

Millennial Grit
Vampire Story
Fiction by
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[Yul's Snapshot](#)
[Ty's Snapshot](#)
[DarkHawk's Snapshot](#)

Dathomir System
Outer Rim

Just crossing over into the borders of the Dathomir system, Ty had just completed one of his numerous system checks of the Decimator. The Duros had a meticulous routine when he flew, constantly monitoring gauges, running multiple system analysis to ensure the systems were operating at one hundred percent efficiency. Those who flew with the former Sergeant Major on a regular basis, had a hard time differentiating whether it was done out of years of military servitude, or if Ty was really that obsessive over system operations.

Since teaming up with Ty some years ago, DarkHawk knew the Duros did most things just because he was a Duros. Plus acquiring the ship from Grand Master Muz, Ty coveted the ship on a whole different level. Although, when it came to the ship, Ty executed his tasks out of pure muscle memory from all his years of Imperial service. Course, the Battlelord would never concede publicly to that fact. DarkHawk always found it a perfect opportunity to push the Duros's buttons so to speak.

"Hey Ty, the head is not working properly, want to run a systems check or you want to just hit it with this plunger?"

"Seriously DarkHawk, your level of adolescent behavior is simply staggering. I remember a young private newly assigned to the teams, his childish antics cost him his shooting arm. This young private seemed to find himself in the most precarious of situations."

Before Ty could finish what he was saying, DarkHawk cut him off, "I would rather take my chances with a backed up crapper, than listen about your private assigned to the teams."

The Duros murmured under his breath as he finished his checks. DarkHawk chuckled a bit, it was not often he could put the Duros in a state of not speaking.

"Would you like some chow Ty, or could I bring you a cafe or tea?"

"Your cafe is positively atrocious. So tea would be aces."

DarkHawk headed to the ship's cantine to procure two hot beverages. "And take the bloody tea bag out of the cup you uncivilized dol!."

DarkHawk could be heard laughing down the Decimator's corridor. Moments later the Battlelord brought two steaming mugs of refreshments. DarkHawk bowed while handing a mug to Ty. The Duros carefully investigated the offering prior to accepting. "Your tea bag has been removed, it is at optimum temperature with a touch of honey and a slice of Roonan lemon."

The folds of skin above Ty'e eyes curled tightly, a wide scowl aimed at the Battlelord. "I swear DH, you really are just an oversized tosser of a man-child!"

DarkHawk held his mug of steaming cafe out in front of both him and Ty, "Cheers old man"

Ty clanked his mug against his comrade's, just as the incoming distress signal alarm made a low pitched sequence of audible beeps. Ty, leaned in his seat towards the captain's control panel on his left and flipped the alarm's toggle switch to open.

Activating another set of switchings, the data from the distress signal displayed across the main screen of the cockpit. "The signal is coming from Munificent Class Cruiser. Looks to be halfway between here and our destination of Dathomir. We are only a few hours away"

"Convenience or coincidence, what do you think Ty?"

"Is there a difference in our line of work?"

"Touche my friend, touche."

Dathomir System

Distress Signal Coordinates

The Decimator made its jump out of lightspeed and seemingly materialized out of the nothingness of deep space. "We should be right on top of it Sir"

DarkHawk kept a keen eye out of the view ports, "There she is at our four o'clock."

Ty brought the Decimator around and lined up the ship on the nose of the Decimator. The Munificent Class Cruiser was blacked out except for a large red and yellow glyph painted across its hull. From the outside the old frigate looked to be in good shape. *We all know looks can be deceiving* DarkHawk thought. The red and green exterior lights prevented the ship from completely melting into the guise of space.

Ty opened the ship's communications and hailed the frigate. After several attempts and long pauses, there was still no response. The two Sadowans eyeballed each other, both knew well and good that this was not a good start to this now humanitarian undertaking.

"Docking bay is on the starboard side, shall we proceed?"

DarkHawk paused before answering, "Proceed, with extreme prejudice Ty. If anything, we may be able to snag a few items from her eh?"

"Or die a horrible death. But the ship could always use a new ashtray."

Ty brought the Decimator around and lined up on the docking bay, expertly maneuvering the ship into the bay. Only the emergency lights were illuminated within the hangar and Tytus turned on the ship's spotlights to help see the surroundings.. Ty put the Decimator down in the first open spot.

DarkHawk already had his helm in hand and brought it down over his head. Air purged out from rebreather as the Battlelord expelled his breath, "Ready to go hunting?"

"O2 readings are on point, so we should be good there, however, something placed this ship in the state it is in."

"Let's go see shall we?"

Munificent Class Cruiser Dathomir System

Making their way into the hangar, the two Sadowans were cautious in their steps. The hangar smelt of death, but left no trail of any wrong doings. Sensors showed no life forms in the vicinity. The two moved stealthily in between the hangar's ground support equipment, moving closer towards the exit corridor. The faint orange blip of a heat signature displayed across the Equite's HUD inside his helm. DarkHawk quickly raised a closed fist, immediately halting his progress. Ty immediately mimicked his lead, DarkHawk began a flurry of quick hand and finger gestures, relaying the HUD's info to the Duros. *One Tango, twelve o'clock, five meters.*

Ty acknowledged with a nod, simultaneously the two moved swiftly stopping on opposite sides of the exit door. Ty sliced into the terminal and bypassed the security protocols and the main terminal button illuminated green. DarkHawk reached out to depress it when Ty stopped him.

[whispering] "You ready?" Ty asked.

DarkHawk titled his head to one side, and pushed Ty's hand down activating the corridor open. *WHISH*, the door opened, DarkHawk waived and dematerialized into a translucent shimmer. That shimmer melted into the darkness of the corridor floating inconspicuously down in depths.

“Bollocks”

Moving into the corridor, Ty had his blaster at the ready, his large eyes adjusted to the dim light of the surroundings. Moving further down the corridor, Ty came to the first intersection. Making a hard right, the Duros saw that the last door on the left was wide open. Carefully moving towards the open door, Ty stopped short of the door and readied himself. Spinning into the doorway Ty was in a crouched position, blaster in both hands. That is when he saw DarkHawk standing in front of a large furry creature, which was chained to the wall.

Very few things churned the stomach of the former Sergeant Major, although the sight before him was a strong contender. “My god man, what in the bloody hell? Who would do that to another?”

“I have no idea Ty. Lucky for us he is still alive, barely but alive. Help me get him down.”

Ty holstered his blaster and moved over to assist his comrade. “How do you know this is a he?”

“The Force is wise my good friend.” DarkHawk said while removing the restraints of the beings arms.

“Ahh, yes that old chestnut”

“Old indeed, now remove the restraints on his legs would you?”

Ty did as he was asked, unlocking the last restraint the beast fell into DarkHawk’s shoulder. DarkHawk carried the beast over the other side of the room where a cargo lift filled with supplies was abruptly cleared of its contents. Laying the beast upon the lift, its hulking frame took up every square inch of its real estate.

“Shistavanen wouldn't you say?” asked Ty.

“Indeed, but he looks more feral. Ty please get him to the ship quickly. Get *Bones* on him and get him patched up. He is our only clue to what went on here.”

“Did he say anything to you?”

DarkHawk paused for a moment, “Yeah one word, vampire.”

Ty’s eyes widened, “Surely DarkHawk, you must be joking.”

DarkHawk never replied. “Righto then old chap.” Ty activated his comlink, “*Bones*, get the OR ready, you have a patient to tend to. Notify *Kaytue*, have her prep the ship. I have a feeling we will be making a rather hasty exit here in the near future.”

“Right away Sir”

Ty activated the lift and its repulsors cracked and whined before slowly moving forward. “I suppose you will be returning to the ship momentarily?”

“Going to dig a bit deeper Ty. Give me thirty minutes, going to head to the bridge of this thing and see what I can find. Keep me updated on our friends' prognosis, I will try to see what the frick is going on here.”

Ty threw DarkHawk a look of disgust. DarkHawk shrugged his shoulders, “We’ve faced worse before this Ty. Seriously, what could go wrong?”

“DarkHawk, I say this with great conviction, I am constantly astonished at how you can be drawn into so many seemingly bad situations and profusely make them worse.”

“We are the product of our environment Ty. It's a simple sneak and peek. I will hit the bridge, pull the data banks and meet you back at the ship in an easy twenty or thirty minutes.”

Ty glared back at the Warlord, “Bullocks! Thirty minutes, no more, no less. I will keep you apprised of this one’s status as requested.”

DarkHawk nodded, then the sound of a corridor whisking open interrupted the two Sadowan’s verbal exchange. {whispering} “Stay here, I will clear the way then beat feat back to the ship!”

Ty held up the ok sign with his long green index finger and thumb. DarkHawk moved up against the door opening and carefully peered around it to see down the corridor. The traces of black mist could be seen lingering in the corridor about two meters high. Small traces of sulfur floated across the Sadowan’s nostrils.

“Ty get to the ship now...”

Munificent Class Cruiser Dathomir System

Ty wasted no time exiting the room, new patient in tow. DarkHawk waited until Ty made it through the far corridor before making his exit. Instead of following Ty, DarkHawk turned right and headed down to investigate the dark mist anomaly.

A few feet down the corridor, DarkHawk instantly dematerialized, vanishing from sight. The Equite followed the sulfur smell taking him deeper into the mysterious ship. As he crept through the corridor, a slight nudge beginning in the bottom of his stomach, then moving up to the back of his head. Precognition, every Force practitioner studied its uses. A useful tool presenting a psychological awareness of danger in or around the user’s surroundings.

"I havft not encountered von such as de likes of you", a deep aristocratic voice boomed through the ship.

DarkHawk maintained his Ghosting ability and cautiously moved towards the southeast exit door. As the Warlord made his cautious approach, the metal doors suddenly whisked open. DarkHawk could see a small entrance way leading into a larger adjacent room.

Peering through the dim light, the Warlord's HUD inside his helm made quick adjustments to the ambient light of the ship. The HUD shifted from the amber green contrast of the night vision setting, to a reddish orange contrast of its heat vision setting. Oddly, only a faint silhouette of a slender figure could be ascertained, no heat signature, no visible signature.

"I know you are dhere, I can sense your heartbeat. Most I encounter, da fear is ripe in them, I can smell the saline in dhere sveat. I can tell the character of a man by the sound of his heartbeat. Usually vhen I approach, I can almost dance to its beat." DarkHawk heard the fast rhythmic clapping of two gloved hands echoing around him. *"Dhere heartbeat pounding like a racing steed. Strange dat yours is so steady, so calm, you have not da fear."*

Ty's voice came in over the comlink breaking DarkHawk's concentration. "Made it back to the ship ol' boy. *Bones* has our patient and is attending his wounds. It looks as if he was sliced apart multiple times."

"I am not surprised, I believe I am about to meet the culprit who accosted our friend."

"Wait, what?!"

"Ty, let me get back to you." DarkHawk then shut off his comlink.

DarkHawk moved into the entryway of the open door. The room adjacent was now void of any light, the same signatures trying to lock in on any sort of target. Looking into that void, a ghostly set of red eyes now stared back from that void.

"Come, let me introduce myself" the voice said in that deep stiling and rolling accent.

A single light illuminated and in the middle of what looked to be a large Command and Control room, stood the mysterious being behind the voice. A long black tomoun wool cape, with a high collar surrounded both sides of the man's face. Wide at the shoulders, then tapering off as the cape draped across the floor. It slithered across the floor behind him as he slowly approached out of the darkness. The interior of the cape gleaned a silky crimson color. The high collar trim of the cape, the wide flaring cross-hide cuffs along with the ornate stitching of his double breasted tunic screamed of aristocracy. The knee high heeled boots with silver trim, neatly matched that of the black shimmersilk inner tunic. The wide red sash tied everything together. Nobility dripped from the stoic figure.

A light blue complexion, long thin face, high cheekbones and neatly groomed ebony hair rested neatly at the shoulders. A very pronounced set of dark curved eyebrows covered those steely eyes. A long thin, neatly manicured handlebar mustache followed the curvature of his mouth and ran down stopping at his jaw line. He put one hand behind his back and the other covered his heart as he bowed, *"Please, forgive my impropriety. Introduction must be formal, I am Count Drak Orlok."*

DarkHawk remained cloaked, not buying the chivalrous gestures offered from the Count. The Count spoke once more, *"Please, I have revealed myself to you, reciprocate the gesture, show yourself and indulge my curiosity."*

DarkHawk obliged and just as quickly as he dematerialized previously, the Warlord materialized, revealing himself.

"Impressive"

"Jury is still out on that. What do you want?"

"Ah yes, of course. Da direct approach is best under these circumstances."

"There is no circumstance, Count is it? Where is the crew of this ship and why the distress signal?"

"Oh yes, dat. Well, my apologies, the crew has been dead for years. The distress signal is to lure ones such as yourself to this new accommodation so that I may feed."

"And the Shistavanen that you had restrained and experimenting on?"

"Vhat is dis Shistavanen you speak of?"

DarkHawk kept his gaze locked in on the Count. Watching for any subtle movements and body language. Unfortunately this guy gave nothing, Stoic was an understatement regarding the man before him. The Warlord kept himself poised, ready to go on the attack if this self-proclaimed Count decided to go on the offensive

"The big hairy guy you had restrained in your torture room."

"Ahh yes, the Lycan. They are a wretched beast. A walking slight against nature. Werewolves are such a nuisance during their transformation, so hard to control."

"That is no werewolf, he is a sentient being, living, breathing productive part of their society. You have no right to invoke your twisted genocidal behavior towards them."

The Count laughed at the Warlord's statement. *"I have every right my friend, for I am eternal!"*

Now it was DarkHawk's turn to laugh. A small scuff but insulting enough. "You're not eternal. I must have heard hundreds of you vermin make the same claim. Each one of them had tasted the end of my blade."

The words seemed to cross the lines of personal disparagement for the Count. The Count's eyebrows lowered, his eyes narrowed glaring at the Warlord with disdain. He tossed back the cape from his left hip revealing a katana blade with an ivory hilt. At the end of the hilt looked to be a carving of a dragon's head.

"Perhaps I will to then. But I think it is more likely, you will taste my blade." the Count said unsheathing his blade.

DarkHawk shook his head in disgust, "It is your funeral pal." DarkHawk watched the Count step back towards the middle of the room. DarkHawk then slowly made his way closer to the Count. The Warlord's left hand rested on the saber neatly stowed on his belt. Stopping about two meters short of the Count. The two squared off on one another, eyes locked.

Removing the long hilt from his belt, DarkHawk spun the hilt several times in his hand before holding it out to one side. "Shall we dance then?"

The Count's devilish smile broke across his face, *"Interesting veapon, how do you intend on defending yourself?"* Before DarkHawk could reply to the Count, charged towards the Warlord in lightning quick fashion. The Count's katana striking downward towards DarkHawk torso. Without hesitation the Warlord activated one of his crimson blades and brought it across his body to parry to incoming attack.

A blade against a lightsaber would be a short exchange DarkHawk thought to himself. But to DarkHawk's astonishment, no damage came to the katana as the Count's attack clashed against the saber. DarkHawk quickly made a small circular motion with his blade putting it on top of the Count's sword. Then stepping in and closer to the Count's body DarkHawk pushed off against his adversary, sending the aristocratic swordsman back sliding to a stop. Caught off guard at the feat, the Count did not see the incoming spinning wheel kick bearing down on him. The long leg of the Warlord carried much velocity behind it, the boot heel landing square against the Count's jaw sending him careening to the ground.

Immediately standing up, he removed a handkerchief from his tunic and wiped the blood from his mouth. *"I can tell you have been vell trained in the art of combat. But I assure you, you are not adept to secure a victory,"* the Count said as he slashed at the air bringing his sword directly in front of his face. DarkHawk's head tilted to one side, he noticed a slight purple hue to the blade.

"Your katana is impressive, it is not your run of the mill katana though is it?"

The Count brought the blade up down and held in the palms of his hand. Peering at it with much admiration. *“No, you would be correct. This was given to me by my betrothed almost twelve hundred years ago. The blade was forged from a most sought after mineral and it was hand folded and meticulously shaped from a master swordsmith.”*

“Phrik, its molecular structure makes it resistant to lightsaber attacks.”

“Da, you would be correct.” Without hesitation the Count initiated his second attack. This time DarkHawk was ready. The Count launching himself in the air, blade out front seeking a kill. A maneuver that probably finished off his prey more than once. Reaching out with the Force, DarkHawk quickly extended his arm, using his telepathy ability to freeze the Count in mid air of his attack. The Count struggled to move, the Warlord could feel the power behind the Count, something not experienced by the Equite.

Keeping his arm extended and his concentration aimed directly at his adversary, DarkHawk walked around the stationary man. Getting right into the Count's face, the Warlord could see the evil in those steely eyes. His mouth slightly open, revealing the two sets of upper and lower fangs. A small bead of sweat began to run down the Count's forehead and over his brow. In all his years he had heard the lore of beings with great power, never having encountered any until now, vacated the change to feed on their essence.

The predicament the Count found himself in, only fueled his rage. He not only underestimated his prey, he underestimated the lore. Disbelieving put him at a disadvantage, a most unfamiliar feeling to say the least.

DarkHawk studied the Count's features carefully, he could feel his resistance and that power was formidable. “Your Chiss, but different”

One of the Count's eyebrows raised quite profoundly. No one had ever made that claim, of course no one had ever been this close to him without having their flesh torn from their bones.

“I vonce vas, yes.”

DarkHawk could feel the Count's resistance growing, pure will, pure evil was pushing against the Warlord. The tables now begin to turn. Much like a wave building momentum, slowing building its momentum. Growing raw power until the point that wave of ferocity crests and crashes against anything in its path. DarkHawk struggled to maintain the upper hand, as with the Count, this was just as unfamiliar to the Warlord. This was Elder level power, directly aimed at the Warlord.

Shattering DarkHawk's hold, the Count's attack continued. Coming straight at the Warlord fang's bared, long pointed fingers with black nails searched for open flesh. The speed the Count moved at was uncanny, which gave the appearance of mist in trail. Instinctively DarkHawk fell to his back and threw his left knee into what he hoped was the Count's abdomen. Using the

momentum of the attack against him, DarkHawk rolled with the attack, launching the Count behind him. Causing the Count to crash into the wall about two meters high, finally slumping to the floor.

DarkHawk immediately rolled to his feet and unleashed a massive volley of Force lightning into the Count. Eerie blue tendrils of electricity emanated from the Warlord's fingers, penetrating the Count's torso. Cringing and twisting in pain, the Counts screams were deafening. DarkHawk moved his hands in a hypnotic motion to direct the lighting to hit multiple spots of the Count's body. The Count's body illuminated internally caused an ominous view of his skeletal system.

"Ty, we got to go, do it, I am outta here!" DarkHawk, backed away from the Count, never waiver in his lightning attack. Backing out of the room and about two meters away from the corridor in which he entered. With a swift motion of his hand the first set of doors closed and DarkHawk hit the locking mechanism with a bolt of lighting welding it shut permanently. Quickly moving thru the second opening and back into the corridor, DarkHawk did the same to the second door.

"Hit it Ty! Let's get the hell out of here!"

Ty already had the Decimator fired up and ready to make an immediate retreat.

"Kaytue you have the guns. Give the man what he wants." Ty said as he made some adjustments to steady the engines.

Kaytue moved the joystick controls in front of him, simultaneously the top laser turret of the Decimator followed the controls. Kaytue pulled the trigger twice and the quad laser fired eight bursts of energy blowing through the hanger wall and into the interior of the ship. Two more quick blasts followed and the echoes of their destruction rocked through the entire ship.

DarkHawk at the aide of the Force, moved at lightning speed. Avoiding the mayhem of what was taking place found the Warlord sliding under and hurdling over debris along his trek to safety.

Kaytue hit a sequence of buttons on her control panel and a targeting reticle came across the view screen on the control panel. Lining up the reticle on her target, Kaytue did not hesitate in pulling the trigger. A missile launched from the Decimator and down the path of destruction caused from the quad lasers.

DarkHawk came crashing into the hangar and continued to the Decimator. He launched himself up and into the open cargo door and rolled to an abrupt stop. "I'm in."

Ty flipped a switch and the cargo door began to close. Wasting no time, Ty pushed the throttles forward and the Decimator raced out of the cruiser's hangar and into space. Quickly putting distance between it and the cruiser. A large internal explosion reverberated through space and rocked the Decimator as it made its narrow escape. Ty pulled up the cruiser on the ships main

display and the Decimator crew could see a rather large whole steaming from the main fuselage of the Munificent Class Cruiser. Smoke and debris could be seen floating off into space.

“Sir, I believe your problem has been dealt with.”

“Thanks Ty, you guys saved my hide. I owe you both”

“You most certainly do.”

DarkHawk moved about the Decimator to find *Bones* finishing up from what looked like a meatball surgery session. Blood and tufts of hide were scattered across the floor. “How is he *Bones*?”

“He will live, but needs much rest”

“Good thing we have a long flight”

Just then, a familiar feeling washed over the Warlord, danger was near. “Ty, what do the scanners show? We in the clear?”

“Systems normal Sir, about to make the jump to lightspeed.”

Then clear as if he were standing right beside the Warlord, the Count's voice boomed inside DarkHawk's mind. *“I enjoyed our martial exchange wraith. Next time, I vill take pleasure in continuing that exchange. You vill feel my blade pierce your heart.”*

“Until Next time Count...”