

# Survival Of the Fittest

Raider Zxyl Bes'uliik Taldrya/RGT/Dark Council (#9056)

## “Deserted Island”

### Unknown Planet

It had been four weeks since DT-9452 had been stranded on this *wretched* island, completely unaware that The Brotherhood had been entrenched in deep combat with the so-called Children of Mortis. When *Xesh II*, the *Xi*-class Light Shuttle he had been given for his mission by Arx Capital Exchange nearly came apart in hyperspace on his way back to *Mattock Station*, the Death Trooper thought he was a goner. Only through pure, unadulterated luck had the former First Order soldier's adequate skills been able to guide the tri-wing shuttle through the atmosphere and closest land mass; what appeared to be a massive, bushy island with two large rocky peaks and a fresh-water lake.

The executive shuttle had torn and ripped its way through the trees and foliage, the final impact nearly killing the trooper and rendering him unconscious. He had awoken a full day later to the system's sun setting, arm bloody and a *massive* headache. After determining - which wasn't hard given the state it was in - the shuttle was trashed, DT-9452 attempted every communication method possible to reach Arx or any Brotherhood craft for that matter, and was unsuccessful in his efforts. He had issued the shuttle's distress beacon when he was first entering the atmosphere, but it was unclear if it had been received.

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### Week 1

The first two days were relatively “okay” by most standards, with the special forces operative taking care to sling his arm using vines and start the mending process. The soldier had spent nearly the entire rest of those two days painstakingly working to construct a suitable shelter, the pace hampered by his damaged arm, only occasionally stopping to relieve himself or eat some of the food supplies packed away inside *Xesh II*. His armor's scanners showed no signs of settlements, but *plenty* of life forms; likely non-sentient fauna. Whether they were prey or predators had not been determined, but DT-9452 remained prepared just in case. While lacking any real survival supplies, the Human was accompanied by his F-11D Blaster Rifle, WLD-5 Peacekeeper, an ornate Sith Dagger he had won in a brawl against one of the Brotherhood's Force-users, and spare ammunition for his blasters alongside some explosives. It wasn't much, but it had to do.

Each sunrise over the next few rotations the Death Trooper ventured further and further in a few directions from his makeshift camp, scouting the island and looking for a high vantage point where he could build a sufficient signal in case the Regent of the Brotherhood *had* indeed sent out scouts to retrieve him. That was a big “if”, though. The Commander marked his whereabouts every one hundred or so feet, so he could always find his way back home.

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## **Week 2**

Trouble didn't find him until his first week stranded had neared its conclusion. He was almost entirely out of rations, and his armor's sensors had shown various life forms closing in on his position. Over the next three days, DT-9452 had spent much of his ammunition reserves, blasting at armor-hardened beasts that, while a *great* meal, had been difficult to eliminate in his injured state. The Human struggled to hold his F-11D with both arms, greatly decreasing his accuracy and wasting too many shots from the weapons powerpacks.

In one engagement, one of the beasts had managed to knock away his rifle and prevent him from drawing his WLD-5 Peacekeeper, pushing the Death Trooper to the ground and pinning him there. After struggling to free his dagger from its sheath on his hip, pure luck had struck him again as the Death Trooper managed to deal a fatal blow to the creature's underbelly just as its large jaws snapped towards his head. For every one of these armored beasts that DT-9452 eliminated, it felt as though two had taken its place. They preferred to strike in the dusk and later hours of the night, attempting to catch him off guard and forcing the soldier to take care in constructing a small barrier and warning system made from rudimentary branches, twigs, and other small foliage to alert him to their presence.

Towards the end of the second week he found he had little use for his armor anymore, shedding his helmet and the plates covering his arms for additional movement. While his arm seemed to be on the mend, it still hurt exponentially and prevented him from speeding through rudimentary survival tasks he would normally excel at. The system's sun was getting hotter, as if the planet was in its hottest season, requiring the Human to take additional and increasingly risky trips to the fresh water to maintain his survival.

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## **Week 3**

By the middle of the third week, the entirety of the Death Trooper's ammunition had been spent and his ranged weapons rendered to mere paperweights. The explosive ordinance the Loyalist had landed with on this abhorrent island had been used. Reliance on mostly twigs, branches, a thickly braided vine rope, and his ornate dagger to main survival was heavily increased, and his only method of defense. While the armored beasts had begun to thin and learn they were clearly - no, *hilariously* - still outmatched by DT-9452, there were still attempts made to render him the food to avenge their kin.

The soldier had finally managed to reach the peak of the nearest protruding rock high above the regular flora, and began setting up a large collection of trimmed branches and other assorted items he would use to create a large fire and smoke signal. Hopefully something that would reach into the lower levels of the atmosphere and alert others to his presence here. His face and his armor was muddied, the smell coming from his body glove nothing but disgusting. Almost all of the other supplies from the shuttle had been expended, requiring him to live entirely off of what the island provided to him.

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#### **Week 4**

The fourth week brought the Death Trooper the reprise he had desperately needed. Rain fell from the sky for the first time since his arrival, refilling his fresh water reserves to capacity and making it incredibly easy to detect any oncoming fauna - while allowing him to rid some of the stench from his body. DT-9452 had finally assembled a large assortment of different flora he could use to make several large signals as to his whereabouts from that rocky peak. Each day, the soldier stocked up on whatever supplies he could muster and made the trek to light the large scale fire using nothing but his ornate dagger and suitable ferrous rocks to spark the flames.

The Commander would watch from his camp eating the remains of the vanquished beasts as the bright flames burned overhead into the late evening, preparing his supplies to make the hike the next day. His appendage had mostly healed by this point, though there was a minor tingling sensation when he moved it and a bit of residual pain remained. The rescue-or-die moment came later that week, during which a sizable group of the armored beats, including their young, decimated his camp and forced him up the rocky peak. What shelter and supplies he had built up had been devastated, rendering him exposed to the elements.

Escaping with nothing but what armor remained attached to his body and his dagger, DT-9452 had fled as quickly as possible through the path he had created. Although they pursued, they were unable to reach the peak to catch their prey - aware from the Human's observations that they had him surrounded should he try to leave it.

The Death Trooper spent three days stranded on that peak, sun beating down on him and the flames from what fires he could create scorching his body even more. He had no access to food nor water, becoming increasingly hard to maintain his physicality. On the final night before he would diminish the rest of his supplies, he lit one last flame and drifted off to sleep earlier than normal - having nearly given up hope that rescue would come.

The soldier had been wrong. In the wee hours of the morning as the flame finally extinguished itself without flora to fuel it, floodlights descended on the stony peak and woke the Commander from his slumber. Flinging his arm and hand up to shield his eyes from the craft's external lights, DT-9452 could just barely make out the silhouette of the onyx-black vessel that was descending upon him.

It was the *Eternal*. The pride of The Exchange's fleet, the *Cosinga*-class Heavy Corvette was almost exclusively used to ferry the Regent of the Brotherhood on his assignments and to the various meetings he attended. As the loading ramp lowered, the heavily armored form of Zxyl Bes'uliik himself descended alongside his two other most trusted agents; former Inspector General of the Imperial Security Bureau Ivilcar Sephtis, and the merciless bounty hunter Krr'yarl. Not one to break diccorum or protocol, the worn and battered soldier pushed himself to his feet and saluted the Dathomiri Mandalorian.

"Sir!" the Commander mustered with a raspy voice as he forced a salute. Zxyl nodded in return.

"Dee-tee-nine-four-five-two. So this is where you've been, while The Brotherhood wages war," the Regent scolded.

"My apologies, sir. *Xesh Two* came apart on me in hyperspace on my return to Arx, stranded me here."

"Of course..." began the Equite, pausing momentarily, "Do not fret. We won. The Brotherhood is safe, for now, but I have need of your determination and skillset to ensure that becomes a reality."

The Commander nodded, nearly collapsing from exhaustion. Zxyl motioned to the two behind him to assist the Death Trooper in getting inside, which they did, and before long DT-9452 was recovering in the medical bay under the surveillance of one of the medics aboard the ***Eternal*** as the *Cosinga*-class vessel plotted its return to Arx and promptly entered hyperspace.

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