

[GJW XV Phase I] Fiction - Against All Odds
307 - Darcy Avarik of Clan Vizsla

Space surrounding Zsoldos
Zsoldos system
40 ABY

Against the dark and sparkly backdrop of space surrounding Zsoldos, an invading enemy force had caught Clan Vizsla by surprise. Starting with a few asteroids that had collided with the planet below, the enemy fleet - who identified themselves as the Children of Mortis as they demanded our surrender - had started jumping in from hyperspace, and were preparing to destroy the planet.

Onboard the merchant platform Spare Change, Colonel Darcy Avarik rushed into the hangar. The platform had been struck by one of the asteroids, causing some very serious damage to the far side. Acting on instinct, the teenager grabbed his companion and ran. Breaking free from that grip, Caden glared at the Mandalorian as his bodyguard droid rapidly stomped behind them.

"Hurry up Caden, we're under attack!" The normally quiet boy grumbled to himself as the trio ran towards the Crescent Courier, Darcy's old and battered Jumpmaster 5000.

"We don't even know what kind of attack this is," Caden argued. The two youngsters came to a halt near the rear of the Courier, and Caden's backpack droid jumped off his shoulders and scuttled towards a hidden access panel.

"It doesn't matter. Whatever they are invading, I need to get you on the Shriek Hawk and then join the defense."

The backpack droid plugged into the access panel and began watching as the two continued to argue.

"What if they are fighting a major space battle? We can't get to the Shriek Hawk if there's enemy fighters."

"Don't worry, I can pilot my ship."

"That doesn't make your ship safe." An old piece of plating fell off just as he said that. The pair began marching over to the ramp, which the fascinated little droid only just noticed with a startled beep.

"Don't crush yourself, silly," Caden chastised his droid, which after skittering to the side, was now returning to his shoulders.

"Strap in. This could get bumpy."

CC-7700 *Shriek Hawk*
Shroud Slicing Control Room

The shroud slicing suite stood in the center of a medium-sized room, a piece of advanced technology that Clan Vizsla had been awarded years ago. A powerful computer system capable of slicing through enemy ships, networks and communications, it was all but useless when the two officers operating it quibbled and argued with each other like spoiled children.

Speaking of children, a pair of teenagers entered the room, accompanied by a pair of droids; clad in shiny Beskar armor was the Mandalorian Colonel Darcy Avarik, and at his side was Caden Itharus, who was very closely followed by his two most loyal droids. Towering at the height of a Wookiee, 5K-4R (affectionately known as Skar) was busy carrying Caden's backpack while his backpack droid, RU-B1, was clamped onto his shoulders.

"Get that support down there now," Darcy commanded over his radio. "I'll lead the attack against their reinforcement transports from this end shortly. Can you handle the slicing from here?" Caden nodded. "All right, stay safe."

"Protect him," Caden ordered. Skar stomped after the Mandalorian.

"Protect."

"Oh, so you like me now?"

"No." Darcy gave the droid an insulted look as they left.

The younger of the two boys crossed the room to stare at the slicing suite and the officers controlling it. He nervously reached out and tugged at one of the officers sleeves.

"Go away boy," one of the officers dismissed him as he stared intently at the main screens.

"I need this console," he mumbled. The officers glared at him but otherwise ignored him as they continued their argument. Caden sucked in a breath of air and shouted, "Move!"

The two officers backed away slowly as Caden almost jumped at the slicing suite, pushing buttons and watching the screens intently.

"Excuse me! That is a very important piece of hardware, you're going to break it!"

"You're trying to slice their communications?" Caden asked. The officer confirmed. "This jumbled screen is the feedback?"

“Yes. It looks that way because it is encr-”

“-Encrypted with a triple-random key. Why are you trying a brute force attack?”

“Because it is the most effec-”

“All three random keys will change before you can break one of them, so why don’t you just program three polymorphic algorithms, link them, and have them do the attacks for you?”

“Well... because... what?”

Caden produced a rubber ball from his pocket and threw it at the wall.

“Go play with the ball, monkey.”

“Now you listen here!” the officer shouted as he stepped forward. Suddenly, he gave a very startled yelp and collapsed. The second officer just ran as the first one stared at the ceiling. He felt a solid weight on his chest, which crawled over and stuck a very angry looking backpack droid head into his line of sight. Ruby held up an electro-shock prod with one of her legs.

“Keep it quiet,” Caden instructed, “I need to concentrate.” He began connecting his computer probe and datapad, before typing furiously and loading some handy scripts he kept for emergencies. He had just the right virus tucked away somewhere to ensure the reinforcements were turned into sitting ducks.