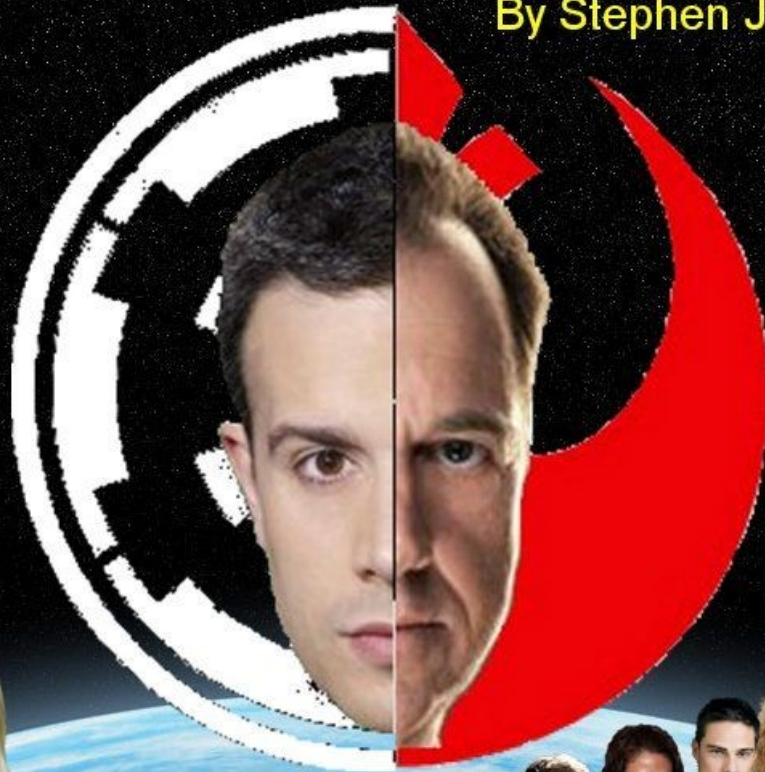


STAR WARS

9-05: Rallying Call

By Stephen J Dutton



9-05
9-05



Civil war turns father against son

IT IS A TIME OF CRISIS. REBEL FORCES FIGHTING AGAINST THE EVIL GALACTIC EMPIRE ARE OUTNUMBERED AND OUTGUNNED BY THEIR FOES. THEY MUST INSTEAD RELY ON GUERILLA WARFARE AND HIT AND FADE STRIKES BY SMALL GROUPS AGAINST STRONGER FORCES.

ONE SUCH GROUP IS LEAD BY THE EXILED NOBLEMAN VORN LARCUS III WHO, WITH THE HELP OF THE SMUGGLER MACE GRAYLE, CAPTAIN OF THE FREIGHTER THE *SILVER HAWK* TAKE THE FIGHT TO THE EMPIRE.

FACING THEM ARE A MULTITUDE OF ENEMIES, BOTH SEEN AND UNSEEN AS THE EMPIRE PLOTS TO BRING DOWN THE REBEL ALLIANCE AND FOREVER EXTINGUISH HOPE AND FREEDOM IN THE GALAXY...

RALLYING CALL

AN IMPERIAL GENERAL ARRESTS THE PLANETARY GOVERNOR OF INTAS MAJORIS BEFORE HE CAN ANNOUNCE A DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE FROM THE EMPIRE. HOWEVER, THE ALLIANCE IS NOT ABOUT TO PASS UP THE CHANCE ON GAINING CONTROL OF SUCH AN IMPORTANT PLANET AND VORN LARCUS IS ORDERED TO TRAVEL THERE AND FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THE REBELS ADVISING THE GOVERNOR AS WELL AS THE GOVERNOR HIMSELF...

Original characters created and story written by Stephen J. Dutton.
<http://thehazugfiles.uk/Index.htm>

Star Wars is the intellectual property of Lucasfilm Ltd. This story is unofficial and Lucasfilm has not approved any of it.

1.

Governor Xander Thern looked at the monitor that had been positioned so that as he read the text it showed he would appear to be looking directly into the camera mounted beneath it instead. The speech he was about to deliver was probably the most important one he had given in his seven year time as governor of Intas Majoris in the region known as the Trade Corridor, that part of the sector that had first been settled thousands of years ago. His planet was one of the most well developed worlds in the sector and that made what he was about say especially significant.

His speech was to announce that Intas Majoris was seceding from the Galactic Empire and declaring itself a member of the so-called New Republic that the Alliance to Restore the Republic was becoming. Governor Thern had discussed this with only a handful of trusted staff, such was the need for secrecy that not even the troops that would be required to move into action against the local Imperial forces were aware that they were to go into battle today. The governor's speech would denounce the crimes of the Empire and inform the population that they would no longer be expected to make the sacrifices that the Empire had demanded of them. He would also issue a general call to arms. Weapons were highly restricted on Intas Majoris but orders would be issued to police and militia posts to issue weapons to any adult with a clean criminal record who volunteered for service while the defence force was mobilised and the planetary shield raised. Though his forces would not have had time to prepare to attack the Imperial forces on the surface the same could be said of the Imperial troops as well and they would be badly outnumbered as well as cut off from any orbital support. Governor Thern hoped that their commanders would see sense and surrender rather than drag out any resistance they might attempt.

Of course before any of this happened Governor Thern needed to deliver his speech and the timing of this had been calculated precisely. It would be broadcast during the middle of a major sporting event, interrupting the feed from the stadium while a large portion of the population could be counted on to be watching. This would spread the news as quickly as possible and hopefully bring the insurrection to an equally swift close. "Two minutes governor." his secretary said and Governor Thern nodded in anticipation as he waited, "One minute." the secretary added as the time continued to count down and it was then that a scream was heard from outside the governor's office, accompanied by the sound of blasters firing.

"What going on out there?" Governor Thern said and he looked at the two guards standing just inside the door, "Go and see."

"Yes governor." one replied as he turned to open the office door, but a soon as he did so there was another shot and he dropped dead with a smoking hole in his chest. A second shot struck the other guard as he was reaching for his weapon and then an Imperial stormtrooper came charging into the room.

"Freeze!" the armoured figure shouted as a second stormtrooper followed him through the doorway.

"What is the meaning of this outrage?" Governor Thern demanded as the shocked occupants of his office looked on.

"Quite simple governor," a man in the uniform of a major in the stormtrooper corps said as he stepped over the body of one of the two dead guards with a blaster in his hand, "you're under arrest for treason."

The interruption to the sports broadcast happened right on schedule. However, rather than being sent from the planetary governor's office, the speech that was delivered live to the planetary population came from the main Imperial garrison on the planet.

"Citizens of Intas Majoris. Citizens of the Empire. I am General Orran," the Imperial army officer shown in the broadcast announced. Dressed in his service uniform he was shown standing in a hangar of some kind and behind him Imperial Army soldiers, stormtroopers and COMPFORce troopers could all be seen embarking on transport gunships, "and it is my sad duty to inform you of a heinous terrorist attack that has taken place within the last few minutes at the official residence of Governor Thern. This attack, carried out by members of the self declared Rebel Alliance stormed the building with the intent of killing the governor himself.

Fortunately members of the Imperial military were on hand to repel this attack. Governor Thern himself was not harmed during this attack but in order to guarantee his continued safety he has had to relocate to a more secure location under Imperial protection. In the meantime there will be an increased Imperial presence on the streets of your planet as the Empire roots out the rest of the rebel traitors at large. During this time of crisis I advise you to go about your business as normal but be alert for any signs of rebel activity and report them to the nearest Imperial unit as soon as possible. Only together we shall bring this emergency to a rapid conclusion that will continue to guarantee the peace and stability that the Empire has brought to the galaxy these past years. Thank you and goodbye."

As the video and holographic screens cut away from the general they briefly showed the six pointed Imperial emblem before cutting back to the sports arena while in the skies above many of Intas Majoris' cities the

sounds of hundreds of troop carriers deploying their passengers onto the streets could be heard.

"Colonel Larcus." a gruff and familiar voice called out and Vorn Larcus III turned to see a man walking down the corridor towards him.

"Colonel Sallir." he responded. The pair were both lieutenant colonels in the Alliance to Restore the Republic's field operations units but Shintal Sallir had a senior position, acting as the overall commander of all of the sector's field teams, "How can I help you?"

"What do you know about Intas Majoris?" Shintal asked.

"It's on the Trade Corridor, not far from Estran." Vorn answered, "The two planets were both settled at about the same time."

"Correct. Did you know that the planet's governor is planning to declare his independence from the Empire? He was going to publicly announce his intention to join the New Republic."

Vorn's eyes widened.

"Really?" he said in surprise, "For any world in the sector to declare for us would be a major step, but a world on the Trade Corridor? That gives us the ability to influence commercial shipping through the sector. When's this due to happen?"

"It should have happened six hours ago." Shintal told him, "But instead of a broadcast telling his people that the time had come to rise up they got this." and he held out a datapad that was already set to playback the speech delivered by General Orran.

"So what happened to the governor?" Vorn asked as he watched the general delivering his speech.

"Our unit on Intas Majoris spotted him being taken from his residence under guard. Now the streets are crawling with troops and suspected Alliance sympathisers are being rounded up in their hundreds."

"So what do you need me and my team to do?" Vorn asked.

"There are already two field teams on Intas Majoris. They were sent there to help the governor make the transition from Imperial to Alliance world. Commander Kord's unit was sent to help co-ordinate the military operation to deal with the Imperial forces present and act as a liaison between the planetary defence forces and our military while Captain Myrell's team was handling the propaganda aspect, advising Governor Thern on how to communicate his intentions to his people."

"Are they okay?" Vorn said, concerned about his fellow field agents in the face of a large scale Imperial crackdown.

"I wish I could tell you. We have heard nothing about their capture or execution so for now we are assuming that they have been able to keep ahead of the Empire. But we cannot be certain that they have not been compromised, even if they remain at liberty so I want you to take your team to the planet as soon as possible and take command of the teams there. Your mission is to locate Governor Thern and if possible trigger his planned uprising. Do you think you can manage that?"

"Sir, my team have stolen an entire fleet of capital ships from the Empire. Stealing a planet from them should be child's play." he said and then he smiled before adding, "And my team are just the bunch of children to try it."

"No!" a high pitched voice cried out from inside the YT-1300 class freighter *Silver Hawk* as Vorn approached it and then there was what sounded like the sound of an explosion.

"Ha! You didn't see that coming did you?" a much deeper voice responded.

Vorn knew instantly what was going on inside the ship and as he walked up the access ramp he heard more sounds of combat. Reaching the top of the ramp he turned to see the rest of his field team as well as his adult daughter all gathered around an electronic gaming device while an R5 astromech droid projected their individual screens into the air. The game was one that Vorn was well acquainted with. When Mace Grayle, the *Silver Hawk's* owner had bought the gaming device it had come with several games for free. Each of these was being given away because they were very old and no longer in great demand, however when Vorn had been much younger this particular game had been very popular and he had played it often, building up a great deal of skill at it in the process.

"Boss!" Kara Larcus, Vorn's young wife and also his team's medic exclaimed when she saw Vorn, "I need your help here. Tharun and Lyssa have paired and the same goes for Tobis and the klutz as well as Cass and Mace. That's left me with Jeeves." and she glanced towards a golden coloured protocol droid that also stood nearby holding a game controller.

"Oh Lieutenant Larcus miss," Jeeves said, "I did try and warn you that I was not programmed with this sort of activity in mind."

"Yeah well I at least thought you'd be able to beat the boss's little princess over there." Kara replied as she turned her head towards Vorn's daughter Lyssa who sat beside the former mercenary Tharun Verser, the field team's combat specialist and also Lyssa's husband.

"Think again mother." Lyssa responded, "Remember that I played this growing up on daddy's old console."

"That's true." Vorn commented as Kara scowled at being called mother by Lyssa. Both Vorn's daughter and

Tharun were older than she was but both of them often used the term to refer to her now that she was Lyssa's stepmother, knowing how much it annoyed her.

"Oh very well." Vorn said, "But not just now. Pause the game while I brief you on our latest mission. It's possibly the most important one we've ever undertaken."

The gathered rebels all set down their controllers as the game was paused and Mace got up to make himself a drink.

"So what's the operation this time colonel?" he asked.

"Fomenting rebellion." Vorn said and another female rebel, the unit's security and demolitions expert who Kara had referred to as the klutz frowned.

"But isn't that already what we are?" she asked.

"Think bigger than just us Jaysica." Vorn said, "We're going to try and engineer a mass uprising on an Imperial planet."

The rebels all looked at one another in silence until the youngest of the group, Mace's teenage daughter Cass raised spoke up.

"That's really big isn't it?" she said and Tharun nodded.

"As big as it gets kid." he agreed.

"Oh, err, if the Alliance is starting to take control of planets openly then we must think that we, err, that we can hold them." Tobis, the *Silver Hawk's* engineer said.

"We have the support of the planetary governor." Vorn said.

"What's the catch?" Mace asked as he sat down again with his drink, "There's always a catch."

"The governor has already been arrested by the Empire. We need to break him out of an Imperial prison cell first." Vorn said.

2.

Although the alert status of Intas Majoris was heightened, the sheer volume of space traffic enabled the *Silver Hawk* to enter its atmosphere with nothing more than a brief challenge from the planet's traffic control service to confirm the ship's identity and ask the purpose of their visit.

"This is the *Grey Ghost* out of Estran." Mace told the controller, using one of the ship's aliases rather than its actual name, "We are unloaded and here to collect cargo."

"Understood *Grey Ghost*. You are cleared for approach." the controller responded, his sensors confirming that the ship was manoeuvring as if unloaded.

"Thank you control." Mace said as he piloted the freighter into the atmosphere. The course he flew took the *Silver Hawk* along a course that at first glance would appear to be taking it towards the planetary capital before veering off towards an area of wilderness before he set it down on the edge of a forest.

Tharun was the first down the access ramp and he dropped into a crouch, looking down the sight of his rifle as the other rebels disembarked more casually than he had.

"Any signs of our friends boss?" Kara asked when Vorn lifted a set of macrobinoculars to his eyes and began to search the ground around them.

"Who are we meeting anyway?" Mace added as he joined them.

"Captain Myrell's team." Vorn replied and Mace smiled, "Oh and Commander Kord's as well." he added and Mace's face fell.

"The *Beauty Queen*?" he said.

"What's the matter captain?" Kara said, grinning, "Aren't you looking forward to working with Inra again?"

Inra Vayne was a Hapan and she was widely known among the captains of the other ships serving as transports for Alliance field teams for boasting about the supposed superiority of her much newer vessel than the ones any of them operated.

"No I kriffing well am not." Mace responded.

"Dad, what's wrong?" Cass asked as she exited the *Silver Hawk*.

"I feel I was denied vital need to know information." Mace told her, glaring at Vorn.

"Movement." Vorn said, ignoring Mace's comment when he spotted a group of figures making their way through the woods towards the *Silver Hawk*.

"Got it." Tharun added, "Looks like three people." then he lowered his rifle, "It's captain Myrell." he said.

"Grace!" Vorn called out and he waved towards the approaching trio.

"Colonel!" Grace Myrell responded as she waved back and as she came closer Vorn saw that she was accompanied by a snivvian and a human. The snivvian was a member of her own team, a former holodrama writer called Druvvon. Most of Grace's team, including Grace herself had been involved in the entertainment industry before the increasing level of censorship by the Empire forced them underground. The other individual with her was a human and Vorn saw that he was not a member of her team. Instead Brak Laeven was a member of Commander Kord's unit. He too had been involved in entertainment before joining the Alliance, however. In his case he had been a music producer and he used the skills he had developed in this role to enable him to slice into Imperial communications. The approaching trio picked up their pace and soon they were standing beside the *Silver Hawk* with Vorn and his unit.

"So what's the situation?" Vorn asked.

"The planet's under martial law." Grace replied, "We were sat in a cantina near the governor's residence waiting to hear the governor announce the start of an uprising when all of a sudden some Imperial general came on with some poodoo about a terrorist attack and telling everyone to start reporting their neighbours."

"Fortunately we had the captain's speeder close by so we made it out of the city before the army managed to get all of its roadblocks in place." Brak added.

"We left the speeder about a kilometre back there when we saw you coming in to land." Grace added, pointing back the way they had come, "We didn't want to risk it being seen just in case you turned out not to be friendly."

"What about the governor?" Kara said.

"We saw him being loaded into a gunship." Druvvon answered.

"How come you three were so close to his residence anyway?" Mace said.

"Druvvon and I wrote his speech for him." Grace replied.

"And I'd set up the transmitter so that the Empire wouldn't be able to jam him half way through." Brak added.

"Oh, err, did you use a node hopping-" Tobis began before Mace interrupted him.

"Not now Tobis." he said before turning his attention back to the three new arrivals, "So where are the rest of your teams?" he asked and Kara smiled.

"He's anxious to see Captain Vayne again." she joked.

"We haven't heard from them." Brak said.

"Commander Kord decided that they could do most good liaising with the local military forces so he had most of them positioned near the defence ministry. The plan was that as soon as the governor declared his revolt they'd identify themselves to the locals and the the head of the defence forces would clear them for access." Grace explained, "He was one of the few with advanced knowledge of the plan."

"I'm guessing that Combrowda and Tell weren't with them at the time." Vorn commented. Combrowda was Grace's wookiee engineer while Tell Kash was an iotran bounty hunter. With wookies officially designated as a slave species it made sense for Combrowda to remain out of sight. On the other hand iotrans were under no such restrictions but a heavily armed alien of any species would attract a lot of attention.

"No." Grace said, "They stayed aboard the *Artist's Impression* to keep an eye on our ships. If we needed a quick evac then Combrowda would have flown us out."

"Seems like you could have done with one." Jaysica pointed out and Druvvon pointed to the sky.

"The Empire's filled the skies above all the cities with TIE fighter patrols." he said, "We'd have been shot down before even making it out of the atmosphere."

"Plus I bet Inra would never have left her ship behind." Mace pointed out and Brak smiled, knowing that the statement was true.

"Our first step has to be to establish contact with the other members of your teams." Vorn said, "But I want to know as much as possible about what the Imperial forces are doing on Intas Majoris. Lieutenant Laeven, can you work with Tobis to slice into the Imperial communications network?"

"Of course colonel. I already have the clearance protocols for the local government system and the Empire must be using that for at least some of their operations. I should be able to use that as a back door into their more classified systems."

"Then do it." Vorn ordered.

The cell door slid open and General Orran entered the tiny room where Governor Thern was being held.

"Governor." the general said, "I apologise for the standard of your accommodation but given your continued lack of co-operation I really have no other choice."

"What do you want general? Somehow I doubt that this is a courtesy visit." Governor Thern replied as he looked up at the general and General Orran smiled.

"Quite correct governor. I am here to ask you for your co-operation once again. All you need to do is agree to appear in a live broadcast and denounce the rebel terrorists who attacked your residence."

"You and your men are the only terrorists general." the governor said sternly, snarling, "Do you think I'm blind to what the Empire does in the name of necessity?"

"These are uncivilised times governor and sometimes we must resort to uncivilised methods to keep the peace."

"The Jedi were keepers of the peace." Governor Thern said, "They were the guardians of peace and justice in the galaxy for a thousand generations."

"And what a poor job they did of it. Look at the history of the galaxy governor and you will see that it is a history of armed conflict. The Jedi and the Republic failed to see that and only the creation the Galactic Empire prevent all out chaos."

"I won't help you general and you know as well as I do that you can't do anything to me to force me. I sent my family off world before all this started and you can't beat me into submission when you need me to go in front of a camera and endorse your little palace coup." Governor Thern said and General Orran smiled.

"It may take some time to secure your release governor." he said before he turned around and left the cell before the door dropped shut behind him again.

Outside the cell the general walked alongside one of his aides.

"What's our progress on finding the governor's co-conspirators major?" he asked.

"We've arrested all of his ministers on the grounds of bringing them into protective custody and the ISB are going through their computers now." the aide replied, "But I'm informed that there doesn't appear to have been any electronic communication between any of them that mention a rebellion."

"Then it must have been done either via audio communication or face to face. Expand the search to include comms logs and get details of their movements since the death of Emperor Palpatine was announced."

"But that's thousands of hours of material."

"I know that major. Start with the governor and work outwards. He could have passed messages to others via intermediaries so see who met him and who they then went on to meet after that."

"Yes general." the aide replied, knowing that this represented a massive amount of work. The governor would have met with hundreds, possibly even thousands of people in the months since the death of Emperor Palpatine at Endor and in turn they would have met with many more. Knowing how unlikely it was that the general would get the answers he wanted in the time he wanted them, the aide resolved to send a subordinate to break the news to him if at all possible.

3.

While Tobis and Brak got to work on finding a way of breaking into the Empire's communications Grace Myrell joined Vorn and Mace in heading for the *Silver Hawk's* cockpit to try and make contact with her own vessel. The sound of a wookiee's roar told the rebels that Combrowda was still aboard the *Artist's Impression*, meaning that it was still secure.

"Combrowda," Grace said, "have you heard from Trent or any of Commander Kord's team?" Trent was the captain of the Artist's Impression, having served as her personal pilot prior to her joining the rebellion when she had been a well know holovid celebrity and the pair had been married for some time.

In response Combrowda began to roar and growl again and Grace smiled as he told her that Commander Kord himself had checked in with the ship to let him know that the rest of the team were still free, having made their way to a cantina where the staff knew better than to ask questions of their customers regarding their identities and businesses.

"Is Tell still with you?" Grace asked and Combrowda roared again to tell her that the iotran was still aboard the ship, standing guard on the access while Combrowda himself waited in the cockpit, "Good. Lieutenant Colonel Larcus and his team have arrived with new orders. Some of his people may be touch with you when we know more but in the mean time I want the pair of you to stay right where you are, don't try and get out of the city or take off unless specifically ordered to. Do you understand?" Grace added and the wookiee first mate let out another roar before Grace shut off the communications channel and looked at Vorn who smiled at her.

"Looks like drinks are on Commander Kord then." he said.

Vorn split the rebels at his disposal into two teams. He left one team consisting of Brak, Tobis, Druvvon and Cass with the *Silver Hawk* to work on slicing into Imperial communications while the other went with him to locate Commander Kord and the other missing rebels. Grace's luxury speeder was easily capable of transporting all of the rebels in total comfort and Kara took the controls to drive them towards the city. In the back of the speeder both Mace and Tharun stood ready to deal with anyone who looked like they were becoming too nosy about the speeder. Mace had his decksweeper in his lap, the bulky weapon designed to fire a rapidly expanding stun blast that would enable him to disable a large number of beings in one go while Tharun kept his powerful Blastech A-280 to hand.

"What do you know about this cantina?" Vorn asked Grace as the speeder approached the city.

"Apart from it being a wretched hive of scum and villainy?" she responded, "Not much. It's one of the places we identified as being free from Imperial eavesdroppers though, so we picked it as a meeting place if we ever got split up."

"Boss!" Kara suddenly called out from the front of the speeder, "Roadblock."

"Let me see." Vorn replied and he looked out of the window ahead of the speeder. The road was relatively clear of traffic despite vehicles being stopped by armed Imperial troops. There was at least a full squad of Imperial army soldiers blocking the road ahead of the speeder and they were backed up by an armoured personnel carrier that mounted a powerful appearing blaster cannon on its roof while a lighter repulsortruck in Imperial military colours was positioned close by as well.

"What's the call colonel?" Tharun asked.

"There are too many of them for us to deal with." Vorn said, "Even if they didn't have that damned carrier."

"Should I turn us around and see if we can find another road?" Kara suggested but Vorn shook his head.

"No." he said, "If they've already seen us then that could make them suspicious." then he looked at the other rebels in the back of the speeder with him, "Mace, Tharun, hide your rifles and take off your jackets so your sidearms are visible. Then get up to the front of the vehicle, Kara get back here with me and Grace and take off your outer clothes. Grace, Jaysica you and I need to strip to our underwear as well."

"But why?" Jaysica asked.

"Don't worry, I think I get it." Grace said as she and Vorn began to undress.

"Not from my husband you don't." Kara responded, quickly changing places with Mace without needing to slow down the speeder and she too began to remove her clothing. Then she looked at Jaysica and added, "What are you waiting for? Trust me if I have to undress you I'll throw absolutely everything you're wearing out of the window."

Jaysica frowned and began to remove her jacket.

"I've got a very bad feeling about this." she said, "Tobis wouldn't approve."

"Ha!" Tharun exclaimed as he and Mace exchanged looks, "That lad once had six women in one night."

"It's true." Mace said, nodding.

"No it isn't." Jaysica protested, "He would never-"

"Oh he was fourteen and the crew of the freighter he was serving on took him to a brothel for his birthday."

Kara said, "He told us all about it, remember? Now strip." and she reached out to pull at Jaysica's shirt, prompting the other rebel to squeal.

With Mace and Tharun now at the front of the speeder Grace reached for the control to the privacy screen that raised a barrier between them and the three rebels in the back of the speeder. This was made of a one way opaque material so that anyone forward of it was unable to see what was going on in the back of the vehicle whereas the passengers in the back could still see the driver and anyone else forward of the barrier. "Grace, is your bar stocked?" Vorn asked as he and the three women were stuffing their discarded clothes and weapons under seats.

"Sure. Though you may not like the vintage." Grace replied as she opened the speeder's built in bar to reveal several bottles of alcoholic beverages.

"It'll do fine. Anything fancy would be a waste." Vorn said and he removed a bottle of pale spice liquor from the fridge. Then he removed the top and lifted the bottle to his mouth, taking a quick drink that he held in his mouth for a few seconds before swallowing it. Next he poured a small amount into his hand and began to smear it over his chest as he passed the bottle to Grace who repeated this and in turn handed the bottle to Kara.

Jaysica was the last to take the bottle but Kara kept hold of it as she tried to take it from her.

"Perhaps I should do this." Kara suggested.

"No. I'm not having you rub this on my body." Jaysica said, "I can do it myself."

"You'll spill it." Kara said.

"I won't." Jaysica responded and she tugged at the bottle hard enough to pull it free of Kara's grasp, but in the process she overbalanced and fell backwards onto the floor of the speeder. The bottle fell from Jaysica's hands as she fell and it landed on her chest, pouring out spice liquor all over her as well as the floor and Grace winced.

"That's going to stain." she muttered.

"It was an accident." Jaysica protested.

"Never mind that now." Vorn said, "Are we all ready?"

"Aren't I always boss?" Kara replied as she climbed into his lap and then took his arms and wrapped them around her, "Now just remember that we're married and have a son. Touch me wherever you want but keep your hands off those two." and she looked at Grace first and then Jaysica, frowning as she turned to the younger woman, "Mind you I'd question your sanity if you risked any part of your body near that klutz." she added and Jaysica scowled back at her before she sat down beside Vorn while Grace positioned herself on the other. To complete the scene Kara leant in close and she and Vorn began to kiss passionately, Vorn's eyes widening as he realised that Kara was reaching behind her back to undo her bra as well.

Seeing the luxury speeder approach the leader of the army patrol smiled.

"Okay let's see what's bringing this rich son of a rancor into the capital now." he said.

With a glow rod modified with a bright red cone on top to make him easily visible, one of the army troopers stepped into the road ahead of the oncoming speeder and waved the glow rod up and down to attract its driver's attention.

Inside the speeder Tharun glanced at Mace.

"Looks like we're going to be searched." he said, "Think they're ready back there?"

"I don't know." Mace replied, "But this is one time I'm honestly glad that Cass isn't here."

"You think she'd be upset at having to undress?" Tharun asked.

"No. I think I'd be upset when she wasn't." Mace answered as Tharun pulled over to the side of the road where the patrol was located and he rolled down his window, "Can we help you?" he asked the soldier right outside the car.

"What is your purpose here?" the soldier replied before he noticed the blasters both Mace and Tharun were carrying, "Weapons!" he yelled, stepping back and pointing his rifle into the speeder.

All around the vehicle soldiers aimed their rifles at the vehicle.

"Out!" the squad leader yelled, "Keep your hands where we can see them."

"I suppose we better do as they say." Mace said as he opened the door beside him.

The two rebels slowly climbed out of the speeder, raising their hands above their heads while their blasters were taken from them.

"I have a permit for that" Tharun said as his DH-17 pistol was removed from its holster but the squad leader held up Mace's DL-44 heavy blaster pistol in front of Mace's face.

"And do you have a permit for this prohibited weapon?" he asked.

"As a matter of fact yes." Mace said, "Or rather my employer does." then he smiled, "Look, I know you're just doing your job but how about you let us be on our way and nobody needs to get into any trouble."

The squad leader then looked at the rear of the speeder.

"Who's back here?" he said, walking up to the back of the speeder.

"I wouldn't do that." Tharun suggested before the squad leader banged his fist on the window.

"You in there! Identify yourselves!" he yelled and then when there was no response from inside the rear compartment of the speeder he reached down and pulled on the door release. Finding it unlocked, the squad leader pulled open the door and was immediately hit by the overpowering smell of the spilt bottle of spice liquor, causing him to recoil.

"Close that kriffing door!" Vorn snapped as he peered out from beneath Kara and when the squad leader and another of his men looked inside the speeder they saw Vorn and the three half naked female rebels all entangled in one another and they grinned.

"Out!" the squad leader yelled, "Get out now!"

"What is the meaning of this?" Vorn demanded loudly, "Don't you know who I am?"

"I don't have clue old man." the squad leader said, "Now get out here before we have to come in there after you."

"This is outrageous." Vorn said angrily as he climbed out of the speeder ahead of the three women, "I am Lord Maxamillion Torr, Member of Parliament of Estran. My wife is a good friend of your governor."

The squad leader then looked at the three female rebels as they too exited the vehicle with Kara covering her chest with her hands.

"And which of these three ladies is your wife sir?" he asked.

"None of them." Vorn muttered.

"I'm sorry sir I didn't quite catch that." the squad leader said.

"I said none of them." Vorn replied more clearly and the gathered soldiers all smiled, none of them now paying any attention to Mace or Tharun as the two male rebels looked around and took note of the positions of all the soldiers and their weaponry.

"Okay cuff all four of them." the squad leader told his men as he looked at Kara again, "Hands behind their backs."

"I'll have you all sent to the spice mines of Kessel for this." Vorn said as his arms were pulled behind his back and binders snapped around his wrists.

When one of the soldiers approached Kara she just glared at the man and kept her arms folded across her chest.

"No." she said before he could say anything but then a second soldier stepped forwards and between them they pulled her arms behind her back and secured them with a set of binders, "No!" she shrieked again as the soldiers then held her up straight by her arms.

The rest of the squad stared at the exposed Kara but in doing so they took their attention off Mace and Tharun entirely and Mace nodded to the former mercenary. Tharun immediately turned on the spot and reached out towards the soldier standing right behind him. One hand went for the soldier's rifle while the other grabbed at a grenade on his belt. Tharun had seen that this was fixed by its pin in such a way that when pulled from the belt the pin would automatically be pulled out and as soon as he had the explosive in his hand he tossed it onto the roof of the armoured personnel carrier where he had noticed an open hatch before he head butted the soldier to get him to release his rifle.

At the same time Mace lashed out and struck the soldier supposedly guarding him in his neck so hard that he instantly dropped his rifle and fell to his knees as he gasped for breath. Mace scooped up the dropped rifle and almost in unison he and Tharun opened fire. Tharun shot the soldier he had just taken the rifle and grenade from while Mace set his rifle to automatic and fired a rapid burst towards some of the other soldiers and cut down the squad leader and one other member of the unit before they could react.

"Down!" Vorn yelled, knowing that he and the three female rebels could be of no help in their current situation and while he and Kara dropped to the ground Jaysica and Grace darted back into the relative safety of the speeder where Jaysica used her foot to retrieve her clothes from under one of the seats and crouched down to search through the pockets.

"What are you doing?" Grace asked.

"I've got a binder key in my pocket. Ah, here it is." Jaysica replied before she was able to release her wrists and held out the key towards Grace.

Outside where Vorn and Kara lay on the ground Vorn looked at his wife.

"There was no need for you to be topless you know." he said and she frowned.

"I wasn't actually counting on them cuffing us. Besides, this was your plan boss." she replied.

"Yes, well I hadn't planned on us being ordered out of the speeder at all." Vorn said.

It was then that the grenade Tharun had thrown into the armoured personnel carrier exploded and the vehicle itself blew up along with it. The blast from this forced everyone nearby to duck as burning shrapnel flew in all directions. One piece of this struck an Imperial soldier in his head before he could get out of the way and his helmet was torn off as the entire side of his head was smashed open. Another flew in through the open driver's door of Grace's speeder and the forward section of the vehicle burst into flames. In the rear compartment Jaysica and Grace were in the midst of dressing themselves when they saw the flames through the barrier separating them from the driver's compartment.

"Out!" Grace yelled, grabbing her clothes and blaster and diving back out of the speeder just ahead of

Jaysica. Only half dressed she fired at a nearby Imperial soldier who was just getting back to his feet after taking cover and he fell back to the ground. Then she turned her attention towards where Vorn and Kara lay on the ground. Just beyond them another Imperial soldier had got to his knees and was firing towards Tharun. She fired again before he noticed her and he fell sideways, landing right beside Vorn. A blaster bolt then flew towards Grace and struck the door of her speeder as one of the surviving soldiers saw her and returned fire, forcing her to roll out of the way.

Meanwhile Vorn noticed a key to the binders on his wrists hanging from the belt of the dead soldier beside him and he rolled over so that he could reach it with his bound hands and after a few moments of fumbling he felt the binders drop away from his wrists. As soon as his arms were free again he picked up the dead soldier's rifle and opened fire on the remaining Imperial soldiers who were falling back towards the nearby repulsortruck, attempting to restore some kind of order to their actions as the rebels continued to fire at them. "Keep them away from that truck!" Vorn yelled and he fired a long burst of blaster shots into the ground between the soldiers and the repulsortruck. This served to halt their withdrawal and left them out in the open where both Mace and Tharun fired at them with their rifles on automatic, cutting them all down in one go.

As the last Imperial soldier fell to the ground the three male rebels slowly advanced towards them, still keeping their rifles trained on their bodies just in case any of them were just playing dead until they could be checked individually. Meanwhile Jaysica and Grace quickly finished dressing and followed them.

"Well it looks like we need a new ride." Tharun commented, looking back towards Grace's burning speeder.

"I really liked that speeder." Grace added.

"We should at least try to extinguish the fire." Vorn said, "Some of our belongings may have survived."

"Colonel shouldn't we get you some new clothes?" Jaysica suggested, looking at Vorn as he stood in front of the other rebels still in his underwear.

"I'm sure these soldiers will have something that will fit." Mace said.

"Yes and we can make use of their vehicle as well." Vorn added, looking at the nearby repulsortruck.

"Hey!" Kara suddenly called out, "How about someone comes over here and unties me? Oh and not being nearly naked would be good as well."

"Perhaps you should take care of her colonel." Tharun said, "I've already seen more than enough of my mother in law's flesh for one day."

"Be right with you dear." Vorn called out.

4.

The rebels stripped the bodies of all of the Imperial soldiers, taking every usable piece of equipment and clothing they could. All together this gave them enough pieces of different uniforms to put together four complete sets. Two of these were immediately claimed by Vorn and Kara and they now sat in the front of the repulsortruck as Kara drove it into the city. The rear section of the truck was open topped and this just left a small enclosed compartment between the cab and the open cargo section for the other rebels to squeeze themselves into with all of the equipment that they had salvaged from the burning speeder as well as the dead soldiers.

"It looks all your equipment survived." Grace called out to Vorn, "Except your clothes of course."

"How long do think it'll take the Empire to realise that those troopers we killed back there aren't checking in?" Mace asked, looking at Grace and she thought for a few moments.

"They could already know." she said, "On the other hand it could take them more than a hour."

"Then probably about ten minutes to figure out that we've got their truck." Mace commented.

"In that case we should get rid of it." Vorn said from the front of the repulsortruck, "Kara, see if you can spot another."

"Sure thing boss." she replied.

"But won't the Empire just figure out that we've stolen another one?" Jaysica asked.

"Not if we make them think we haven't." Vorn replied and Jaysica frowned.

"We swap them over and then torch this one little lady." Tharun explained to her, "The Empire will think their other truck was destroyed and hopefully they won't log it as stolen. That will leave us driving around in a repulsortruck that the Empire doesn't even know is missing."

"There." Kara said when she drove the truck around a corner and saw an identical vehicle parked at the side of the road. There was a single crewman in the cab but no other Imperial troops visible nearby as Kara drove past it.

"Mace, you better change into one of those other uniforms." Vorn said, "You and I will deal with the driver."

"Head shot?" Mace suggested as he began to undress and Vorn nodded. Yes, then we'll swap his uniform for some of the fragments we've got. That way we'll get another disguise as well."

Kara turned another corner not far past the parked truck and Vorn and Mace climbed out before heading back around the corner on foot. They searched the street for any indication of where the rest of the soldiers who had been deployed in the truck had gone to but there were no signs of them at all.

Taking full advantage of this vulnerability, the two rebel officers walked towards the repulsortruck where Vorn banged on the door.

"Hey, open up in there." he called out.

Confused, the driver opened the door when he saw the Imperial uniforms but did not recognise the faces of the men wearing them.

"What's wrong?" he asked, leaning out of the cab and at that moment Mace produced his blaster and shot the driver in the head.

Vorn shoved the corpse back into the cab, climbing in and beginning to strip it of its uniform. Meanwhile Mace stuffed his blaster back under his tunic and let out a whistle to signal the other rebels before climbing into the cab as well. Moments later the rebels' truck came rumbling around the corner just as Mace was getting into the drivers' seat of the newly acquired vehicle and he started the engine. For now though he did not move the repulsortruck, instead waiting while Grace ran alongside it until she stood level with the very front of it and she waved to Mace. As Mace then moved the repulsortruck forwards Kara drove the other vehicle into the space it had just occupied, using Grace as a marker that allowed her to park in exactly the same position as the other truck had been.

With the older vehicle in place all that needed to be done was for the rebels to move their equipment over to the new one while the dead driver was dressed in a damaged uniform and sat in the driver's seat of the older truck. While all this was being done Jaysica crawled underneath the old repulsortruck and set a small explosive charge against its power cells. The charge contained just enough explosive to trigger a secondary detonation in the fuel cells that would consume the entire vehicle. Though a detailed investigation would undoubtedly reveal the presence of the explosive, it would not be immediately obvious what had caused the explosion and a faulty power cell would be considered a possibility by the Empire.

"So where to now boss?" Kara asked as she climbed into the driver's seat vacated by Mace for her.

"The cantina." Vorn told her, "It's about time we met up with Commander Kord's group."

Kara nodded as she started to drive away and just as the repulsortruck rounded the corner there was the sound of an explosion from behind them as the vehicle they had used to enter the city was consumed in a fiery detonation.

The cantina was located down a narrow street that made approaching it in the repulsortruck impractical. Instead Kara, Tharun and Jaysica remained with the vehicle at the end of the street while the other rebels went the rest of the way on foot, Vorn using a borrowed jacket to cover his stolen Imperial uniform. Inside the dingy building they found that the cantina was a lot larger than it appeared from the outside, with a set of steps taking them down into a room that obviously extended beneath the neighbouring businesses as well. "This looks like a scene fitting for outlaws to be hiding in." Druvvon commented as he looked around the interior of the cantina and Mace grinned.

"Think the owner got permission for all of this before knocking through into the neighbours' basements?" he commented as he looked around at the various sonic billiard tables and slot machines that filled much of the room.

"I'd be surprised if he even has a liquor licence." Vorn replied, "Now can you see Commander Kord anywhere?"

"No but I can see Mack taking some poor laser brains for every credit they have." Grace replied as she looked across the cantina and saw the gambler who acted as her team's medic sat at a sabacc table playing cards with three strangers.

"Sen at ten o'clock." Mace added and Vorn turned to see Sen Verid, the *Beauty Queen's* engineer, slumped over another table with a number of small glasses arranged into a pyramid shape piled up in front of him.

"So who do you think will react better to being interrupted? The drunk or the gambler?" Vorn said.

"Probably the gambler. But waking the drunk will put him in a bad mood and that will annoy Inra more." Mace replied and he started to walk towards the unconscious Sen.

"I've got a bad feeling about this." Vorn said.

"Me too." Grace agreed, "But I can't look away."

Mace walked calmly across the cantina, avoiding making eye contact with any of the other customers until he reached the table where Sen sat alone and he sat down beside the engineer. In addition to the pyramidal stack of empty glasses there was also a single half full one that Sen had obviously been drinking when he lost consciousness. Smiling, Mace picked this up at the same time as he lifted Sen's head off the table and pushed him back in his chair. Sen's head fell backwards and his mouth dropped open when Mace did this and the smuggler lifted the half full glass over Sen's head and slowly tilted it.

Sen let out a groan as a small trickle of drink poured down into his face and Mace stopped pouring when Sen tried to wave the trickle away while still remaining unconscious. Mace then poured more of the drink right into Sen's mouth and he woke with a start, letting out a surprised cry as he flailed his arms about and toppled over onto the floor, kicking the table in the process. This knocked the pyramid of glasses off it and there was a loud clatter as the reinforced glasses bounced off the floor. Having patrons drop or attempt to deliberately break glasses was a common enough occurrence in the cantina that the owner had replaced them all with ones that were as difficult to break as possible.

A few of the other customers looked towards the sound of the disturbance, as did a pair of burly looking staff at the bar but most of the beings inside the cantina regarded the commotion as none of their business.

"What the kriff are you playing at?" Sen demanded before he realised who it was that was now standing over him.

"Good to see you too Sen." Mace replied as he extended a hand to help Sen back to his feet, "Where's Commander Kord?"

"Out back." Sen said, "He thought it would be better to keep out of the way."

"So how come you and Mack are out here?" Mace asked.

"Because Inra was winding Trent up." Sen said and Mace smiled, knowing that Trent Myrell had no more time for Inra's boasts about the supposed superiority of her vessel, "We decided to get out of there before he decided to kill her." Sen then looked around, "Marse and Coll are about as well somewhere. Playing sonic billiards last time I saw them."

Mace nodded.

"You better show us where the commander is." he said.

"Us?" Sen commented and then he looked past Mace to where Vorn and Grace stood, "Oh, right. Come this way then."

Sen showed the three officers into a back room where Commander Kord waited with Inra Vayne and Trent Myrell.

"Grace!" Trent said, smiling as his wife entered the room and he rushed to embrace her, "Thank the Force you're here at last." and then he glared briefly at Inra.

"Dayle." Vorn said and Commander Kord got to his feet.

"Colonel." he responded, "I didn't know you were coming."

"Colonel Sallir sent me to take charge of the rescue operation." Vorn told him, "Can you shed any light on what happened to the governor after he was removed from his residence?"

"None at all." Dayle said, "We saw the broadcast announcing the crackdown and knew something had gone

wrong so we came here to lay low until the heat died down.”

“Frankly I'd rather take my chances out there.” Trent muttered, glancing at Inra again and Mace grinned.

“Since Grace is here I'm guessing Brak made it safely out of the city as well.” Dayle said and Vorn nodded.

“We left him back at the *Silver Hawk* with Tobis and Cass. They're trying to find a way into the Imperial communications network.” he said.

“With the communication suite aboard that old bucket?” Inra said and she looked at Dayle, “Commander we should get Brak over to the *Beauty Queen*. At least then he'd be using equipment that's not older than the Clone Wars.”

“The equipment aboard the *Silver Hawk* is perfectly adequate. We're not wasting time moving personnel from one ship to another.” Vorn replied.

“Of course not.” Dayle agreed, “So do you have a plan to get us out of the city colonel?”

“Same way we got in. We've got a repulsortruck parked not far from here.” Vorn replied.

“We got it the same place the colonel got his clothes.” Grace added, “Well, we got one truck there and swapped it for a clean one later.”

It was then that Dayle and Inra noticed the visible parts of the Imperial Army uniform Vorn was wearing under his borrowed jacket.

“An army trooper? Why are you the only one wearing that? Why aren't any of the others?” Inra asked.

“Because only the colonel and Kara ended up half naked when my speeder caught fire.” Grace told her and Vorn sighed.

“Let's go.” he said, “I want to meet up with Combrowda and Tell aboard the *Artist's Impression*. Then we'll check in with the *Silver Hawk* and find out how far they've managed to get.”

5.

There was insufficient space inside the repulsortruck for all of the rebels to fit comfortably so some of them had to ride in the open section to the rear. In order for them to remain unseen as Kara drove through the city streets they had to lie flat while several sheets were draped over them. This simple precaution proved sufficient to deflect any official attention away from the vehicle and when Kara drove up to one of the checkpoints blocking escape from the city it was simply waved through by the army squad manning it. Kara then drove directly to the nearby private docking bays where both the *Artist's Impression* and the *Beauty Queen* waited.

Grace and Trent entered the docking bay that held their ship and almost immediately the baudo-class star yacht's access ramp extended to reveal the iotran Tell standing at the top.

"We were starting to think that you weren't coming." he said as the ship's owners beckoned the other rebels to follow. Designed for the loading and unloading of cargo as well as passengers, there was enough room in the docking bay for the stolen repulsortruck to be brought inside once the main doors were opened just long enough to get the vehicle off the street and out of sight.

"You know we'd be a lot more comfortable on the *Beauty Queen*." Inra commented as she boarded the *Artist's Impression*.

"At least here I don't need to worry about having to fix anything that gets broken in here." Sen responded as he sat down and put his feet up on a table in the yacht's lounge before letting out a belch that produced a strong smell of alcohol. Combrowda roared angrily at the suggestion of the ship he worked to maintain being treated in such a manner.

"Calm down." Trent told the wookie, "If he breaks anything you have my permission to break him." and Combrowda placed his hands behind his head as he looked at Sen and let out a growl of contentment. Meanwhile Kara looked at Jaysica.

"I'd wait outside if I were you." she said, smiling and Jaysica frowned at her.

"I think we should try and get in touch with the Silver Hawk." Vorn said, "Mace, Dayle, Inra, Grace, Trent. Shall we make our way to the cockpit while the others get something to eat and perhaps some good strong caf for Sen? He still smells like the inside of a spice bottle."

"I've got something for that in my cabin." Mack commented, "I've woken up after a few heavy nights myself." The rebel team leaders and ship captains all made their way to the yacht's cockpit where they found Grace's silver coloured protocol droid.

"Mistress Myrell, I am so relieved to see you have returned to us still fully functional." the droid said.

"Thanks Easy." Grace replied, "Now could you give us some room? It's going to be cramped enough in here with six of us."

"Of course mistress. If it is acceptable to you I will go and recharge." Easy replied and Grace nodded.

"That's fine." she said, sitting in the co-pilot's seat while Trent sat in the pilot's seat and adjusted the setting from how Combrowda had left it. The other rebel officers stood behind the Myrells and Grace activated the ship's communication system, "*Silver Hawk* this is *Artist's Impression*. Do you read me?"

"Yes! Yes I can read you. Is my dad with you?" Cass's voice responded excitedly.

"Right here Cass, what's wrong?" Mace asked.

"Nothing. It's just that with Tobis and Lieutenant Laeven working on slicing to the Empire's communications I'm stuck here with nothing to do but think about whether you've been caught." Cass said and Mace smiled.

"Always nice to hear your offspring care about you, isn't it?" Vorn said before he smiled and, remembering how he was once shot by his eldest son he added, "Though perhaps my experience in that matter isn't the best to go by."

"Cass we need to know how Tobis and Brak are getting on." Mace said.

"Sure dad, I'll just go and check." Cass replied and then there was the sound of her getting up and leaving the cockpit.

"You left your kid in charge of your ship?" Inra said, "Oh well, at least if she crashes it, the dents won't show so much."

"Commander?" Brak's voice then asked from the *Silver Hawk*.

"Brak." Dayle said, "have you broken into the Imperial communications yet."

"Yes, Tobis and I cracked it about an hour ago."

"Have you located the governor?" Vorn said.

"Yes colonel. We intercepted a communication between the army and the Imperial Security Bureau.

Apparently the ISB wants access to the governor to interrogate him over his links to the Alliance but the army's not having it. General Orran, that's the local army commander, wants to use the governor to justify his coup." Brak explained.

"So he's worried that an uprising could go ahead even without the governor." Vorn said.

"It's an old story." Dayle commented, "Political leaders only lead where they know their people will follow. Governor Thern knows that the population here on Intas Majoris is tired of living under the yoke of the Empire."

"But where is he?" Mace said.

"According to the information we've intercepted he's being held in the detention section of the main garrison." Brak said and Vorn nodded.

"That makes sense I suppose." he said. "In that case we need to see how many Imperial uniforms we can rustle up and then it's time to go for a ride."

All of a sudden there was a loud roar from the lounge, accompanied by a high pitched scream.

"Combrowda." Trent said.

"Jaysica." Vorn added and he ran from the cockpit, followed by the other rebel officers. Reaching the lounge they found Combrowda standing in the centre of the lounge with his arms raised above his head where he held Jaysica. Meanwhile the pieces of a broken mug lay scattered across the floor while the liquid it had held was soaking into the carpet.

"It was an accident!" Jaysica cried out as Combrowda shook her.

Between the three teams there were enough Imperial uniforms available for almost all of their members. Even the iotran Tell was able to hide his appearances by putting on the uniforms of a stormtrooper. Ultimately only Combrowda and Druvvon could not be disguised and it was decided that they would form the basis of how the rebels would make their way to the garrison's detention section.

Initially the rebels used their stolen repulsortruck to drive right up to the main entrance of the garrison. The fortified structure was the typical hexagonal modular construction design that was connected to a nearby landing pad for shuttles that was raised high off the ground. Although the garrison was on a heightened state of alert, the imposition of martial law on the planet meant that there were relatively few troops available to man the perimeter and only the normal number of guards patrolled inside the power fence that surrounded the garrison several hundred metres from it.

The guards on the gate scanned the repulsortruck's registration as it drove towards them and their system told them that the vehicle was authorised for access. This did not mean that they simply opened the gate for it to drive right through, however. Instead one of them stepped out of the armoured guard house and flagged the repulsortruck down. Most of the rebels visible to the guard either wore the uniforms of enlisted military personnel or in the case of Combrowda and Druvvon sat in the open rear section wearing binders. Only Trent, wearing a lieutenant's uniform, sat in the open section at the rear to give him the appearance of an officer detailed to take charge of a patrol.

"Where are you taking this thing?" the guard asked, snarling as he looked at Combrowda and the wookie growled at him.

"Quiet!" Marse Horkin, the former naval trooper who was now part of Dayle's team said and he and Tharun both aimed rifles towards Combrowda.

"We caught these two trying to break into a militia armoury." Sen told the guard and then he glanced at the other two rebels visible in the cab, "Right?"

"Yep." Coll Jurven, the final member of Dayle's team replied from the truck's driver's seat without even turning his head.

"Oh, err, yes that's correct." Tobis added.

"They claimed to be alone but I suspect there may be more of them." Trent called out from the back of the repulsortruck, "We're taking them for interrogation."

"Okay take them inside." the guard said and he waved towards the guard house, letting the other guards know that it was safe to open the gate and the barrier sank into the ground to allow the rebels to drive through the perimeter.

"Okay we're through." Sen said, peering into the covered rear compartment where all of the rebels that could not be made to look like members of an army patrol or their prisoners were squeezed in.

"You all know the plan." Vorn said, "We release the governor and then we get him to the communications suite. From there he can make his speech announcing the revolt."

"Won't the Empire be able to jam it?" Cass asked.

"Not when we control their jamming equipment." Brak replied.

"That will be our job." Vorn added, "While Combrowda and Druvvon are being escorted to the detention section we'll head for the communications suite."

"Think you can get us somewhere that we can disembark without being noticed Coll?" Dayle asked.

"Yep." Coll responded as he drove towards the garrison building itself.

Driving right up to the high, steep sides of the garrison Coll slowed the repulsortruck down to a walking pace. From this location the rebels could see the surveillance cameras mounted at the tops of the high steep sided garrison walls and could see that they were pointing further from the structure rather than watching its base.

This allowed the rebels in disguises not suitable for the role of impersonating members of an army patrol to disembark individually or in small groups between the garrison wall and the repulsortruck before calmly walking towards the nearest entrances while Coll continued to drive towards the main vehicle hangar. Once inside he parked the repulsortruck beside a row of identical vehicles and the remaining rebels disembarked as Imperial personnel continued to work around them, completely oblivious to the fact that a rebel team had just penetrated their base.

6.

Trent led his team towards the garrison's detention section. The disguised rebels that accompanied him, Tharun, Tobis, Mack, Coll, Sen and Marse all appeared to be army troopers and were obviously heavily armed with both rifles and pistols and when they entered the detention section the officer on watch looked at them and snarled.

"No-one said anything to me about new prisoners." he said.

"We can just turn them loose if you'd rather." Trent replied. The watch officer's rank badge also labelled him as a lieutenant so Trent was not concerned about being accused of insubordination.

"Surveillance." Tharun muttered when he noticed the various scanner arrays positioned around the detention section.

"I see them." Marse whispered back at him, "Ready Coll?"

"Yep." Coll replied.

"That won't be necessary." the watch officer said in response to Trent's comment and he looked at a pair of his guard unit, "Take them." he ordered and the two troopers advanced towards Combrowda and Druvvon. The moment they came within arm's reach of Combrowda the wookiee let out a loud growl and suddenly reached out towards the nearest, his fake binders dropping from his wrists.

"He's loose!" Sen yelled as the rebels all raised their weapons as if to try and regain control over the enraged wookiee. In reality they had already each chosen a target and they opened fire on the detention section guards and the scanners built into the walls and ceiling. Combrowda on the other hand grabbed hold of the guard he had been reaching for just as the man was pulling his sidearm from its holster. Grabbing hold of the guard's arm just above the elbow while placing the other on his shoulder, Combrowda pulled as hard as he could and the guard screamed in pain for a brief moment before losing consciousness as his entire arm was ripped out of its socket. Combrowda then made the unconventional move of swinging the severed limb like a club at the second guard coming to take him and Druvvon to cells and he knocked the man's blaster from his hand.

Druvvon then dived to pick up the dropped weapon, slipping out of his fake binders as well and as soon as he had the blaster in his hand he shot its owner at point blank range.

The detention section staff were taken totally by surprise by all of this. They expected to have nothing more serious to deal with than resistance from unarmed and bound prisoners as they were being taken to cells, so their initial reaction to suddenly coming under fire from opponents armed with blasters was one of confusion and this only served to put them at an even greater disadvantage. This was compounded even further when their officer was hit in the chest by Trent's first shot before he could attempt to raise the alarm. As soon as the shooting started another guard came running towards the detention section's command post but before he could open fire Tobis shot him as well.

It took less than a minute for the rebels to take out not only the detention section guards but also all of the security scanners and Trent ran for the control station.

"We need to find out what cell the governor's in." he said as he located the list of prisoners, "Here it is. Cell THX-one-one-three-eight."

"Err, that's this way." Tobis said and he ran down the corridor that the guard had charged down, jumping over his body as he ran. Then as soon as he reached the cell where the governor was being held he opened the door then just looked inside as he tried to think of something to say.

"Well?" Governor Thern said when he saw a man in an army uniform standing outside his cell and he looked at the rifle Tobis carried, "Are you my firing squad?"

"Oh, err, no." Tobis said, "We, err, we-"

"We're here to rescue you governor." Tharun said before Tobis could get the words out.

"Thank you." the governor said as he rushed towards the cell door, "I take it that you're with the Alliance?"

"Captain Myrell sir." Trent said from the end of the corridor, "Now if you'd like to accompany us we need to be getting out of here before the rest of the garrison figures out that they're under attack."

Unlike Trent's group, the other rebels wore a wide variety of uniforms. Most of them were conventional military officer's uniforms but Inra wore the pale tunic of an ISB agent instead and the rebels noticed that even though the ISB was not supposed to have any authority over the military, the staff of the garrison avoided making eye contact with her.

Having entered the garrison in small groups, the rebels under Vorn's command first had to meet up with one another before they headed for the communications suite as a single group. They had almost reached their destination when all of a sudden klaxons began to sound.

"I think Trent's made it to the detention section." Grace commented.

"And if that alarm's sounding it probably means that he made it out again." Vorn added, "We need to hurry." There were two guards standing outside the main communication suite when the rebels arrived but they did not act to hamper them in any way, believing them to be Imperial officers. However, all that changed when Vorn rushed past them, pulled a compact blaster from under his tunic and fired it into the ceiling of the communications suite.

"You are prisoners of the Alliance to Restore the Republic!" he shouted, "Co-operate and you will not be harmed."

Upon hearing this the technicians who had been frantically working to organise the security teams now hunting for the escaped governor and his rebel accomplices as well as monitoring communications from outside the garrison suddenly stopped and looked around as the rebels stormed into the room. In the corridor outside the guards both raised their weapons but a pair of rapid shots from Tell felled them both.

"Stand guard." Grace told him and Tell nodded as the other rebels dragged the bodies of the guards inside the communications suite out of sight.

"What is the meaning of this?" the officer in command of the communications suite demanded as Mace pulled him from his seat, pressing his heavy pistol against the man's neck.

"I thought the meaning was pretty clear." Mace replied, "We're rebels and you are our prisoners."

"Get away from your consoles." Brak ordered the technicians, "Everyone over by that wall." and he waved his blaster towards a nearby wall.

"Come on, we haven't got all day." Kara added as she watched the technicians begin to move.

"Kara, Inra, keep an eye on them." Vorn ordered, "Everyone else take a seat. Brak I want you to set up the broadcast system while we deal with the troops here in the garrison. We'll need a way out once we're done."

"What's going on?" General Orran demanded as he rushed into the garrison's main command centre.

"It's hard to tell sir." one of the officers on duty replied, "We appear to be under attack by a large rebel force. A small team infiltrated the garrison and released Governor Thern. Now we're getting more reports of rebels being sighted from all over."

"Recall our troops from the city. This location must remain secure." the general ordered.

"We can't sir. There's something wrong with our communications." the other officer said.

"The governor must not be allowed to escape." General Orran said.

"Yes sir. I've sent runners to the landing pad, vehicle hangar and TIE bays warning them all to be on maximum alert. But we need all the troops we have available to protect the perimeter."

"That's it." Mace said, leaning back in his seat, "If we've done this right all that's left inside the garrison with us are support staff and pilots. All of the combat troops are moving out to counter a non-existent attack force approaching from the east."

"Excellent. Now we-" Vorn began before Tell called out.

"Incoming." he shouted as he stepped through the door and the rebels prepared to defend the communications suite. However, when the first figure charged through the open door it turned out to be Trent.

"Don't shoot, it's us." he said as the rest of his team and Governor Thern followed him.

"Governor." Vorn said, "I'm Lieutenant Colonel-"

"Vorn Larcus." the governor interrupted, "Yes, I remember your face from when you were a member of Estran's Parliament."

"Yes that's me." Vorn replied, "Now if you'd like to sit down we've prepared the equipment here for you to address your people."

All across Intas Majoris video, holographic and audio broadcasts were suddenly interrupted and the governor's voice spoke up.

"This is Governor Xander Thern and a speak now to the people of Intas Majoris. You have been lied to, there was no terrorist attack on my residence and I was not being protected by the forces of the Empire. Instead it was General Orran who led a coup against me and I have been held captive at his headquarters before being liberated by members of the rebel alliance. I speak to you now as a fellow citizen who has watched the Empire bleed our planet of its wealth and resources over the years and I have come to the conclusion that this state of affairs can no longer continue. The Empire is not invincible as they would have you believe, all across the galaxy the rebel alliance is driving them back and now is the time for us to reclaim what is rightfully ours. To the members of our defence forces and militia I call upon you to defend your homes from the Empire. To our police I call upon you to root out and arrest the Imperial agents who spy upon us and to the people I call upon you to take up what arms you can in support of our sovereignty. With this in mind I am ordering every defence force and militia post to issue a weapon to every able bodied citizen of good character who reports for duty. I call upon you all to rise up and resist the Empire, take back our world. Good luck and may the Force be with us all."

"Very good governor." Vorn said.

"But will it be enough?" Mace asked.

"Only time will tell." Vorn replied, "Speaking of which, that broadcast can't have gone unnoticed. Now perhaps we should be getting out of here before General Orran figures out there is no attack going on and he is able to recall his men."

"There's a shuttle on the landing pad and our phony orders have cleared everyone out of our way." Dayle told Vorn and he smiled.

"Then I think it's time to be leaving." he said, "After making sure that the Empire can't use any of this equipment again of course."

As the horrified Imperial prisoners looked on, the rebels opened fire on the communications equipment that filled the room and destroyed every console there was, leaving behind just smoking debris. Then as they left they closed the door behind them and destroyed the opening mechanism, trapping the communications staff inside with no means of calling for help.

Then they ran, moving as quickly as they could through the garrison until they reached the landing pad connected to it via a short walkway.

"Stay where you are!" a stern sounding voice called out from the walkway just as the rebels were rushing aboard the single lambda-class shuttle that was parked on the landing pad and Vorn looked around to see General Orran and a squad of stormtroopers charging towards them.

"I'm terribly sorry for all of the mess general," Vorn shouted back as the shuttle's engines started up, "but you didn't really give us much choice." then he hurried up the shuttle's access ramp just as it began to close.

Outside on the walkway the stormtrooper began to fire at the shuttle as it rose up into the air but the sturdy craft remained undamaged as its wings dropped down before it flew away, leaving the general unable to do anything more than watch the rebels escape.

Meanwhile somewhere in the distance there was the sound of explosions as the people of Intas Majoris began to rise up against the Empire.