

## Option 1: DEFEND THE PLATFORM AND AID IN THE EVACUATION

Thick black and grey smoke swirled through the hallways of the Shadow Academy platform *Nesolat*. Occultan lacul's Mandalorian armor clinked softly on the bulkhead the man leaned against as the platform shook from another explosion. Boarding the space station had been easy enough for the Mandalorian, having just been a passenger waiting to dock. The Reaver and the other Vizsla mercenaries had since become separated in the ongoing fighting. Collective soldiers were easy enough to take care of with one exception. The mercenaries had noted a few small teams of Collective soldiers that moved differently than the rest. These irregulars were tough, overpoweringly so. Orders had been clear though, assist in the evacuation of the Shadow Academy, protect the station personnel while they removed valuable artifacts and detached parts of the platform.

"At least the Brotherhood paid for services up front this..." Occultan's voice trailed off as his helmet's HUD blinked a warning and highlighted a humanoid shadow. Exhaling slowly the mercenary brought his m5 blaster rifle up and crouched.

"Three, no five. Weird profile, probably hostile. No external communication. Krak me, probably those irregulars." lacul raised the tip of his rifle slightly, his trigger finger moving forward to the grenade launcher's trigger. Inhaling deeply he steadied himself, the HUD highlighting four blaster barrels poking around the corner. The Human exhaled slowly letting his shoulders relax, carefully taking his aim.

"Come on, take a peek."

A few tense seconds passed before the Corsair Hive Mind Marine dashed across the corridor. Four blaster shots rang out as the Marine quickly noticed the Mandalorian, but the high explosive grenade was already in flight. Two of the shots pinged off Occultan's armor as he spun back into cover behind the bulkhead. The explosion's shockwave flew through the Human first, followed by thick black smoke.

"Hopefully that slows you freaks down." the Mandalorian dryly stated as he moved into the explosion's smoke and down the hallway from the enemy. The Vizsla mercenaries had quickly noticed several things about the Irregular Collective soldiers. Things such as they were accurate, unbelievably so, but only shot when they had confirmed visual on a target. lacul doubted they would stand a chance against the Irregulars, or take them out, but leading them around unimportant parts of the *Nesolat* was a different thing entirely.

The chirp of a freshly armed thermal detonator called out through the smoke from Occultan's hand. In response five blaster bolts streaked through the smoke harmlessly passing the detonator in mid flight, streaking through the now empty origin point.

“They don’t miss a beat, good thing I turned meh helmet’s speakers off.” Iacul muttered to himself as a quiet beep pinged into his ear from his comms system.

“This is Iacul, make it quick I got some company.”

*“Occultan, we just received word from the Shadow Academy team. They managed to disengage the locks and are about to descend to Arx, make way to the extraction point.”*

“Roger that, I ain’t too far out. Might be coming in hot tho’. These Irregulars are somethin’ else, high explosive nades don’t even do them in.”

*“Acknowledged, get here quick or we are going to be late for our next date.”*

“No time for a rest eh, well at least those spark fingers credits are good. Iacul out.”