

# STAR WARS

## 1-02: The Emperor Extraction

By Stephen J Dutton



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...

## **THE IMPERATOR EXTRACTION**

A LUXURY HOTEL FREQUENTED BY THE RICH AND POWERFUL BECOMES THE SCENE FOR A MANHUNT WHEN IT IS SELECTED AS THE VENUE FOR A TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE. MAJOR VORN LARCUS MUST PLAY THE PART OF THE NOBLEMAN HE ONCE WAS IN ORDER TO INFILTRATE THE BUILDING AND ABDUCT A PRODIGY WORKING FOR THE GALACTIC EMPIRE. BUT A REAL NOBLEMAN NEEDS COURTIERS...

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<http://thehazugfiles.uk/Index.htm>

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# 1.

All eyes turned towards Vorn Larcus III when he stepped into the lobby of the Emperor Hotel. He was doing his best to maintain a dignified appearance and fortunately he had frequented many such establishments as this when he had still held his title. These days it was rare that he went anywhere near these sorts of places, let alone stayed at one. Given his history, he knew exactly why all of the human males and a great many of the females present were looking at him. It had nothing to do with his appearance or manner, no matter how important and self-assured he tried to look; a sixty-year-old man did not attract a lot of attention in this sort of place. Instead it was to do with his companions.

Neither Jaysica Horbid and Kara Bilstran were the sort of women who could have ever afforded to stay here - even before they joined the Rebellion, but they were stunningly attractive, and he had his arms around them both. For the purpose of this mission they had understandably enough been issued with clothing more suitable to blending in around wealthy businessmen and nobles and their hangers on than the somewhat less flashy clothing they tended to wear when crawling through gaps in fences so that they could blow something up. The pair had apparently enjoyed the chance to go through the stockpile of expensive clothing that the Alliance's forces in this sector had acquired over the years and he had a hunch that they had taken far more than they had brought with them here. Even the amount that they had brought seemed to be more than would be needed. But then again travelling with far more fancy clothing than they needed was a hallmark of the types of women that they were supposed to be pretending to be and Vorn though that it was not worth complaining about. Certainly the other men in his rebel group, who were not accompanying him, had appeared somewhat jealous of his assignment. Even Tobis the engineer, who had done his best to look like he was not staring at Jaysica when she and Kara decided to model some of their new clothes. Though he had been quick enough to offer a helping hand when Jaysica's heels had proven to be too high for her. "Wait here," Vorn told the two women, "I'll go check us in." and he separated himself from the women and went to the reception desk.

"Larcus," he said, "checking in." doing his best to act like he did in his pre-Rebellion days, as if the man sat at the desk was nothing more than a droid.

"Ah yes, Mister Larcus," the young man answered, "I have you down for three occupants in just the one room, with a double bed. Is that correct?" and Vorn noticed the receptionist looked past him towards Jaysica and Kara instead.

"Yes it is," Vorn snapped at the man loudly, "and you would do well to look at me when I'm talking to you."

"Of course sir," the man replied, flustered and worried that his superior may have overheard the complaint, and he logged Vorn's arrival on his computer before pressing his hand down on a bell mounted on top of the desk.

"A porter will show you and your lady friends up to your room sir," the man said, "and a droid will follow with your luggage when it is unloaded from the speeder.

"Excellent," Vorn said, almost thanking the man, but remembering that that was not the way the sort of man he was pretending to be acted. The sort man that he used to be.

Vorn returned to his companions.

"We're checked in," he said, "someone will show us up soon," and he went back to standing arm in arm with the two women.

It was less than a minute before a man in a hotel uniform approached him.

"Mister Larcus?" he said, "I'm here to show you and your companions to your room."

"Very good," Vorn said, "lead the way."

The man turned and walked towards the turbolift cluster followed by the undercover rebels. Jaysica let out a slight yelp as her heels once again proved to be too high for her, but fortunately this time she had a good hold on Vorn that prevented her from falling over.

"Nice work," Kara whispered, "most of us learned to walk as babies."

"Shut up," Jaysica replied.

"Oh keep quiet the pair of you," Vorn said as they stepped into the turbolift with the bellboy.

When the door slid shut, the young man behind the reception desk leaned over to the man next him and whispered, "Did you see those women with him? That's one lucky bastard."

The turbolift soon took them to the top floor of the hotel, where the bellboy led them to a room immediately across the hallway and unlocked it.

"This is your room sir," he said, stepping through the doorway and beckoning for Vorn to follow him, "you of course have a full en-suite bathroom with separate shower and grand sized bath, while in here you have our full entertainment system that features audio, video and holographic presentations. The full info-net is

accessible, either from your own terminal or we can provide one for you. Do you need me to show you how this works?"

"No," Vorn said, narrowly avoiding adding 'thank you', "that will be all."

"Of course sir," the droid replied, and he smiled when Vorn tossed a credit chip towards him, "Thank you sir," he said when he saw the denomination of the coin before he set down three key cards on a chest of drawers and he left the room. On his way out he almost bumped into a droid that was little more than a flat platform with a repulsorlift engine that was loaded down with various cases.

"Is that for Larcus?" he asked the droid.

"Affirmative," the droid replied.

"It's the lucky bastard in there," the man said, pointing towards the closed door of the group's room.

Vorn looked at the pile of cases that the droid dropped off. Three of them were his, which meant that assuming that Jaysica and Kara had each brought them same amount of luggage as each other meant that they had five cases each and all of them were larger than his.

"Ah good," Kara said when she opened up her first case and she removed a bikini, "I'm just going to put this on." she said, "I'll be back in a minute." and she disappeared into the bathroom.

While Jaysica opened up several different cases without removing anything, Vorn just removed his clothes from two of his cases and put them away. Then he went to his to his other case and opened it up; there inside was the equipment for the mission. Vorn removed a palm-sized device and then began to move about the room, watching it.

"We're clear," he said, "No surveillance detected."

"So we can talk freely then major?" Jaysica asked, standing up straight and looking at him.

"Yes, go get Kara," he told her. Before Jaysica could go to the bathroom, Kara reappeared from it.

"Well what do you think?" she said, spreading her arms apart to show off what she was wearing.

"I think it doesn't leave much to the imagination," Jaysica said.

"Well I think that men will be imagining quite a lot when they see me in it," Kara responded, "and I don't think that this will scare them as much as that polymer one piece thing you brought."

"Hey, I like this swimsuit" Jaysica said, pulling a black polymer garment from one of her cases and holding over her body, "its nice and shiny."

"It's perverted."

"Are we quite done?" Vorn asked, "We're here to do more than just sit by the pool you know. We need to find that computer expert and disable the hotel shield so we can get him out of here safely."

"But we will be able to sit the pool as well won't we boss?" Kara asked.

"Of course," Vorn said, "intel says that he won't be here until tomorrow."

In truth Vorn had little interest in lazing about by the pool. He was far more interested in gathering intelligence, but he decided that the task would be far easier if he could just ditch Jaysica and Kara and ask a few discrete questions on his own. But still there was a part of him that enjoyed the looks that he got when he came out of the turbolift with his arms around the two young women who were now dressed, barely, for spending the afternoon lying in the sun. There was also a very large part of him that actually relished having such a pair of women so close to him, but that part of him had to be ignored. After all not only was he their superior officer, but he was also more than thirty years older than Kara and almost forty older than Jaysica. They were young enough to be his daughters.

Vorn's thoughts suddenly turned to his actual daughter, somewhere on an Alliance safe world where the Empire could not get to her. Sadly, he knew that he had raised her to be the sort of privileged brat that his companions were pretending to be, and he had been compelled to trick her into getting onto the transport ship that had taken them from their homeworld when he escaped the Imperial agents coming to arrest him. Agents like his own son.

"Are you alright?" Kara asked, looking at Vorn as they walked to a row of poolside sun loungers.

"Yes, I'm fine," he lied, "Look you two go and relax. I'm going to look around and ask a few questions."

"Sure thing," Kara answered, and for show she kissed his cheek before going to one of the sun loungers.

Vorn headed to the bar. After all, the barman was bound to know about any big events well in advance. The bar itself was a circular structure beside the pool, designed so that it was possible to get to it by walking or swimming there.

"Good afternoon sir," the barman said as Vorn took a seat, though Vorn saw him glancing towards where Jaysica and Kara lay, "what can I get you?"

During his time with the Rebellion, Vorn had become used to drinking whatever was available. His private bottle of Cassandran choholl was being saved for a special occasion. Few Alliance facilities had an extensive wine list, and it suddenly occurred to him that this mission would give him the chance to try something a little more like what he had previously been used to.

"Corellian whisky," he said, "no ice."

"A man who knows his liquor," the barman said, and he poured a glass for Vorn.

"My companions drive me to it with their constant demands," Vorn said downing the drink in one, "Another," and he held out the glass.

"You're with the two women over there by the pool aren't you sir?" the barman said, pouring more whisky into the glass.

"Yes I am, an associate recommended them to me when I said needed someone with special talents."

"I see sir," the barman replied, not realising that Vorn was actually referring to their abilities to destroy things and patch up the wounded. "Another drink?"

There was a scream from behind Vorn that sounded all too familiar followed by a large splash.

"It sounds like one of them has just found the pool," Vorn said looking at the barman.

"The young lady in black. Indeed she has sir."

Vorn shook his head slowly.

"Sometimes I think that girl needs permanently strapping down for her own good," Vorn said, and the barman just gulped.

There was the sound of wet footfalls and Jaysica appeared beside Vorn, drenched and shivering. In her hands she held the pair of high-heeled shoes that she had been wearing when they came down to the poolside.

"My heel broke, look," Jaysica said. She held up the broken shoe for Vorn to see, shaking it about. The damaged heel swung back and forth and then broke free of the shoe, flying through the air towards the barman, who ducked just in time.

"I'm so sorry," she exclaimed.

"That's alright miss," the barman replied.

Jaysica turned back to Vorn. Still shivering she spoke to him again.

"That water's freezing," she said, "you'd think that a place like this could keep it a bit warmer."

"Something to warm up my friend please," Vorn said to the barman.

"Pink lizard thunderbolt?" the barman suggested.

"No, she's far too unsteady on her feet while sober. A lum will do nicely," Vorn said and the barman poured Jaysica a drink.

Then Vorn remembered the real reason why he'd come to the bar in the first place.

"So tell me," he said to the barman, "I noticed that there was a lot of activity around the ballroom. Is there a party being planned?"

"No sir, its some sort of conference. Lots of technology specialists coming here tomorrow. Most of them are the sorts who had already had doctorates by the time they were fifteen I think."

"I didn't realise that technology geeks could afford this sort of place, you must be undercharging them, or overcharging me maybe."

"Their companies are paying for them I believe sir, we've hosted them before. They like the fact that we have our own shield generator for enhanced security. There are a lot of people who would make tempting targets for the rebellion coming."

"You don't say," Vorn said, "Did you say that you have your own shield generator?"

"That's right, full ray and particle shielding. It's not state of the art military stuff, but it'll hold off anything short of a frigate long enough for law enforcement to respond."

"Where is it?" Jaysica suddenly asked. Vorn had hoped she'd keep quiet while he spoke to the barman, and he feared that her sudden outburst would cause the barman to clam up. Few places like this openly discussed the technical nature of their security arrangements.

But he had figured without taking into account the fact that the barman wanted to keep the beautiful woman in the shiny swimsuit sitting right in front of him, even though he did believe that she was Vorn's woman.

"There are emitters all over the place," he said, "that way its not possible to take out the system with one shot before the shield goes up."

"But what about the generator?" Jaysica asked him.

"Oh that's in the basement in an armoured chamber. No one can get in there."

"So the power just runs from there to the emitters then does it?" Jaysica asked.

"Yes that's right. It comes from there and then splits off to the emitters."

"That's really interesting," Jaysica said, then she looked at her glass, "I've finished my drink and I'm still cold."

"I think maybe you should dry off," Vorn suggested.

"That's a good idea," Jaysica said, "You've got the room key though. Will you come up with me while I get out of this wet swimsuit?"

"I think I can do that," Vorn said, and with Jaysica holding his arm the pair returned inside the hotel.

"Lucky bastard," the barman muttered to himself.

Vorn sat back; making the most of the thickly padded sofa in the hotel room while Jaysica was in the bathroom. Not knowing how long the young woman was likely to be he had picked up the controller for the entertainment system and was looking through the menus. Not surprisingly the only items on offer were those fully approved by the Imperial censors.

"You know this is great," Jaysica called out from the other room, "I don't need to take the swimsuit off, I can just rub the towel over it as well."

Vorn was about to reply when the com unit chimed.

"Yes?" Vorn asked, activating the unit at his end.

"Good afternoon sir, its reception here. There's a gentleman down here with a package for you. Would you like us to bring it up to you?"

"May I speak to the gentleman?" Vorn said.

"Hello mister Larcus," another voice spoke, and Vorn immediately recognised it as Mace Grayle, the smuggler who captained the transport ship on which Vorn's unit was based, "I have the documents you requested. Are you free to discuss them?"

"Yes I'm free," Vorn answered, "Kara's by the pool and I think Jaysica's experimenting with static electricity. Tell one of those receptionists to show you up," and he disconnected the link.

"Who was that?" Jaysica asked as she emerged from the bathroom.

"Vorn, he's brought the blasters."

## 2.

Mace smiled at the hotel employee who was showing him up to the room.

"Do you know mister Larcus well?" the man asked him.

"Yes, I've worked with him for some time."

"Is he always accompanied by those two young ladies?"

Mace guessed that Jaysica and Kara had made an impression on the locals, just as had been expected.

"Oh yes, they're always around him," Mace said to the man, "They are impressive aren't they?"

"Oh yes sir, very much."

"Especially the shorter one," Mace continued, "few people get over an encounter with her."

"Really? Most people here are talking about the taller one more."

"Well she's no wallflower either. I was there when they were told they were coming here and that they would be allowed to pick out whatever clothing they wanted for the trip. Mister Larcus and I just stood back and waited for the dust to settle when they were let loose on the clothing racks."

"I can guess sir."

Then the turbolift door opened with a chime.

"Here we are," the hotel employee said, walking across the hallway and pressing the door com button.

Instead of a voice over the com, the door was opened to reveal Jaysica standing there.

"Oh hi Mace," she said, "Come on in."

"If that's all sir, I'll be going," the hotel employee said with a smile.

"Yes that's fine," Mace replied and stepped into the room without giving the man the tip he was hoping for. As the door shut the man turned back towards the turbolift cluster and bumped right into Kara as she emerged from one of them.

"Oh I'm terribly sorry," the man said, embarrassed.

"Oh I'm used to it," Kara replied, sliding past him to the door.

Who needs a tip anyway? The man thought to himself after breaking contact with Kara and returning to the turbolifts.

"Special delivery," Mace said, setting the case down on the table after Kara was let in, "without any of the hassles of those nasty intrusive security checks at the commercial starport you arrived at."

Vorn turned the case around and opened it up. Inside, set into a foam lining were three hand held blasters, one full sized pistol and a pair of compact hold out models. Spare ammunition clips were also included. Vorn picked out his hold out blaster and checked it.

"Of course," Mace said turning towards Jaysica and Kara, "I've got no idea how you two expect to conceal anything in those outfits. Though I do have one suggestion."

"Really?" Kara replied, taking the larger pistol from the case, "Would you like to demonstrate on yourself?"

"No, I don't think so," Mace answered.

"Well at least mine fits in a purse," Jaysica said, and she took one of the purses that she had brought with her from a case and held it up next to her hold out blaster that she then picked up, "it's small enough."

"Everything about you is small," Kara snapped, "even in heels that you can't walk in."

"We won't be taking them down to the pool anyway," Vorn said and he turned towards Jaysica, "Will we?"

"No," Jaysica answered, removing the weapon from her purse.

"Good," Vorn said and then he turned back to Mace, "Do you have the data?"

Mace pulled a mem-stik from his pocket.

"Fresh from the local planning department boss," he said, "its got full structural drawings on it. It doesn't show what's inside any particular room, but you should be able to pull the entire layout of every building on the grounds from it."

"The generator is in the main building somewhere," Jaysica commented, "I persuaded a barman to tell me."

"I can't think how," mace said, staring at her standing there in just her swimming costume.

"Never mind how," Vorn said, taking the mem-stik and placing it on the table, "Right now I need you to get back to the ship. We'll let you know when the target is in our possession and the shields have been disabled."

"Then we swoop in and fly you away." Mace said, "Mind you, I wouldn't want to be in your shoes if the hotel management ever catch up with you after you skip out without paying the bill."

"Yes, when you're a wanted rebel your greatest worry is a fifteen thousand credit hotel debt," Vorn said with a smile, "and that's without room service and pay per view."

Mace smiled back and left the room. As he did so, Kara reached for the mem-stik.

"What are you doing?" Vorn asked her.



"I thought I'd make a start on figuring out where the generator is hidden," she answered.  
"Never mind that for now," Vorn told her, "There'll be plenty of time for that tomorrow, right now I want the pair of you to get changed, it's almost dinner time and I want us to be seen in the restaurant."

Vorn simply took the one suit that he'd brought with him and changed into it. However, both Jaysica and Kara insisted on going through every case they had and laying out various outfits on the bed in order to determine which were the best ones to wear to dinner. By the time they had made their choices, put them on and done their hair and make up more than two hours had passed.

"Are you sure you're ready?" Vorn asked them sarcastically, "Because I can always watch that documentary on the wildlife of the Kashyyyk system a couple of more times if you need more time." He hadn't actually been that bothered about the delay, it wasn't as if they were running against the clock, and in a way it also reminded him of his earlier life and the hours he had spent waiting for his wife to get ready before the accident that took her from him, and later his daughter dashing about in a panic because the gloves she was holding up looked the same colour to him even though apparently 'They are two completely different shades of white daddy.'

On the trip down to the restaurant however, he did decide that it would be best to caution the two women on their behaviour.

"Sip your drinks, don't gulp," he told them, "if you have any questions about the menu whisper them to me instead of shouting them to the waiter, and most importantly," and he turned specifically towards Jaysica, "if you spill anything on me then so help me I will put you over my knee and spank you," then he realised that they had reached their destination floor the turbolift door had opened. Outside a group of elderly people were staring at him.

Vorn just linked arms with Jaysica and Kara and walked out past them.

"Good evening," he said to the people as they watched him go past.

The restaurant staff seated them at a table near the window, and when Vorn noticed that the waiters who came to them all seemed to want to stand behind Kara he wondered if he should have warned her about her low cut dress when she bent over near him in their room. But he put this out of his mind when Jaysica tapped his arm.

"Trouble," she said softly, and nodded across the room. Looking over his shoulder, Vorn saw something that he had not seen since arriving here, an Imperial uniform. The man he saw talking to one of the waiters was from the Commission for the Preservation of the New Order.

"Just stay calm, and keep enjoying your meal," Vorn whispered back, "Its hardly surprising that COMPNOR have sent someone to watch over the place."

"What if he's brought an entire squad of troopers with him?" Jaysica asked nervously, "There's just the three of us."

"Don't worry, its not as if we're going to march into the conference and publicly kidnap our target now is it? We're going to be far subtler than that. Now like I said, just carry on with your meal."

"Okay then, I'll relax," Jaysica said, reaching out for her wine glass. Which she promptly knocked over.

"It was an accident." Jaysica said as when they got back to their room.

"You said that you'd spank her." Kara said as she followed Jaysica and Vorn through the door, attempting to wipe the stain from her dress.

"Technically that was only if she spilt anything on me," Vorn replied, "which she didn't do."

"In that case," Kara said to him, "I should get to spank her instead."

"No." Jaysica said.

"She ruined my dress boss."

"Its not like you were ever going to wear it again," Vorn said, "I doubt that we'll be able to take it with us. You've got plenty of other things back on the *Silver Hawk* anyway."

"But she still spilt her drink on me, now I think I should be able to spank her like you said you'd do if it was you."

"You can't let her do that." Jaysica protested.

"Yes you can, you're an officer."

Vorn held up his hand for silence.

"No one is spanking anyone." he said.

"Why?" Kara asked.

"Because the others would never forgive me," Vorn said.

"You see," Jaysica said, "they'd never let you do it."

"Actually I was thinking that they'd want to watch." Vorn responded.

"I have my recording rod, we could film it." Kara suggested.



"The answer's still no." Vorn said, "Now I suggest we all get changed, forget about it and relax until we turn in for the night."

"Err boss," Jaysica said, looking around the room.

"Yes, what is it?"

"Where are we actually going to sleep? There's just the one bed and the three of us."

"Didn't either of you pack sleeping bags in all that luggage?" Vorn asked Jaysica and Kara, but the two women just looked at one another before shaking their heads.

"You brought ten cases of clothes between you, but no sleeping bags?" he said, "That's just brilliant. Well then, I'll take the couch and you two can share the bed."

"No way," Kara said, "I'm not sharing bed with her, she'll probably beat me to death in my sleep, *by accident*."

"Then what do you suggest?" Vorn asked.

"She can take the couch," Kara said, "and we'll take the bed."

"Why do I get the couch?" demanded Jaysica, "Why can't you sleep on the couch and I'll share the bed with Vorn?"

Vorn sat down. As hard as it was for him to believe, these two women were now arguing with one another over who got to share his bed and both were arguing that it should be them.

"Just toss a coin, okay?" he said.

Jaysica and Kara both looked at each other.

"Okay." Kara said.

"Fine." Jaysica said.

Vorn took a coin from his pocket.

"Call it," he said he threw the coin into the air.

"This couch is actually really comfortable," Kara said after the light was turned out.

"Not as good as the bed I'll bet." Jaysica said as she wriggled under the covers.

"Shut up the pair of you and go to sleep." Vorn said.

"Boss?" Kara said.

"What now?"

"Can I have a glass of water?"

"No. Go to sleep, that's an order."

Vorn awaited Kara's next comment, but it never came, and instead Vorn focused on trying to get to sleep himself. Next to him, Jaysica seemed to fall asleep almost straight away. He realised that he would be more comfortable if he rolled over, but he wanted to roll in the direction of Jaysica, and he didn't think that it would be appropriate for him to do that. He couldn't move away from her before rolling over either, he was too close to the edge of the bed. Moments later things were made worse when Jaysica rolled towards him while she slept and she pressed herself up against him.

"Oh great," he said to himself quietly, and he just lay still.

### 3.

When Vorn awoke the next morning he found himself in an undesirable position given the situation. At some point during the night, Jaysica had got on top of him and now she was lay there still sleeping with her legs either side of him and her face next to his.

“Err, Jaysica,” he said softly, but she didn’t respond, “Jaysica,” he said again, louder, but she remained unresponsive. Kara however, did sit up on the couch and look towards the bed.

“Way to go boss,” she said, “and thanks for keeping it quiet so I could sleep.”

Kara got up and picked up her recording rod. She activated it and approached the bed with it pointing at Vorn and Jaysica.

“The guys will love this,” she said, “well except Tobis of course, he’ll be jealous you’re making moves on his woman.”

“Stop that,” Vorn said, “this isn’t funny.”

“Oh yes it is,” Kara said, bringing the recording rod up close to Vorn and Jaysica’s faces.

Jaysica suddenly opened her eyes and saw Vorn beneath her while Kara filmed them. She shrieked and rolled over, but she rolled towards Kara and off the edge of the bed, landing on the floor below with a thump. Kara also cried out in pain and dropped the recording rod onto the bed when Jaysica landed on her foot.

“Serve’s you both right,” Vorn said as he got out of bed. He reached for the recording rod, but Kara was able to grab it before he could get to it and delete the footage she had just shot.

“What did I do?” Jaysica asked as she adjusted her nightdress, making sure that it covered her properly.

“Well its not a court martial offence,” Vorn told her, pulling some clothes from a drawer, “but I’m pretty sure that the Alliance frowns on its personnel getting on top of their commanding officers while they’re asleep.”

“It was an accident,” Jaysica said, getting to her feet.

“Never mind,” Vorn said, “Now we need to get down to business today. The convention guests should be arriving soon, and we need to locate our target, disable the hotel shields and get him out of here so that Alliance Intelligence can pick his brain about what he’s working on.”

“So what do you want us to do first then boss?” Kara asked.

Vorn paused.

“Well I think getting dressed is probably a good start, then breakfast.”

Following breakfast the three rebels split up, moving around the hotel grounds looking for the computer expert they had been ordered to abduct. After a short while Kara instead returned to their room to review the information provided to them by Mace the previous day, searching for the shield generator that had to be disabled if their fellow rebels were to be able to bring their ship here and whisk them away. It was at this point that Vorn decided to take up a place by the pool and just watch who came by. Many of those attending the convention appeared to be heading for that area after checking in, and he surmised that their target was just as likely to do so as the rest. Only Jaysica continued to travel around the grounds, but after less than an hour she appeared in front of Vorn.

“They’re all the same to me,” Jaysica said, “geeks. Even Tobis is more interesting than them,” and she sat down on the sun lounger next to Vorn’s.

“Well I’ve not seen him yet,” Vorn said, “I don’t suppose that you spotted him on your travels did you?”

“Actually I spent most of my time dodging the geeks trying to grab hold of me,” she replied, “the other people here may be really stuffy and proper nobility types, no offence...”

“None taken, they are.”

“...Thanks, but at least they can keep their hands to themselves. Being ogled is better than being grabbed by some stranger. For some reason a lot of them think because my swimsuit’s polymer it’s really funny to try and get a finger inside it and make it snap against my skin. I’m not surprised Kara went back to the room to work with that mem-stik.”

“Perhaps if you wore something less suggestive,” Vorn offered, though he still rather liked the idea of her and Kara spending most of their time dressed for being here by the poolside. Especially now that there were even more people around to be jealous about what they wrongly believed the relationship to be.

“Don’t blame my outfit,” Jaysica said, leaning hack on the sun lounger, “I can’t help that I’m so hot,” and she picked up a bottle of sun lotion and opened it.

She tried to squeeze out some of the lotion onto her hand, but nothing came out. Then she tried shaking the bottle instead.

“Is there anything in this?” she asked.

“It felt nearly full when I picked it up,” Vorn told her, “but it’s Kara’s.”

"Oh she won't mind me using a bit," Jaysica said and she shook the bottle harder, then she banged its base against the table between the sun loungers.

There was a 'pop' as the cap flew off the bottle entirely, and a large portion of the lotion contained inside spurted upwards before coming back down and landing all over Vorn.

"Watch it!" he said as Jaysica dropped the bottle, and put her hands to her mouth.

"I'm so sorry," she said, "it was an accident."

"Give me your bag," Vorn said.

"Why?"

"Because it's got the room key in it and I need to go and get cleaned up."

Jaysica picked up her purse. She dipped inside it and took out her comlink and nail file and then handed the bag to Vorn. He took the bag without saying anything and headed back inside while Jaysica began to work on her nails.

"It's all really rather amazing," the man whose identity badge read 'Rynal' said to Jaysica. Two of the male guests at the convention had decided to come and sit on the sun lounger vacated by Vorn when they saw that she was by the pool on her own. She knew that the man had been saying something about his work in combining droid and computer technologies, but she had switched off in the same way she did whenever Tobis spoke to her.

"So what do you think?" the other man, whose badge read 'Cool Darik', said to her.

"About what?" Jaysica asked, not having a clue what she was being asked about.

"About coming to our party," Rynal said, "it's nothing formal, you don't need to change what you're wearing."

Jaysica smiled to herself. The party would be either just her and these two geekish men with a few bottles of cheap beer, or alternatively an entire room full of similar tekkie types with less interesting personalities than the droids many of them designed all swarming around her because she was more attractive than any of the women she'd seen wearing conference identity badges.

She was about to decline, when a sudden thought struck her. Their target had not been identified yet, but a party full of guests from the conference would be a likely place to locate him.

"When and where is this party exactly?" she asked.

"We told you, it's on the eighth floor tonight, from seven," Rynal.

"Until late," Darik added in a vain attempt to appear like someone who got invited to a lot of interesting parties.

"Well my boyfriend won't be able to come tonight," Jaysica said.

"Oh," Darik said suddenly, the disappointment in his voice obvious, "you have a boyfriend then."

"Yes, he's the man with the greying hair I was with when you were staring at me earlier."

"The one you spilt sun lotion all over," said Rynal.

Jaysica wasn't impressed by that comment, and felt the urge to tell the pair to go away.

"Yes, that's him," she said instead, "he's got work to do tonight - more of his boring papers. But since he won't have time for me, I could come down and just bring our girlfriend Kara with me."

"A girlfriend, cool," Darik said, a grin spreading across his face, "Is she hot like you?"

"Oh yes, sometimes I can hardly keep my hands off her."

"Then we'll see you later," Rynal said as he and Darik got to their feet.

"Count on it," Jaysica answered as they walked away.

"Score," she heard Rynal say to Darik, "we'll have the hottest chicks there," and the pair raised their hands and slapped them together.

"Losers," Jaysica muttered, and she went back to her nails. Then she was interrupted by the comlink.

"It's me," Kara said when Jaysica activated it.

"Hi, I just got invited to a party," Jaysica said.

"Yeah right."

"No honestly, you're invited too."

"Well it's not a party without me is it? Anyway that's not why I'm calling, I think I've found the shield generator."

"Great," Jaysica exclaimed, "guide me to it, then you can talk me through disabling it," and she got up from the sun longer taking the comlink and nail file with her.

Kara guided Jaysica around the side of the hotel to where a flight of steps lead downwards to a door on which was written 'STAFF ONLY'. Jaysica pressed the control beside the door and it opened with a hiss.

"It wasn't even locked," she said into her comlink as she stepped inside.

"Why would it be?" Kara said, "The rich and pampered aren't interested in a service corridor."

Beyond the door was a simple corridor. Unlike the areas of the hotel intended for the high paying guests, this corridor had paint that was fading and peeling here and there. Further on Jaysica could see where the turbolift cluster reached this level.

"Where now?" Jaysica asked.

"Follow on until you hit the turbolift cluster," Kara instructed her, "I think that the shield power conduit comes from in there."

"Oh, you think - that's encouraging," Jaysica said, but she followed the direction anyway, dashing along the empty corridor towards the turbolifts. There she found a single door opposite them that was unmarked, and she pressed the control panel beside it. Like the exterior door, it opened immediately and Jaysica went through. Inside, the room was featureless.

"There's nothing here," she told Kara, "its completely empty."

"Is it clean?" Kara asked, and Jaysica looked around again.

"Yes, spotless."

"Then its being used for something special or it wouldn't be being kept in such good shape would it?"

"I get your point," and Jaysica looked around again. This time she spotted something, a panel on the wall that was held on by four screws in its corners.

"I think I've found something," she said, "there's a panel covering something."

"Can you get the cover off?"

Jaysica went closer and looked at the screws, they each had a simple slot in them, it looked like she would be able to get her nail file into them to loosen them.

"I think so," Jaysica said, "I'll get back to you when I'm done."

Inserting the nail file into each screw, Jaysica removed them one at a time and then pulled the panel covering from the wall and set it down beside her.

"Right," she said into the comlink, "I've got the cover off, now what?"

"You should be able to see a metal rod about the width of your wrist on the end of a spring," Kara told her, "that's the power conducting element for the entire shield grid."

"Yes, its right in front of me."

"Good, now you need to retract the rod from the contact that the spring is pressing it against."

Jaysica reached into the machinery exposed by removing the panel and pressed her fingers against the thick rod and pulled it backwards."

Okay," she said into the comlink, "I've moved it back, now what?"

"Jam it," Kara told her, "you can't let it make contact with the other terminal."

"Jam it with what?"

"Well what do you have? There must be something there to jam it with."

"Look," she said, "the only things I have with me are the swimsuit I'm wearing, my comlink and nail file. I can't talk to you if I've wedged the comlink in the machinery, and the nail file is metal."

"Well take a look around, there must be something around that you can use."

Jaysica looked around, but the tiny room was nearly empty, the only things around were the panel that she had removed, and the four screws that had secured it in place. All of them were metal.

"There's nothing," she told Kara.

"Well you need to think of something."

Jaysica stopped and thought.

"It can be anything that doesn't conduct electricity yes?" she asked.

"Yes, anything so long as it's insulated and will fit in there."

"Right okay, I've got an idea. I'll get back to you in a moment," and Jaysica turned off the comlink.

She went to the doorway and made sure that it was locked to prevent anyone from just walking in on her and turned back to face the exposed machinery. Then she reached up to her shoulders and slid the straps of her swimsuit down over them. Then she paused before she pulled the polymer garment from her body, down her legs and then stepped out of it.

She shivered slightly, more from nerves than being cold now that she had no clothes on at all. After all, the swimsuit was not a very good choice for keeping warm. She picked up the swimsuit and then returned to the open panel with it in her hands. She crouched down and reached inside again, pulling back the rod Kara had told her to. Then she pushed her swimsuit between the rod and contact and released the rod once more. The rod sprung back towards the contact and stopped when it hit the swimsuit. Jaysica let go of the swimsuit and checked that it remained in place.

Then she reactivated the comlink.

"Right," she said, "the rod's jammed."

"Good, now can you see any lights above it?"

Jaysica looked above the rod and saw a row of three LEDs, none of which were lit.

"Yes," she said, "three of them, but they're all out."

"Good," Kara told her, "that means that there's no connection."

"Right, so what do I do now?"

"Put the panel cover back on," Kara said.

"What, let the rod make contact again?"

"No, whatever you've used to jam the rod needs to stay there."

Jaysica paused.

"That's a problem," she said.

"Why?"

"Well like I said all I brought with me was this comlink and my nail file..."

"And your swimsuit," Kara finished, "Its made of that polymer stuff, you actually took off your swimsuit and used that didn't you? That means that you're currently..."

"Yes, okay I'm naked." Jaysica snapped, "Now what should I do?"

There was a pause and Jaysica thought she heard the sound of Kara laughing.

"Right okay, I'm back," Kara said, "Now you have to get that panel cover back on."

"But what about my swimsuit?"

"Never mind that, just do as I tell you."

Frustrated, Jaysica replaced the panel and screwed it down.

"Well the cover's back in place," she said into the comlink, "but it doesn't do us much good if I'm still stuck here like this."

"You mean naked." Kara said, and Jaysica thought she heard laughter again.

"Yes, yes," Jaysica said, "Now how do I get out of here?"

"Well I'd suggest the door." Kara said.

"Very funny, I'm serious."

"No really, go out through the door, make sure that no one's outside of course, but there's another door to the stairs right opposite the one to that room. You can just come up them to our floor. Our room's right opposite the stair's too."

"The stairs? That's your great idea?"

"Well who uses stairs nowadays? Trust me, they'll be deserted."

"But its fourteen floors."

"Best you start now then."

"Ooh, you're hopeless!" Jaysica switched off the comlink again and headed for the door.

"I really liked that swimsuit too." she said before she opened the door. Then she popped her head around the doorframe and checked that the way was clear before sprinting to the door opposite that was labelled 'EMERGENCY STAIRS' with her arms covering her as best as she could.

In their room Kara also switched off her comlink. She was about to get up when she had an idea, a nasty one – entertaining, yes – but nasty and she picked up the room service menu.

Jaysica was almost out of breath when she reached the fourteenth floor. Though the stairwell had been empty just as Kara had suggested, Jaysica had continued to attempt to cover herself up with her arms instead of grabbing hold of the stair rail to help her climb them.

She opened the door just wide enough to make sure that there was no one outside and then dashed to the door to the room the group occupied and pressed the comm button beside it.

"Kara, its me. Open up quickly."

On the balcony Kara heard the comm unit chime, followed by Jessica's desperate plea to be let in. But instead of getting up to answer the door she activated the comm unit on the balcony table.

"Room service," she said, "I'd like a few things sent up to my room please."

Kara reeled off a list of drinks she wanted sending up to the room before disconnecting the comm. Then she looked over the side of the balcony and smiled as she saw a barman loading drinks onto a trolley and wheeling them to wards the entrance to the hotel.

Then Kara heard the sound of the shower stop and she turned around in time to see Vorn emerge from the bathroom with a towel wrapped around his waist.

"I heard the door," he said, "shouldn't we find out who it is?"

"Oh its just Jaysica," Kara replied, standing up, "I'll let her in."

"No, I'll do it, I'm closer," Vorn said, and as he turned towards the door he did not notice Kara reach out for the recording rod that lay on the set of drawers beside her and activate it after aligning it towards the doorway.

"It's alright, I'm here," Vorn said as he pulled open the door, "there's no need to keep pressing the com. Oh!" and he froze when he saw Jaysica standing naked in the hallway.

Jaysica gave out a shriek and pressed her arms over herself. Then she saw Kara.

"You did this on purpose," she said, pointing at her before remembering that she had been using her arms to cover herself, "and you know how much I liked that swimsuit."

"You've got five of them," Kara replied, "I saw you take them from storage."

At that moment there was another chime from across the hallway and the turbolift door slid open for the barman to push his trolley out. He stopped suddenly when he saw Jaysica and Vorn in the doorway. Jaysica shrieked again and leapt behind Vorn.

"I have your drinks sir," the barman said, smiling while he pushed the trolley towards the door.

"My drinks? But I didn't order anything?" Vorn said.

Inside the room Kara heard the exchange. Knowing that the barman had not seen her yet she walked over to the bed and pulled the cover from it, then she wrapped it around her so that it covered up all signs of her bikini and made her way to the door also.

"I ordered them darling," she said as she stood beside Vorn, "now hurry up and sign for them then you can both come back to bed." and then she planted a kiss first on Vorn's cheek and then on Jaysica's.

Vorn signed for the drinks and gave the form back to the barman.

"I'll take them from here I think." he said, taking the trolley from the barman, and then he closed the door.

"Lucky bastard." the barman said to himself quietly after the door was shut.

Inside the room Kara began to walk back towards the bed, where she threw the cover back over it.

"You did that on purpose!" Jaysica hissed, and she rushed at Kara just as she turned to face her. Jaysica shoved Kara backwards and she fell backwards onto the bed with a cry before Jaysica leapt on top of her and held Kara's arms above her head.

In the hallway outside, the barman was part way back to the turbolift when he heard a muffled shriek from the room he had just delivered drinks to, followed by the sound of a heavy impact on a bed.

"Lucky bastard." he said to himself again, and he got into the turbolift.

Back in the room Jaysica continued to hold Kara down. Vorn approached her and tapped her on the shoulder.

"Stay out of this," Jaysica yelled, "She did this deliberately."

"Two things," Vorn said sternly, "Firstly I'm your superior, so telling me to 'stay out of it' is highly inappropriate. But more importantly you might want to consider putting some clothes on."

Jaysica suddenly remembered that she still had nothing on and she shrieked again before running into the bathroom, shutting the door behind her.

"Anything to say?" Vorn asked, looking down at Kara.

"Nothing boss."

## 4.

"So do you think you two will be able to get along this evening?" Vorn asked as he watched Jaysica and Kara going through their clothes and picking out what they would be wearing to the party.

The two young women stopped what they were doing and stared at one another.

"Why wouldn't we?" Kara asked in return.

"I'm in charge right?" Jaysica said.

"This was your idea," Vorn said, "so I'm giving you the responsibility."

"Then I can wait and get my own back later," she replied.

"I still think putting her in charge is a mistake," Kara said, "I've far more command experience."

"Before or after your court martial?" Jaysica snapped.

"That's out of order," Kara said angrily, and the pair stared at one another again.

"Enough," Vorn said, holding up his hands, "I've made my decision and this is Jaysica's show."

"Thanks major," Jaysica said with a smile, and she held up a pair of items of clothing, "So what do you think? Slutty dress or kinky catsuit?"

"Can I make any answer that doesn't make me look like a dirty old man?" Vorn said.

"No," Kara answered while she continued to rummage through her clothes.

"Catsuit it is then," Jaysica said, "only my head's exposed so any geek who tries to snap this against me will get his hand bitten off," and she carried her selection into the bathroom to get into it.

"Well I'm sticking with a slutty dress," Kara said holding up a bright red dress that looked to be nothing but a fabric tube with a zip.

"You know," Vorn said out loud as he sat down and activated the room's entertainment system, "I think you two have gotten into your roles just a little too well."

Vorn's opinion did not change when he actually saw the two women when they were ready for the party.

Kara's dress covered just enough of her to stop her being arrested, while Jaysica looked like she had been dipped into a vat of liquid polymer up to her neck and it had coated her in the material.

"I see that neither of you has given much thought to escaping at speed," he said, looking at their feet which were raised up on heels.

"We need to blend in boss," Kara said, "running shoes don't go with what I'm wearing and little miss shiny's outfit has heels built in."

"Do you at least have everything else that you need?" Vorn asked.

"I think so," Kara said and she went through their equipment, "We each have a blaster and comlink in our bags, and I have binders to keep him restrained," she said.

"Good," Vorn replied, "now go to your party and have fun."

"Thanks boss," Kara said.

"See you later," Jaysica added.

"Remember you're actually supposed to be working," Vorn called after them as they left, and then he went back to the hotel entertainment system while he waited for the signal that the target had been acquired.

When Jaysica and Kara made it to the eighth floor there was already a crowd of people in the hallway as part of the party that was being held by the occupants of the rooms on this floor. All of them were human, of course, and the vast majority of them were male. The Empire had a chauvinistic streak in it almost as great as its anti-alien bias, and this attitude spilled over into the corporations that made their money supplying it. Corporations such as those that were paying for this convention. The appearance of most of those present was similar too; they were people that didn't get out much. Their employers kept them away from the public eye in research facilities equipped with the best equipment available, and now that they were out in the real world they had little idea how to relate to anyone but others like them. Even the handful of women present seemed to behave the same, so the two supposedly undercover rebels stuck out a mile.

"This could be tricky," Jaysica whispered to Kara, "all these different rooms will need checking somehow."

"Hi," an annoyingly familiar voice said from behind Jaysica, "I'm glad you came," and she turned to see Rynal standing there with a drink in his hand.

"You're hot, you must be Kara," Darik added and he slid an arm around Kara's waist.

"And you must have a death wish putting your hand there so soon," she replied, smiling menacingly.

"Hey sorry," Darik said, withdrawing his hand.

"Good," she said, "now where can we get a drink around here?"

"There's beer in every room," Rynal said.

"What about wine?" Jaysica asked, "Could you go find us some of that?"



"Sure," Rynal said, "Stay right here and we'll be back with it soon," and both he and Darik began to push their way through the crowd in search of the drinks Jaysica had asked for.

"So what now?" Kara asked.

"Well I suppose we mingle and try and find this guy."

"Mingle, great. Where first?"

"Well I think right down the hallway," Jaysica answered, looking directly down the hallway past Kara.

"What is it? Do you see him?"

"No," Jaysica replied, "but I get the feeling that he'll be very close to her," and she pointed past Kara. Kara turned around and looked down the hallway herself where, just coming into view around a corner, she saw an agent of the Imperial Security Bureau.

"Now she looks out of place." Kara said, smiling.

Kara was right, the woman they were looking at stood out as much as they did. Not only was her pressed and shiny white uniform unlike anything worn by the other party guests, but the stern looking woman also appeared to be about sixty years old.

"Perhaps we should have brought Vorn to try and seduce her while we get the geek," Kara whispered.

Before Jaysica could reply, Rynal and Darik returned with their drinks.

"We didn't know if you wanted white or green," Rynal said.

"So we brought one of each." Darik finished.

Kara snatched the white away before Jaysica could get it and took a sip.

"So," she said, "what's with the witch?"

"Who?" Darik asked, and he looked when Kara pointed at the ISB agent.

"Oh her," Rynal said, "She's here with this guy called Jaran. It's weird, he's like under twenty and she's like over a thousand. Everywhere he goes, she's right behind him. In fact that's him right there," and Rynal indicated a young man that both rebels recognised immediately. He was their target.

"Why?" Jaysica asked.

"Because Jaran's doing some super secret military work for the Empire," Rynal said, "He thinks just cause he's doing that he's cooler than us."

"Well that's nonsense," Kara said, "if he was so cool why is his date so old?"

"Yeah," Darik said, "we should go down there and show you to him."

"Oh no," Kara said, "it would be much better if we went alone, and then when he comes onto us we'll tell him we're taken by you."

"Wow that's a great idea," Rynal said, "go do it."

"Well," Kara said to Jaysica, "let's go meet Jaran shall we?" and the pair made their way along the hallway.

"So what's your plan?" Kara asked.

"I don't have one," Jaysica admitted.

"Well I do, so don't worry."

"What is it?"

"It has to do with you getting up close to her in her nice white uniform with your bright green drink," Kara said.

"Hey, that's not fair, I'm not always spilling things," Jaysica protested, right before she bumped into the ISB agent and spilled her drink down her uniform.

"I'm so sorry, it was an accident," she said looking at the large green patch on the agent's tunic.

"You clumsy fool!" the agent shouted, even though she was right next to Jaysica.

"Hey there's no harm done," Kara said, gently pushing Jaysica further away from the agent.

"No harm? My uniform's ruined."

"No it isn't," Kara said, placing a hand on the agent's shoulder, "I can get rid of that mark if you come with me," and she indicated a nearby door labelled as a women's bathroom.

"Wait here," the agent said to Jaran, and she went with Kara into the bathroom.

"Your friend is a fool," the agent said inside the bathroom, "She should learn to walk without bumping into things."

"No argument here." Kara replied, and she put the plug into a washbasin and moved her hand over a tap so that the in built sensor switched it on and began to fill the basin with water. Kara waited for the basin to fill and then shut off the tap in the same way.

"Now give me your jacket." she said to the agent. The agent undid her tunic and began to remove it but when it was about half way down her arms, Kara suddenly punched her in the stomach.

The surprised agent doubled up in pain, the breath knocked from her. Kara seized the opportunity and grabbed the agent by her hair and dragged her to the basin where, before the agent could get her breath back she forced her face into the water.

The agent did her best to get free, waving her arms around and trying to land a blow on Kara. But the combination of Kara leaning on her to hold her face beneath the water and the tunic still being part way down her arms limited her ability to fight back. Kara kept the pressure on the back of the agent's head, watching the bubbles in the water around her head until they ceased.

Kara knew better than to assume that the agent was dead and when she checked she found a faint pulse at her neck. Kara laid the unconscious woman out on the floor and checked her pockets, taking her identity card, comlink and rank cylinders; those could be of use to the Alliance later. Then she dragged her into one of the toilet cubicles.

Inside the cubicle, Kara removed the tunic from the agent and forced it into the toilet, pushing it down and jamming it at the base of the bowl and then she flushed the toilet. As the bowl began to fill with water that could not escape because of the tunic blocking the drainage pipe, Kara lifted the agent up and leant her over the toilet so that her head rested inside the water filled bowl, her face once again submerged. Kara then locked the cubicle door from the inside. She took off her shoes and slid them beneath the door. Then she put a foot on the agent's back and used her as a platform from which she could climb over the top of the cubicle wall before dropping down on the other side. Finally she dried off her arm, put her shoes back on and went back to the party, leaving the woman from the ISB to drown.

When she got back to Jaysica, the other woman had already been able to get Jaran to open up to her somewhat.

"He was just telling me how he works on star destroyers," Jaysica said, feigning excitement. Had Jaran been exposed to women in this sort of setting more often he may have picked up on it, but as it was he believed her to be genuinely impressed in him.

"Wow," Kara said, "that's amazing."

"Oh it's nothing really," Jaran said, "Star destroyers are old technology really. The really good stuff is all top secret of course."

"But you could tell us about star destroyers?" Kara said, "I love star destroyers, they're just so...huge."

"I'm not sure," Jaran said, "I have lots of data on the computer in my room but Miss Blasen wouldn't like it. Where is she anyway?"

"Who?" Kara said, "Oh, the ISB agent. I left her on the loo."

"If you could show us some more about star destroyers," Jaysica said, "we'd be grateful," and she stepped closer to Jaran.

"Very grateful indeed," Kara added, also stepping closer so that the young man was right between the two women.

"Oh wow," Jaran said, then he suddenly added, "Let's go."

From the far end of the corridor, Rynal and Darik watched as Jaran got into a turbolift with Kara and Jaysica.

"That nerd stole our dates." Darik said.

"He'll never shut up about this." Rynal added.

## 5.

"I'm not stupid you know," Jaran said when he showed Jaysica and Kara into his room.

"What do you mean?" Jaysica said, suddenly concerned that he knew they were rebels and was about to summon help. Her hand drifted towards her bag where her blaster was concealed.

"If I show you what you want to see you'll just leave," he said, and then he turned around and faced Jaysica and Kara, "I want to see just how grateful you are first, before Miss Blasen can interrupt us. Then I'll show you the data on my computer."

"Oh you are smart," Kara told him, and she brushed his cheek, "but how old are you?"

"Seventeen," Jaran said.

"Seventeen?" Kara repeated, "Well that's too young for us to do anything with you," and Jaran's face fell until Kara finished with, "but we can let you watch us."

"Oh wow!" Jaran said, "This is so cool."

"Well its about to get hotter," Kara said, and she pulled a set of binders from her bag.

"Oh hey," Jaran said, "You're not putting those on me."

"Then how about I put them on myself?" Kara said, putting her bag on the bed and then clamping the binders around her wrists behind her back.

"I tell you what," Jaysica said, stepping towards Jaran and Kara, "I know she has another set of those in her bag, and if you," and she turned to Jaran at this point, "put them on, then instead of just watching us, I'll do anything to her that you tell me to."

"Oh wow!" Jaran said, and he moved towards the bag that lay beside Kara. Jaysica was faster, grabbing it before the young man could open it up and find the blaster that was inside.

"Let me do it," she said, and she took the second set of binders from the bag and locked Jaran's wrists behind him.

"Now you sit over there," she said, pointing to the sofa, "and I'll be right back after I've been to the loo. You just wait here and think of what you want me to do to her."

While Jaran took a seat Jaysica took her bag into the bathroom and closed the door. Inside She opened up the bag and took out her comlink.

"Major, we've got him," she said.

"Great," Vorn's voice responded after a moment's delay, "How long do you think you can keep him?"

"Don't worry he's secure," she said, and she also took her blaster from her bag.

"Good, where are you?"

"Twelfth floor, room twelve sixteen."

"Okay, hold tight. I'll let the others know, and then I'll be right down," then Vorn broke the link.

The cockpit of the *Silver Hawk* was deserted apart from the astromech droid R5-HV, known to the crew as Harvey. When the ship's communication system came to life suddenly, the droid gave out a series of chirps.

"*Silver Hawk, Silver Hawk, we have a go,*" Vorn signalled.

Harvey spun around and wheeled out of the cockpit towards the communal area of the ship where he knew that some of the living crew could be found, emitting more chirps.

"What's he so excited about?" Tharun Verser asked Mace as they sat eating.

"How should I know?" Mace answered and he turned to a gold coloured protocol droid, "Hey Jeeves," he said, "what's up with Harvey?"

"I believe that major Larcus has signalled us captain Grayle," the droid GV-3PO replied, "apparently his team has acquired their target and is awaiting us."

Mace and Tharun leapt to their feet.

"Tobis we're moving!" Mace shouted towards the engineering section. The engineer had remained in that part of the ship to monitor the repulsorlift engines that Mace had ordered be kept running to allow for an immediate take off. Then, accompanied by Tharun, he ran for the cockpit.

Jaysica put her comlink away, picked up her compact blaster and headed out of the bathroom. When she opened the door and stepped out, she kept her weapon behind her back.

"Good, you're back. I know exactly what I want you to do," Jaran said excitedly, staring at Kara.

"Really?" Jaysica replied, "Because there's something I'd like you to do for me too."

"What?" he asked her.

"Stay still and shut up you stupid little pervert," she snapped, and she pointed her blaster directly at him.

"Oh crap!" he exclaimed in terror at the gun. Though only a hold out blaster, in the hands of the short-statured Jaysica it looked larger than it actually was, especially to Jaran who was staring down its barrel.

"Get the keys to these binders," Kara said, and Jaysica approached the bed, all the time keeping her gun pointing at Jaran. When she got there she bent over towards the bag, at the exact same time that Kara did the same thing.

There was a 'crack' as two women's head struck each other, and both of them cried out in pain. Jaysica's gun fell from her grasp and slid across the floor towards Jaran. With his hands bound behind his back, the young man could not pick up the weapon, but he did kick it away from the rebels and jumped up from the sofa. Before Jaysica could get up off the bed and stop him, Jaran ran towards the hotel room door, even though his arms were bound behind him. He slammed his shoulder into the control beside the door and made to escape into the hallway.

"Going somewhere boy?" Vorn said from outside the room, and he pressed his own blaster into Jaran's face. He then pushed Jaran back away from the door, and the young man fell backwards into the room, allowing Vorn to step inside himself and then close the door behind him.

"What's going on?" he asked.

"Sorry boss," Kara said as she struggled to sit up.

"It was an accident," Jaysica the said as she looked for where her gun had gone.

"Never mind that," Vorn said, and he dropped a large bag onto the floor at his feet, "get what we need, because we're out of here."

Vorn picked up Jaran from the floor and dragged him back to the sofa while Jaysica released Kara. The two women then retrieved their blasters.

"Please don't hurt me," Jaran said.

"Just shut up and do as you're told," Vorn said to him, "but first tell me where your computer is."

"U-Under my bed," he stammered, and Vorn looked at Kara.

"Got it boss," she said, pulling a portable computer from under the bed.

At that moment there was a crackle from Kara's bag on the bed.

"Agent Blasen, why haven't you checked in? Agent Blasen respond immediately," a muffled voice said.

"That ISB agents comlink," Kara said, "I dealt with her, but she must have missed a check in."

"The hotel's surrounded by Imperial security," Jaran yelled, "You'll never get out of here."

"Well then," Vorn said, "it looks like we're about find out if you two can run in those shoes."

"Didn't you hear me," Jaran said, "the guards in the grounds will get you when you go downstairs, " and then he looked at Jaysica and Kara, "though I'll make sure they leave you two alive, then you can show me just how grateful you are about that," and he leered at them.

"Can I shoot him boss?" Kara said, raising her blaster pistol, "I'll just stun him - honest."

"Go on then," Vorn said, and there was a bright blue flash as Kara set her weapon to stun and fired it at Jaran.

"Help me pick him up," Vorn said to Kara, "we need to get him to the roof," then he looked at Jaysica, "you pick up the bag and get the door."

In a secluded room on the ground floor of the hotel a pair of ISB agents attempted to raise their colleague.

"Its not good sir," one of them said, "she's not there."

"Something's wrong," the other one said, "have the guards up there check on the boy's room, and get reinforcements up there now, " then he turned to a hotel employee sat nearby, "And get that shield up now!" he shouted.

The hotel employee began to press buttons on a control panel in front of him, and then he looked up and shouted back at the ISB agent.

"I can't!" he cried out, "There's no power, the shield's been sabotaged!"

"Hang on," Kara said when she and Vorn picked up the incapacitated Jaran, and she kicked off her shoes.

"I told you those shoes were no good for this job," he said, and then he added, "sorry you're losing them though."

Kara shrugged.

"I've got another three pairs on the ship," Kara replied as they began to carry Jaran towards the door.

"Okay Jaysica," Vorn said, "Open it up."

Jaysica opened the hotel room door and looked into the hallway.

"Way's clear," she said, and she stepped out of the room. As she stood in the hallway waiting for her companions to catch up with her she suddenly heard the sound of heavy footfalls around a corner. Turning to face that direction she was just in time to see a pair of large men in the armoured uniforms of the Empire's COMPForce assault units appear.

"Imperials!" she shouted and she fired her blaster.

The bolt from the relatively low powered weapon struck the nearest trooper in his chest, and he drooped to the floor screaming before passing out. The shot had failed to penetrate his armoured chest plate properly,

but the heat had still burned him badly. The second trooper raised his own weapon, but before he could return fire Kara reached around the doorframe with her own, larger blaster and shot him in the head. "Quickly, move!" Vorn ordered, and with Jaysica leading the way the trio of rebels moved towards the turbolifts carrying Jaran.

At the turbolift cluster the rebels looked at the displays above the turbolift doors. All of them showed the turbolift cars to be below them and moving up.

"I don't like the look of this," Vorn said, "Jaran said there were security all over the grounds. What's the betting that those turbolifts are full of them?"

"We'll have to take the stairs," Kara said, "at least Jaysica's not naked this time."

Jaysica turned towards Kara and opened her mouth to speak.

"Not now!" Vorn said, "We're taking the stairs then."

Jaysica lead the way once more. Inside the stairwell the sound of footfalls could be heard echoing up from below. Briefly, Jaysica leant over the safety rail and looked down. Below her she spotted the signs of movement as a force of COMPForce troopers made their way up towards them.

"More of them," she said, pulling away from the edge.

"We're going up anyway," Vorn said, "they won't catch us. But you better do something about that door."

"Like what?" Jaysica asked.

"Well close it behind us for starters," Vorn told her, "that way the troopers in the turbolifts might not realise which way we've come, and see if you can jam it too, it'll make it harder for them to follow us if they do figure it out."

As Vorn and Kara began to make their way up the stairs Jaysica shut the door, then she pulled the control panel cover downwards to expose the circuitry behind it. Aware that she did not have long to work with she just slammed the butt of her gun down on the delicate electronics in front of her and smashed them.

"I doubt that'll hold them for long," she said and she began to follow the others up the stairs.

When they got two flights further up, to the floor where there abandoned room was, a blaster bolt flew past them from far below, making a 'crack' when it struck the ceiling further up.

"Look's like they've seen us," Vorn said.

"They're still too far below to catch up," Kara said.

"It's not them that I'm worried about," Vorn replied.

"Then who..." Kara began, before she was interrupted by the sound of an explosion from below them. To be precise it was from the twelfth floor, the reinforcements sent up in the turbolifts having blown open the jammed door when told of the rebels' location by the trooper further down the staircase.

"Quicker," Vorn said, and the rebels picked up their pace.

Though the unconscious Jaran that they carried weighed down Vorn and Kara, Jaysica was being slowed down by her choice of outfit. The catsuit included high-heeled shoes formed into it, so unlike Kara she did not have the option to remove them. As such they all reached the door to the roof at about the same time.

"It's sealed!" Jaysica hissed when she tried the control.

"Well you're the expert, unseal it," Vorn told her.

"And quickly would be good," Kara added.

Jaysica opened the control panel and knelt down beside it. She put her blaster and the large bag on the floor and instead rummaged in her own smaller bag.

"What are you looking for?" Kara asked.

"This," Jaysica said, holding up a small multi purpose tool, and she set to work on the door mechanism.

"They're coming!" Kara said, worriedly hearing the sound of troops moving through the destroyed door below them and coming up the stairs.

"Drop him," Vorn said, and he began to lower Jaran to the floor.

"What, over the edge?" Kara said in disbelief.

"No, just here," Vorn said, "And I need some tape or string."

"What for?" Kara asked as she began to look through the larger bag that Jaysica had been carrying. Then she added, "Oh no," when she saw Vorn pulling spare blaster power packs from his pockets and removing the overload limiting dowels from each one.

"Got a better idea?" he said.

"Give me five minutes," Kara answered as she passed him a reel of tape.

"They'll be here in two!" Vorn said, wrapping the tape around the three blaster power packs to join them together. Then he picked up the bundle of overloading power packs and threw them over the safety rail of the stairs.

The improvised bomb detonated a few seconds later, and there were screams from below as the first wave of troopers through the blown open door was caught in the blast.

"I've got it!" Jaysica said suddenly, and the door to the roof rapidly slid open.

"Move!" Vorn shouted, and he and Kara bent down to pick up Jaran. They all ran out onto the roof where they found it empty.

"Where are you?" Vorn's voice called out from the communication system.

"Two minutes," Mace replied.

"It better be," Vorn responded, "We have hostile forces closing on us fast."

When the link broke, Mace turned to Tobis in the co-pilot's seat beside him.

"Go get Tharun," he told the engineer, "You open the ramp, and have him ready to give cover."

Tobis just nodded in return, and he rushed from the cockpit. Through the viewport Mace could see the shape of the hotel building looming ahead of him.

"They're here!" Jaysica yelled as the roar of the *Silver Hawk's* repulsorlift engines heralded its arrival, and moments later the disk like freighter came into view.

"Run!" Vorn shouted over the noise, and the trio ran from the doorway towards their ship.

As the *Silver Hawk* came in lower, the entry ramp beneath it lowered and light spilled from inside the ship.

The ship touched down gently, but its engines continued running at full power. At the top of the ramp Tobis waved them towards him, meanwhile Tharun rushed down to the roof and crouched down before raising his blaster rifle.

"Down!" the mercenary yelled, and he fired a short burst of blaster bolts past the rebels coming towards him and at the COMPForce troopers who had just appeared on the roof, causing them to duck back through the doorway. Tharun got to his feet as Vorn, Jaysica and reached him and he helped them onto the ramp.

"Nice outfits," he commented when he saw what Jaysica and Kara were wearing.

"Not now!" Kara replied tersely.

Behind them, the COMPForce troopers had sent more of their number onto the roof, and blaster bolts bounced off the hull of the *Silver Hawk*.

"They're in," Tobis said into a communication panel at the same time as he slammed his hand on the control to close the ramp, and in the cockpit Mace pulled back on the control column and lifted off.

On the roof below more and more COMPForce troopers spilled out of the doorway, above them they could see the light freighter climbing skywards. Some of them aimed their blasters and fired off a few shots in the vain hope of hitting the ship, but it was already out of range.

"So this is the boy wonder then is it?" Tharun asked, looking down at the unconscious Jaran, "The one that the Alliance is desperate to talk to."

"He's also a total pervert," Jaysica said.

"You're not one to talk dressed like that," Tharun commented, and Jaysica shoved him. Then Tharun noticed the large bag that Jaysica had carried aboard, "What's in that?" he asked.

"Well there's all the equipment we took with us," Vorn said.

"Yes," replied Tharun, "but I saw what you took, and that wouldn't fill that bag."

"We were in a posh hotel," Kara interrupted, "so we stole enough bathrobes and towels for everyone."

## 6.

As far as the manager of the Emperor Hotel was concerned, this was a total disaster that would likely cost him his job. Following the gun battle that had taken place a lot of guests wanted to leave, but were unable to do so because the ISB was questioning everyone. Plus now he had to deal with the ISB Investigations agent who had turned up and wanted to speak to him on the eighth floor.

The manager was lead into the women's bathroom by one of the COMPForce troopers keeping everyone on the grounds. By the row of toilet cubicles he saw the Investigator crouched down with his back to him. On the floor next to the investigator was the body of the ISB agent who had been killed here, the investigator holding up the blanket over her body and looking underneath.

"I was told you wanted to see me?" the manager said nervously.

"Yes," the investigator said, standing up and turning around. When the manager saw his face, the investigator looked somewhat familiar, but he could not quite place him. "I'm agent Garm Larcus," the investigator said, "and I've a special interest in one of your recent guests."

"Well," Mace said, "I think I'd better go check on the... hang on, what's this?" and he nodded towards the hatchway leading to the cabins. The others around the table all turned look as well.

"Oh no," Vorn said, "I've got a bad feeling about this."

There, having just emerged though the hatchway, Jaysica had gone to the kitchen unit and was getting herself a drink. She was wearing just one of the polymer swimsuits she had acquired, and she had a bulging plastic bag by her feet. Her compact box like mouse droid, MSE-6-PNI, darted about nearby.

"What are you doing?" Tharun asked.

"Just getting myself a drink while wearing one of my nice new swimsuits," Jaysica said, and she brought her drink and the bag to the table. Tobis slid up to make room for her at his end, but she instead sat at the other end next to Mace and the smuggler grinned at Tobis as she rubbed up against him as she sat down. She put her drink on the table and stuffed the bag beneath it.

"No really," Tharun said, "What are you doing exactly, and what's with the bag?"

"The bag?" Jaysica said.

"Yes the bag," Mace said, kicking the bag by his feet, "What's in it?"

"Oh right," Jaysica replied, "its all of the towels from the bathroom, and the clothes that Kara took in there."

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

"I was able to bypass the lock and sneak in there while Kara's in the shower," Jaysica continued, "and I've had Harvey seal all of the cabin doors."

"I think I can see where this is going," Vorn said, raising a hand to his forehead.

"So if she wants anything to cover herself up with when she gets out of the shower," Jaysica went on, "she's going to have to come all the way out here and tell me how nice my swimsuit is. While Penny records it all," and she pointed at her droid.

Suddenly a shout came from the direction of the bathroom.

"Jaysica! You did this didn't you?" Kara yelled.

"I don't think that anything needs checking after all," Mace said, "at least not just yet."