dart buried in DarkHawk's left shoulder. Gritting his teeth in pain, he yanked the dart out quickly. He could already feel the effects of the hallucinogen. He would have to work quickly if he was to dispatch the huntress before he passed out.

The Huntress was already drawing her bow from its holster. His hand engulfed hers on the riser of her bow and he pushed back with all his might. The huntress's back slammed against the railing that the mount bolts broke from the floor. A quick right cross and the huntress lost her grip on the bow. Another right cross and DarkHawk felt her nose crush under his gloved fist. She unexpectedly spun with the blow and came around with a spinning elbow strike to DarkHawk's ribs. He felt a rib break, as the pain ran through his side. The huntress moved

towards the roof door to get into a more open space. DarkHawk was not going to allow this to happen. The huntress managed to crack the door open and the light of day filled the small stairwell landing. DarkHawk shot a front kick out slamming the door shut.

With his momentum from the front kick, DarkHawk grabbed a handful of the huntress's dreadlocks and slammed her head into the wall. Following that blow, the assassin drove his right knee square into the face of the huntress. She slumped forward, spitting out teeth and blood. Her vision impaired, she lashed out, hoping to strike anything she could to regain her senses. That would not be the case today.

DarkHawk drank from the Force and unleashed powerful tendrils of Force lightning at the huntress. The impact scorched her entire body and set her over the railing. DarkHawk continued his onslaught as the huntress crashed and tumbled against the lower railings and finally crashing to the bottom floor. DarkHawk fell back against the roof door and grabbed his right side. He could feel the broken rib and pushed it back in place. The pain shot through his body like a jagged knife. The sound of ino engines could be heard outside on the roof.

"Damn...got to move!" he thought. Staggering to his feet and moving to the outside, DarkHawk saw a Lambda-class T4 shuttle hovering above the roof. The ramp door was already closing, as an out of focused figure made their way up the ramp. DarkHawk shook his head violently, forcing his vision somewhat back to normal. Just before the door closed, a familiar face from the pages of studied dossiers of the Collective came into focus. One Kerwin Drake gave a two-finger salute at the Sith. The door closed and the shuttle blasted away from the building.

DarkHawk hit his comlink, "Ty, get the ship over here, we have a ship to catch..."