

Caelus System

Taldryan Flagship ***Axios***

40 ABY

And now you steal away. Take him out today
Nice work you did. You're gonna go far, kid
With a thousand lies And a good disguise
Hit 'em right between the eyes
Hit 'em right between the eyes
When you walk away Nothing more to say
See the lightning in your eyes
See 'em running for their lives
You're Gonna Go Far Kid by the Offspring

"Attention, all crews. This is the captain speaking," a voice from the comms system rang out all over the *Axios*. As the announcement continued, two figures stepped out into one of the corridors aboard the ship. One dressed as an Engineering repair tech. While the slightly shorter one was dressed as a Loyalist naval trooper.

"We have just received a high priority, code red communique from the SOC. They have received information that several Palatinae spies and saboteurs have infiltrated several of our ships. Now hear this, until further notice, this ship will be on high alert. Security will be on active patrol, and security checkpoints will be set up throughout the ship."

"Well, it looks like things just got a little more interesting," Oriyanna said in a hushed tone as she and Xendar stood in front of the turbolift shaft waiting for one to arrive.

Yes, they have. But remember, we are supposed to be brand new recruits on our first patrol. And we need to act the part as well. Xendar projected, using the Force to make a telepathic connection between their minds.

Yeah, I know. But that doesn't mean I have to like doing it, Oriyanna projected back to Xendar, as she watched him feign impatience at the slowness of the turbolift, by drumming his fingers on the container sitting on the repulsor board in front of them.

"Cheya!" A voice with a girlish timbre called out.

Turning around, Oriyanna came face to face with another naval trooper, a shorter and very friendly female Chiss named Jojara.

"Cheya, how long do you have left on your shift?" Jojara asked excitedly.

"Because the army troopers challenged the pilots and us imperial troopers to a game of Grav-ball. I'm really hoping to get picked to play against Hunter Squadron. There is a rumor that the Corosos twins will be playing for them!"

It was no secret that the Corosos twins had quite a few female admirers. As both boys were considered to be very handsome as well as being talented pilots and Grav-ball players.

"Sorry, Jojara. I can't. I'm still on duty. Just before the captain made that announcement, my comlink went off, and I was ordered to escort and watch this repair tech."

Jojara looked over at Xendar and gave a shuddering double-take.

"You certainly got the raw deal on this one," she whispered as she leaned close to Oriyanna.

"But if you get off in time, we definitely could use another player. That, and Lieutenant Marvkres is going to be there. And from what I heard; he is interested in meeting you. Though, as a piece of advice, ditch the chrysalide rancor behind you," Jojara said, grimacing as she looked over at Xendar.

"I'll have to see what happens. But thanks for telling me," Oriyanna said as the turbolift door slid open. And Xendar stepped in, pushing the repulsor board into the turboshaft.

"And don't worry about that rancor behind me. Once this job is over, he'll be on his way to whatever the next job is on his list," Oriyanna said as she stepped into the turbolift.

As the doors slid shut, Oriyanna gave a sigh and then looked over at Xendar then smiled.

"I wonder what Jojara would do if she found out that you and I are engaged," she said with a giggle.

"More than likely, question your sanity," Xendar replied. "And doubly so if you were to tell her that you are from Ragnath and not from Chyron."

"That place is worse than Coruscant," Oriyanna said, shuddering. "Having to spend two weeks on that planet is something I never want to do again."

"A necessary evil," Xendar replied. "That slicer we arranged to get off Chyron was one of the best and very thorough as well. As it takes a fair amount of time to slice into various government systems, as well as creating false identities."

"I know that it was necessary for the mission, but that doesn't mean that I have to like it," Oriyanna stated.

"Speaking of our mission, this is our stop," Xendar said as the turbolift doors slid open.

Stepping out into the corridor, they found it mostly empty, with the exclusion of two naval troopers standing guard outside one of the doors.

Walking down the hall, they made their way to the door the troopers were guarding.

There are two more guards on the inside. Xendar projected.

How do you know that? Oriyanna asked mentally.

I was in there less than sixteen hours ago. While you were giving that concert. I was laying charges around the engine room. Then I came here to break Nyrrire's comm unit. Just as I finished my task, two guards came into the room. And they were talking about how the Council of the Taldryan clan wanted to increase the security measures that could be enacted to ensure Nyrrire's safety.

"IN-76945, Trooper Cheya Vandries," Oriyanna said as she and Xendar stopped in front of the two security officers. "I am escorting this repair tech here to fix Lieutenant Colonel Nyrrire's com unit."

One of the troopers held out a blank pad. Oriyanna took off her glove and placed her hand on the pad. It gave off a green light and a bright affirmative sounding chirp. Oriyanna pulled her hand off as Xendar stepped forward and placed his hand on the pad. Which glowed green and gave off a chirp as well.

"Your authorization chip?" One of the troopers asked as they pulled out a small reader.

Xendar reached into the breast pocket of his uniform and pulled out a small chip-like device, and handed it to the trooper. The trooper inserted the chip into the reader and watched as the small reader screen began to display the contents of the chip.

Handing the reader over to the other trooper to read. The first reached down to his belt and pulled off a comlink.

"This is IN-4535, in sector seven," the trooper stated. "I have a repair tech here with orders to repair Lieutenant Colonel Nyrrire's com system. Can you verify that?"

"Affirmative, IN-4535. The Lieutenant Colonel authorized that repair himself."

"Understood, sending data for unit authentication," IN-4535 replied as he nodded to the other trooper holding the reader.

"Affirmative, IN-4535. The duty roster shows a Kelf Danagin on duty for making repairs to the Lieutenant Colonel's com system and IN-76945 to act as a security escort. Everything checks out. Let them through."

IN-4535 reached over and rapped his knuckles against the door, which slid open with a silent hiss. IN-4535 motioned in the direction of the now open doorway.

"Get inside, but keep it quiet. The Lieutenant Colonel is working, so try not to disturb him."

"And your rapping loudly on the door did not?" Xendar said in a snarky tone as he started to walk into the room.

"Hey! You had better watch it, rookie! Or you might not like where you end up!" IN-4535 hissed at Xendar.

Xendar stopped and slowly turned toward IN-4535, and as the door slid shut, he smiled.

It was not a combative, angry, or even a nasty smile. The only way that IN-4535 could describe it was, frightening.

Stepping past the two troopers guarding the door on the inside of the room. Xendar and Oriyanna made their way over to the center of the room. Stopping at the desk, the two of them came to attention.

Lieutenant Colonel Nyrrire sat at his desk, going over some intelligence reports.

"You are relieved, trooper," Nyrrire said to Oriyanna, without looking up from the reports.

"Understood, sir," Oriyanna said, then spinning around, she marched back to the door and then out into the corridor.

Several moments passed as Xendar stood at attention, silently waiting. As proper military protocol stated, he waited for Nyrrire to order him to fix the comms system.

"At ease, technician," Nyrrire stated, still focused on the reports.

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir." Xendar replied.

"The comms unit is over there," Nyrrire said, pointing at the holo transmissions unit.

"Understood, sir. I will get right on it." Xendar said, pushing the repulsorboard with the container on it, over to the holo unit.

Nyrrire watched the technician as he started to take apart the holo unit.

There is something odd about this tech. Nyrrire thought to himself. *Security sent me the file on him just before he came in the door. His file says that he comes from a military-oriented family, which would explain the lack of behaviors displayed by a normal recruit on their first patrol, but not the nonconformist attitude or the feeling of darkness that seemed to surround the tech.*

Nyrrire's train of thought was broken by the sound of yelling and blaster fire coming from the corridor. After a moment of tense silence, the door hissed open, and IN-4435 staggered in. His movements were mechanical and spasmodic. As he stepped in, he let

loose a massive torrent of blaster fire. Catching one of the other two troopers in the room square in the chest.

"Hit the deck!" someone yelled.

Nyrrire watched as the tech working over on the holo unit dropped to the ground. The tech looked up and yelled. "Sir, you need to get to better cover!" And then launched himself at Nyrrire, tackling him. The two of them hit the ground with a muffled thump.

The blaster fire continued for several seconds before suddenly stopping.

Nyrrire slowly lifted his head to try and look around. He could see that the other security trooper and IN-4535 managed to hit each other as Nyrrire saw their inert frames sprawled across the floor.

Slowly Nyrrire tried to get to his feet. As he did so, he found that he could not. As he was pinned under the tech. Nyrrire took to yelling loudly and trying to move back and forth in an effort to get the tech to move. After a few moments. Nyrrire found out, to his irritation, that the tech was unconscious.

While struggling to get out from under the unconscious tech, Nyrrire could have sworn that he had heard a voice in his mind.

That is correct. You are hearing my thoughts that I wish you to hear. Though, I must applaud you. You are quite the resilient being, Teebu Nyrrire. But as a piece of advice, enlist some guards with a stronger will. And do not worry, none of them are dead, I made sure the weapon settings were set to stun. But for the moment. I am going to need you in an unconscious state. It will make things progress so much easier.

Everything suddenly seemed to go strange, as if his mind was slowly being overloaded somehow. The last coherent thought that passed through his mind was that he might have misjudged the tech.

"That went a lot easier than I expected," Oriyanna said as she sat in the copilot's seat of the Lambda shuttle that they had stolen. She had finished putting on her armor and began to braid her hair.

"Yes, things do tend to go a lot smoother when the whole ship becomes preoccupied with an abandon ship order," Xendar said. He was back in his standard garb of Assassin's Armor with a midnight black Armorweave cloak.

"And how did you manage that one? People were saying that there was a massive explosion in the engine room. Because, as far as I am aware of. Demolitions and slicing are not your areas of expertise." Oriyanna stated.

"Xendar gave her a relaxed smile." I can't take credit for this one." Xendar stated.
"Those charges I used; they came from your father. They make a lot of smoke, and while they give off a fair amount of heat and flame. They really don't do much damage. As to getting you and me on the duty roster at the same time and the abandon ship order, you're going to have to thank Slicer for that. She's the one who came up with the programs to make that happen."

"Who's Slicer?" Oriyanna asked.

" She's the one during Operation Hidden Blade, that was responsible for getting the Invasion of the Republic of the Force back on track. After taking electronic control of a TRF base, she managed to drop the planetary defense shields for a TRF Acclimator Assault ship in orbit, and then she cleared up the communications black-out, the invasion force was under. And right now, she is teaching history at the academy. She also does some classes on electronic warfare."

A soft tone interrupted their conversation.

"It looks like we have arrived, and it's time to hand off our guest, will you land this ship while I go get him?" Xendar asked.

As Teebu Nyrrire awoke, he found himself staring at the plain ceiling bulkheads in the passenger section of the shuttle. As he tried to move, he found that he had been restrained on a repulsor board.

"You are awake, good," an eerie sounding voice on his right side stated.

Turning his head in that direction, Nyrrire found himself staring at a figure shrouded in black. Their face, completely obscured by shadows.

"Who are you?" Nyrrire asked, staring defiantly at the figure.

"No one of consequence," The figure replied.

"I doubt that," Nyrrire replied. " I get the notion you are someone much higher up the chain of command than you let on."

"Think what you wish," the figure replied as they grabbed the edge of the board and started to push it toward the front of the shuttle.

As he was being pushed. Nyrrire tried to get a good look at his captor.

From what he could see, he began to speculate.

Male, possibly Human, or near-human. Nyrrire thought to himself. A glint of metal caught his eye, a lightsaber. *Force user, not a Jedi, a Sith perhaps? No. Far too polite*

and far too restrained. He must be a Gray. Though, he seems to prefer hand-to-hand combat. He concluded as he got a good look at his captor's hands. Noting the talons on the fingers and the blood-red claws above the knuckles.

"We just landed in the docking bay, and Gorax Lead states that they are ready to accept the transfer," another voice broke in. As their form stepped into view, even though they were clad in full body armor, Nyrrire picked up another nugget of information. *Female. Again, human to near human. And, from the looks of the armor, a standard Brotherhood special operations soldier. No. Wait. Black armor, Two DC-15 pistols and a DC-17m blaster rifle. Custom armor and non-standardized weapons, definitely one of the high-profile special operations soldiers.* Nyrrire concluded, as the two figures led the repulsor board he was strapped to, down the shuttle's entry ramp and into a large docking bay, where they seemed to be waiting for someone.

These two are from the clans, but which clan? Nyrrire thought. Plagueis? No. Gray Jedi in the Plagueis Clan are fairly rare. That, and their actions and mannerisms come across that this mission to them is more of an impersonal one, rather than a matter of revenge or pride. And it is certainly not Odan-Urr or Taldryan. That leaves Arcona, Sadow, Palatinea and Vizla. No, perhaps not Vizla. Vizla has strong Mandalorian influences, which neither one of these two seem to have any predisposition towards.

"Excellent work Veradun and Eleena." A voice called out. We will take it from here. Transportation has been provided for you. You may leave when you are ready to depart."

Veradun and Eleena. That was the name of Darth Malagus and his Twi'lek lover. But what relevance did that have on the situation. Then, from a dim memory in Nyrrire's mind, burst forth with startling clarity, he remembered. In a report from a mole deep within the Palatinea clan. There was a mention of several projects being developed to create stronger two being fighting teams. His mind went through the scant information that was given. He remembered the three projects that made up this idea: *Revan and Bastillia*; the pairing of a strong male and a strong female force user. *Etain and Darman*; the pairing of a strong female force user with a male Special Operations soldier. And *Veradun and Eleena*; the pairing of a strong male Force user with a female Special Operations soldier.

Nyrrire smiled to himself as the unknown figures pushed the repulsorboard he was restrained on, away to what they thought his fate was to be. *Well played, Palantinea.* Nyrrire thought to himself. *But the war isn't over yet.*

As Xendar and Oriyanna made their way back to Raganth in Xendar's ship. When the comm system started to loudly chime. Xendar hit the button to establish a communications link.

"What is it?" Oriyanna asked as she sat down in the copilot's chair.

We are going to have to cancel meeting up with yours and my parents.” Xendar stated, the irritation bleeding through his voice. “We just received a message from Command. Apparently, the ship carrying Tebuu Nyrrire never made it to Lady Nighthunter’s Ewok farm. They are wanting to keep this as quiet as possible, so we are to change course and head for the ship’s last known location.”

“What!” Oriyanna yelled. “I have troop training, personnel evaluations to conduct, and mountains of paperwork to finish! If someone else messed up, why are we having to clean up the mess?”

“I agree, that little Ewok has just caused a lot of problems for us. And when I get my hands on him, I am going to punt the little furball into next week! And then, I am going to let Zeish use him as either a scratching post or as a chew toy!” Xendar stated.