[GJW XIV Phase I] Fiction - In Opposition

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Arx Orbit

The *Nesolat* Platform

Five hours ago, the *Nesolat* was besieged. Crushed under the boot-heel of the Collective’s elite vanguard of technocratic soldiers, the Brotherhood’s defenders all but cowered in retaliation. The final remnants of the so-called resistance Nuy Vexus was promised sealed themselves in a corridor, licking their wounds in defense of some of the Nesolat’s critical infrastructure. Yet, their futile efforts were less than a hindrance to the Pau’an’s goals and the orders given to his lobotomized forces. He couldn’t care less for the station’s controls—he wanted it all gone, a soundless ball of flame in the void.

Flanked at the sides with the Collective’s nicknamed “Hive Marines,” the Pau’an held aloft his trusted micro-grenade launcher. Motioning his detachment to form up at his back with a halting gesture, Nuy Vexus pressed his ear to the bulkhead separating his forces from the small, uncontrolled sector that sheltered the Brotherhood’s last defenders. Hearing naught but faint scuffling through the durasteel with his sensitive ears, he lingered for some indication as to when the rabble would make their move.

“**All set for the debrief, Nuy?**” the Pau’an heard a voice exclaim above the drowned-out commotion he had been searching for. His nerves shot daggers into his brain—without his ear-coverings, the Ongree’s distinctive voice might as well have been a loudspeaker pressed against his head.

Clutching a palm against his forehead to keep the migraine manageable while slamming the bulkhead with a fist, Nuy Vexus snapped around to face the source of his recent troubles, smiling down upon him with its lipless grin: Rakkas Kat—an Ongree, with the ego to rival a Hutt’s.

“Do that one. More. Time,” Nuy Vexus promised a threat behind pointed teeth, “Once more, and I’ll have you watch the fireworks *aboard* the station. Got it?”

“About that,” Rakkas clicked his tongue between syllables, “I hate to give credit, but one of the agents just informed me of an…”

He let out a cough to clear his throat, as if the mere *idea* of giving someone else credit had dried out his vocal chords, “...interesting development. The *Nesolat*, I’ve been told, is home to a vast collection of treasures. Items, which I would like to examine in detail. Not to mention, the specimens of this ‘Force’ that have so kindly caged themselves just behind this barrier.” As if to emphasize his point, the Ongree knocked twice on the bulkhead.

“We don’t have time for dusting off artifacts,” the Pau’an admonished, “Or did you forget, that we’re under orders from Rath Oligard himself?”

Rakkas’ mouth widened in what some might recognize as an Ongree’s imitation of a smirk. “Well, of *course*,” the Ongree’s eyestalks scanned the corridor, as if searching for someone who might find the notion of taking *some* initiative repulsive, “our orders were to take control of this heretical ‘training center.’ Rath Oligard made no word on what to do with the platform once it was cleared of resistance—or is that something you’re having issue with?”

Nuy Vexus gritted his teeth in frustration; of course, the rabble behind the bulkhead hardly had the means to mount an offensive against his forces. Moreover, admitting that the wounded still posed a threat meant that he had to include in his debrief that it took over the allotted five hours to purge the station. Even so, the thought of not watching this station burn was an insult to Rath Oligard’s vision, for which this fool seemed to care little.

“I never thought…” the Pau’an said in a low growl, “that one of the Liberation Front’s best surgeons would even *entertain* the notion of allowing these heretical Force-users the chance at life.”

Rakkas’ eyestalks twitched in surprise, as the Major’s fist collided between them. His beard of tentacles recoiled under the weight of the Pau’an’s assault on his inverted face, before falling to a knee. Nuy’s fist rose again, casting a shadow over the Ongree’s pale complexion, stopping short as an order to his unit of lobotomized followers.

“Restrain him.”

Clapped in handcuffs, Rakkas regarded the flat-nosed marines with a nod of mild dissatisfaction. Although it was his surgical expertise that helped create the Liberation Front’s elite vanguard, his creations were far from perfection; incapable of consideration for the benefits of his research. Soon, however, Rakkas hoped to be standing before a hologram of Rath Oligard, himself. After all, he was a man of reason and would no doubt see the benefit in finding new means to experiment on the Brotherhood’s Force-users and its priceless artifacts.

“When Rath Oligard heards about your short-sightedness, Nuy, It’ll be me that calls the shots.” Feeling a blaster pointed at his ribs, the Ongree was urged to move forward, “I, the Liberation Front’s greatest human surgeon, will be the conqueror of the Nesolat platform. Has a certain ring to it, doesn’t it?”

“Stop.” Nuy Vexus bellowed a command, stopping the Ongree short of a door he hadn’t seen before. An airlock? It couldn’t be, as Rakkas Kat could hear a distant murmuring behind the barrier. It wasn’t until he heard the cries that Rakkas knew was waiting on the other side.

“That door was sealed!” Rakkas exclaimed, regarding the Major with his eyestalks, now flipped back behind him.

“Not from their end.”

As if given a silent order, one of the soldiers grabbed an entry card from the Pau’an’s outstretched hand, which freed itself to rest on the trigger guard of his grenade launcher. As the doors began to open, Rakkas Kat could hear the distant moans loudening, as if drawing nearer to his fate. The wounded gave shocked expressions to the entourage that now lingered behind what used to be a barricade, but regarded them with little actual interest as those still able to move applied synthflesh and bacta to the injuries of those who could not.

A trail of smoke followed the path of a rolling, cylindrical object that had left the Pau’an’s hand. “Now move it,” he ordered the Ongree once again, “I’ll see to it that you witness the flames early, if you don’t.” Jamming the end of his grenade launcher into the Ongree’s back for effect, it was clear that he had the strength to create enough distance to make good on his threat.

“I’ll see you in hell, Nuy,” the Ongree’s parting words were cut short by the hydraulic sound of the bulkhead door being shut and sealed—for good, this time.

“Plant the charges,” Nuy Vexus ordered the marines who had witnessed the events unfold, “it’s time to blow this rock.”