*38 ABY*

*Somewhere in the Unknown Regions*

*Onboard the Voidbreaker*

Karran Val’teo walked the halls of the Voidbreaker to airlock, checking his gear as he went. Sera Kaern, a fellow Zabrak and loyal crewmember walked beside him.

“Karran, you really shouldn’t go alone. At least take me or Sulith with you.”

“I will be fine. Most of the security will be preoccupied with the riot, I just need to get to the right cell block and free the prisoner.”

“And what if something happens along the way?” The smaller Zabrak had to almost jog to keep up with his purposeful gait.

“Then I will find a creative solution, *Kashinka.*” Karran smiled while Sera fumed at the term of endearment before he stepped into the airlock and onward to the shuttle as the doors closed behind him.

“Captain, welcome aboard.” the pilot looked back toward him from the cockpit of a ‘borrowed’ Collective craft.

The Zabrak nodded and settled into his seat as the shuttle detached from the Voidbreaker. Once they were at a safe distance, the vessel made the jump to hyperspace.

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The shuttle dropped out of hyperspace just beyond scanner range of the Collective prison station.

“Shall I take it in, Captain?”

“Yes, but be careful. I would rather not be shot out of the sky.”

“Don’t worry, I’m a leaf on the wind.”

The pilot took the vessel in toward the station and before long, they received a hail from the stations hangar control.

*“Unidentified vessel. This is a classified location. State your verification code and your business.”*

The pilot smiled as he pulled the microphone on his headset down. “Copy that control. We caught a piece of Jedi scum trying to infiltrate one of our remote outposts. We’ve got him frozen in the back right now. Transmitting verification now.”

The pilot looked back into the passenger seating and gave a grin to the Sith. Karran simply nodded in return.

*“Verification confirmed. Shuttle 050119, you are cleared for landing. We’ll have a carbonite transport team waiting for you.”*

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The rest of the flight was short, but quiet. When they went in for their landing, they could see the team of technicians waiting for them just as had been promised. Karran stood up and made his way over to the loading ramp to be ready to greet them.

As the shuttle touched down, the door opened as the ramp lowered to reveal the Sith standing there.

The technicians only needed a split second to realize what was happening. “JEDI!”

Karran leapt toward them, igniting his lightsaber and cutting them down as they tried to run. A guard by the door lunged for an alarm only to be caught by an invisible grip that lifted him from the ground as he struggled before a resounding crack could be heard and he went limp. Karran released his grip on the guard and rushed toward another who was wielding a Z9 riot baton. The guard swung wide at the Zabrak, only to have his weapon parried away before a killing blow was struck across his chest.

An alarm through the Force warned the Sith of incoming danger from behind him. He spun around and summoned a shield of Force energy. The blaster bolts fragmented and fizzled out like comets hitting an atmosphere as they dissipated against the barrier. Karran gestured toward his attacker, and with a pulling motion, yanked the Collective soldier toward him to be skewered on the Sith’s lightsaber.

The Zabrak deactivated his lightsaber as he surveyed the bodies around him. He had had the element of surprise this time, but soon the entire station could know that he was there. He would have to hurry.

Karran reached out with his mind to feel for any living sentients near him. In his immediate vicinity, he found only one. He walked with purpose toward the control room. Upon opening the door, he saw no one manning the computer terminals lit up with security feeds of the hangar. What was it Zig said about situations like this? It meant that their security feeds were on closed loops and only routed to this room. Chances were that he had evaded detection, for now.

He looked around for the sentient he had sensed and saw no one, however he could hear whimpering beneath one of the computer terminals. He paced the room for a moment, as if searching for something or someone, before stopping directly in front of the desk. He crouched down to look at the source of the whimpering, a human male, thin and wiry with a receding hairline.

“Please! Please don’t kill me! I’m just a technician!”

Karran reached to grab the man by the front of his shirt and pulled him out from his hiding spot. “You will tell me where I can find the Brotherhood prisoners.”

No manipulation of the man’s mind was necessary. Through his sniveling, the man choked the words out, “Detention level Mern. Maximum security. The turbolift is right there.” The man pointed toward a set of doors just behind him.

“Very good. Guards? How many?”

“No guards. No amount of training can make them perfectly immune to your...tricks. There’s just auto-turrets.”

“Good answer. Now, how truly devoted are you to the Collective’s ideology?”

“I- what?”

“The ideology of the Collective. Do you truly live by it?” Karran repeated. He was starting to get impatient.

“Well… I mean… no?”

“No?”

“No.”

“Good. Then you will take a shuttle and fly as far from this place as you can and begin attoning for your actions, yes?”

The technicians eyes went wide. He was either the luckiest or least fortunate man in the galaxy right now. He nodded vehemently as Karran dropped him and let him scurry away.

Karran turned toward the turbolift doors and pressed the call button on the pad.

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The turbolift descended as Karran watched the floor markers light up above the door. Finally, he arrived at the floor labeled Mern. The doors opened to reveal a long hallway. Like the technician had said, no guards but as soon as the doors opened, two turrets at the end of the hall trained on his position. It took only a moment for them to scan him and find no marker denoting him as belonging.

Karran ignited his lightsaber a split second before the turrets opened fired. The Zabrak held his ground and blocked the bolts as best he could, dodging when he couldn’t block. Eventually the turrets had to stop to cool down. The Sith took this opportunity to charge forward, channeling the force into his legs. In two motions, he cut the turrets down as they tracked him.

With the threat dispatched, Karran walked over to the nearest cell and opened it up. The figure before him was not the one he had come looking for. The man in front of him was clean-cut with amber-colored eyes.

“Ah, very good, are you part of the strike team the Brotherhood sent to rescue me?”

“I came alone, and unfortunately, you are not the one I seek.”

“You came alone? Hm, well I suppose you are quite imposing. Now- wait, I’m not the one you came for? Do you know who I am? I’m Evant Taelyn. Deputy Grandmaster.”

Karran paused for a moment, “Deepest apologies, but you say that name like I should recognize it. I am here for Violet. But I suppose you may come along.”

It was now Evant’s turn to pause, until wearily, he spoke, “Thank you. Let’s go.”

The Zabrak quickly went along the hallway, opening up all of the cells to release their occupants, Brotherhood or not. “Follow me if you wish to rejoin the Brotherhood, if not, there were plenty of shuttles for you all to go your own way!”

It was simply a short turbolift ride up and then Karran, with all of the Brotherhood delegates and the Deputy Grandmaster, loaded into the shuttle that had brought him here before they departed, leaving without ever setting off an alarm.