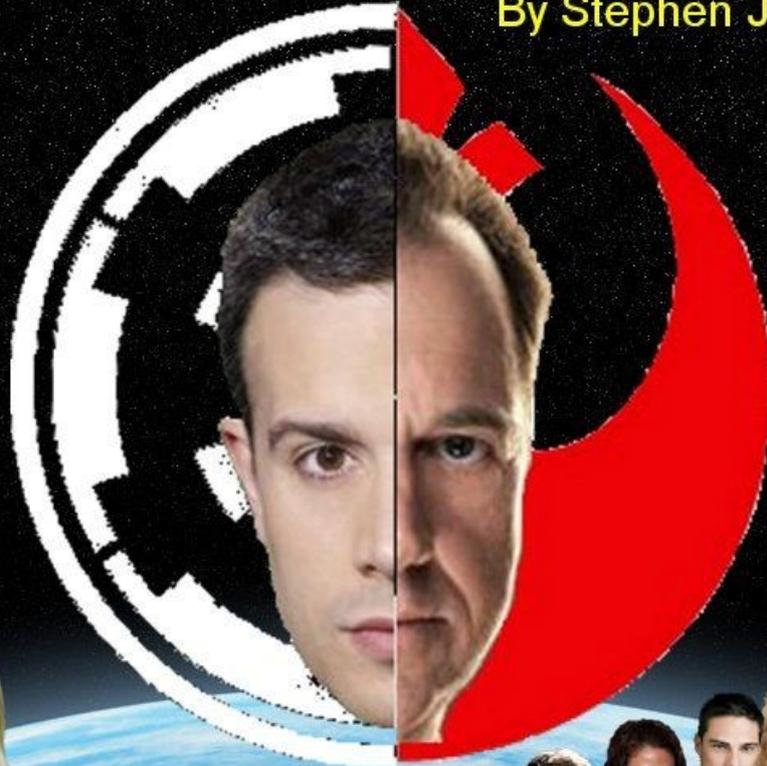


STAR WARS

3-09: Justice Delivered

By Stephen J Dutton



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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...

JUSTICE DELIVERED

REUNITED WITH HIS TEAM, VORN LARCUS III SEEKS TO EXPOSE THE RESISTANCE'S
TRUE AIMS TO THE ALLIANCE AND GET JUSTICE FOR HIS MURDERED WIFE...

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

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1.

Jaysica Horbid and Tobis Dorfus found their fellow rebel agent Kara Bilstran sat on the floor of the refresher; her back leant against the wall. They were in the home of Lord Couran Desh, a former member of the Estranian Parliament and long time friend of their former commanding officer Major Vorn Larcus. The major had left the Rebel Alliance unexpectedly when he had discovered that an independent resistance group recently admitted to the Alliance was in fact merely part of a larger organisation responsible for the death of his wife. Vorn had reappeared today to request the help of his old team and apart from Kara they had all been enthusiastic in their willingness to help. After slapping Vorn Kara had instead stormed out of the room and come here.

"Major Nerf Herder send you here to get me?" she asked, looking up at Jaysica.

"Actually everyone thought I should come." Jaysica replied, "With you out of the room everyone outranks me."

"Jenessa and his lordship don't, they're not part of the Alliance."

"No, but I can't give them orders either."

"And Vorn doesn't outrank you either. He's not a major any more."

"Yes he is."

"No Jaysica, he isn't. He left us remember? So I don't have to do anything he says."

"Well everyone else is willing to help him anyway." Jaysica said, "So you'd better come back as well."

"Or what?" Kara said, "Are you two actually giving me an order and expecting me to follow it?"

"Sort of. But if you won't come back now then Mace says you aren't allowed back on the *Silver Hawk*. Isn't that so Tobis?"

Mace was the captain of the ship to which the rebel team was assigned and in Vorn's absence he had also been acting as the team's leader.

"What? Oh, well err, he did say it was a long way back to headquarters." Tobis said.

"See." Jaysica said, "So are you coming back?"

"Yes ma'am." Kara said, frowning and she followed that with, "And yes sir." To Tobis as she got up.

From the outside the cantina looked like a run down light industrial unit and it was only when the door opened that the faint sound of music could be heard. Either side of the door stood a guard that looked particularly menacing, even though they were not displaying any weapons openly. According to information gathered by Vorn the cantina was a frequent haunt of a man called Arrs Tellik. This man was a droid engineer who carried out modifications to droid-controlled vehicles that allowed the terrorist group to turn them into weapons. It was hoped that by capturing the man the rebels could prove to their superiors that the Alliance was being used as an unwitting accomplice in acts of terrorism.

Mace and Vorn moved carefully across the roof of a nearby building, keeping low enough that the guards did not notice them. Accompanying them was Tharun Verser, the final member of the rebel team. They lay down beside an antenna array and aimed macrobinoculars towards the cantina door.

"I can't see anything," Tharun said, "but I'll wager that those two are packing."

"Oh I don't doubt it." Vorn agreed, "But at least we know they can't be carrying anything too powerful."

"So do you think he's in there now?" Mace asked.

"I don't know." Vorn replied, "I doubt this place has fixed hours of business. I suggest we keep an eye on the door and watch how people act when they go inside. That should tell us how to get someone inside to take a look. Unless Tobis has found anything of course."

Mace pulled out his comlink and activated it.

"Tobis?" he said into the device, "Has Harvey come up with anything?"

There was the faint whistling of an astromech droid over the comlink followed by the sound of Jeeves' voice. "I'm sorry Master Dorfus, but it seems that Harvey has been unable to uncover any further information regarding the layout of this establishment."

"Err, did you get that captain?" Tobis asked.

"Yeah I got it. Send the droids back to the speeder and go wait with Jaysica and Kara." Mace replied and he shut off the comlink, "So no update floor plan or camera feed."

"Ah, here we go." Vorn said as a pair of young women approached the doorway. Both he and Mace focused their macrobinoculars onto the guards and watched as one of them took a ten-credit coin from one of the women and then opened the door for them, smiling and nodding as they went inside.

"Okay go." Vorn said and Mace slid back. At the same time Tharun set down his macrobinoculars, removed his heavy Blastech A-280 blaster rifle from its cover and directed it towards the doorway.

Tharun and Vorn remained where they were, watching the entrance from the rooftop until the other four rebels came into view. Kara and Mace simply walked alongside one another while Jaysica and Tobis held hands as they approached the doorway. There was a 'click' as Tharun released the safety from his blaster. They saw the others halt in front of the guards and Mace reached into his jacket, producing some coins that he then presented to the guards. Immediately the door was opened for them and they were waved inside.

"So where do we start?" Jaysica asked as they looked around the large smoky room.

"You head for the bar." Mace said, "Kara and I will take a look at the gaming tables. Agreed?"

"Well if that's what you think Major Larcus will want." Kara said.

"Are you going to be like this the whole time?" Jaysica asked.

"Like what?" Kara asked in return, "He left us and now he just swans back and you lot all jump at his every word."

"Fine." Mace said, "Ignore his orders. But I've warned you about ignoring mine. Plus you may want to remember that I'll hit back. Hard."

"Yes sir." Kara muttered.

"Good." Mace said, "Now lets go. Oh and Tobis?"

"Err, yes sir?"

"Get us some drinks won't you?"

They split into two pairs as they searched for Arrs Tellik. Each of them had seen the image provided by Emissi Caysa's search, though they knew it to be fifteen years out of date. They could have asked of course, but if Arrs was well known to the staff then such a course of action may serve only to alert him to their presence.

It was as Mace and Kara were making their way between two of the gaming tables that they suddenly heard someone say what they needed to hear.

"You know Arrs, I'm starting to think you may have an advantage the rest of us don't."

The looked at the gamblers sat around the table and amongst them they spotted a grey haired man who was clearly Arrs Tellik.

"Oh yeah?" Arrs replied to the accusation, "Well what are you going to do about it?"

"Go get the others." Mace whispered to Kara, "And let the major know we've found him."

Kara just grunted and she headed towards the bar while Mace stayed to watch the events at the table. As Kara walked towards the bar she subtly produced her comlink and activated it.

"Major Larcus sir," she whispered, "your loyal subordinates have located your target." And then she shut down the device and returned it to her pocket before anyone could notice it.

Meanwhile Mace was keeping a watchful eye on Arrs. He was sat sneering across the table at his accuser, looking as if he was daring the man to take action. Which he promptly did.

The man reached out his hand and swept the pile of money in the centre of the table towards him.

"This is mine!" he exclaimed shortly before another of the gamers also jumped to his feet and knocked the table over.

Immediately there was chaos as beings all around attempted to grab as much of the money that had fallen to the floor as they could. Arrs himself began to back away as several humans in clothing similar to that worn by the door guards rushed to get things back under control. But as he went his accuser suddenly lunged forwards and Mace spotted the glint of metal in his hand.

"Knife!" he called out as he tried to intercept the man before he could plunge the blade into Arrs, but all he succeeded in doing was knocking the knife downwards slightly so that instead of passing between Arrs' ribs it instead went into the base of his spine and he cried out in pain. Mace delivered a punch that knocked the man backwards, his face pouring with blood and as he fell to the floor a trio of guards rushed up and began to beat him as he lay there helpless to prevent it.

"Kara!" Mace snapped as the others arrived, "Can you do anything with him?"

Predictably Arrs was screaming in pain, the knife still protruding from his back.

"Its bad." Kara replied.

"I can see that." Mace said, "But can you do anything about it?"

Kara shook her head.

"Move!" a voice suddenly called out as more guards arrived and Mace was shoved aside by one of them.

The other rebels backed off as a pair of the guards picked up the screaming Arrs and carried him off between them.

"Oh that's just great." Mace said, "Now what do we do?"

"Ah." Tobis said, "Well, err maybe this will help." And he held up a datapad.

"You took that from him?" Jaysica asked, "Oh Tobis you're so smart." And she hugged him.

"Come on, let's go." Mace said and the rebels began to head for the exit. As they crossed the room they saw the guards who had carried Arrs off return and look about frantically. When they looked towards the rebels one of them pointed and they began to push their way through the crowd towards them.

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

"Do you think they've noticed the datapad's missing?" Jaysica asked.

"I think that's likely." Mace replied as he took out his comlink, "Major, we're on our way out," said into it, "and we may not be alone." Then before Vorn could reply Mace put the comlink away again.

The rebels made it to the door before the guards could catch up with them and began to walk away briskly, heading for the building where Tharun and Vorn were watching. The door suddenly burst open behind them and the two guards emerged with blasters in hand.

"Stop them!" one of them snapped, pointing at the rebels and the two guards on the door both reached into their jackets and produced blasters of their own.

"Stay right there!" one of the guards yelled and he took aim. However, before he could fire there was a flash of red light as a powerful blaster bolt ripped into his chest and he fell backwards, dead.

The other guards looked around in panic, attempting to determine where the attack had come from. Had they been professional soldiers they may have been able to spot Tharun and Vorn and seek cover before Tharun could fire again. But as it was they were instead left out in the open gazing around in bewilderment.

"May I major?" Tharun asked.

"They could still fire on the others." Vorn replied, "Fire at will sergeant."

Tharun flicked the fire selector to automatic and squeezed the trigger. The stream of bolts pounded the area in which the guards stood, and all three shuddered as they were hit. Behind them, chunks of the wall exploded as the blaster bolts that missed the guards instead blew fist-sized holes in its structure. It was only when the body of the last guard dropped to the ground that Tharun ceased fire.

"Targets eliminated major." He said.

"Excellent work sergeant." Vorn said, "Now let's go see what the others have found."

They took the datapad back to Couran's home and watched as Tobis hooked it up to a computer.

"So do you think he's dead?" Vorn asked Kara, "Arns I mean."

"I know who you mean Major Larcus sir." Kara replied without looking at Vorn, "And I don't know. The wound had the potential to be fatal, but swift treatment would save him. Is that a satisfactory answer sir?"

Vorn frowned.

"Yes specialist." He said.

"Well, err this is it. I think." Tobis said and he tapped at the computer keyboard.

"So what do we have?" Vorn asked.

"Ahh, err. I'm not sure." Tobis replied, "There look to be a lot of technical data files."

"You mean like blueprints?" Tharun asked and Tobis nodded.

"I'm afraid my computer isn't set up to read those sorts of things my boy." Couran said from behind the rebels, "Never had the need you see."

"What about Harvey?" Tharun suggested.

"Good idea." Mace said and he looked to where both Jeeves and Tobis' astromech droid Harvey waited in the corner. The droid whistled.

"Yes of course they want your help." Jeeves said, looking down at the droid, "So I suggest you co-operate fully."

Harvey rolled up to the computer and connected to its main droid port. Then the droid turned its head through one hundred and eighty degrees and projected an image constructed from one of the datafiles into the middle of the room.

"Those look like circuit schematics." Mace said.

"Oh, err, they are." Tobis said, "From a droid brain I think."

"This must be how he modifies the droids to act as weapons." Vorn said

Harvey let out a string of chirps.

"Harvey says that there are many files of this type stored on the datapad." Jeeves said and when Harvey whistled again he added, "With time stamps going back at least fifteen years. He says that there is also a wiring diagram for a landspeeder of the type I believe your son owned."

"This ties the engineer to the attacks that killed my wife and daughter in law." Vorn said.

"Garm's wife's dead?" Mace commented, "When did that happen?"

"About a month ago my boy." Couran said, "Garm and the young lady he works with have spent most of the time since then in bacta tanks. They nearly died too, though why the young lady was there is something of a mystery."

"They only held the funeral service recently." Vorn said and then he looked down at Harvey, "Next file please Harvey." He added and the droid whistled as the image changed to show a three-dimensional image of a large building.

"Vorn my boy, is that what I think it is?" Couran asked.

"I'm afraid it is." Vorn said, "I've got a very bad feeling about this."

“What is it?” Jaysica asked.

“Young lady,” Couran said, “that is the Estranian Parliament building.”

“Okay then,” Mace said, “we’ve got an idea of where, but when will these people strike?”

2.

Foran Fallir studied his target from a distance through macrobinoculars. Tomorrow the Parliament would be in session and the building would be crowded with his enemies. He planned to interrupt this session however and with any luck none of them would escape his wrath. Lowering the macrobinoculars Foran smiled and looked at the droid operated speeder truck that was being loaded with explosives.

Just then one of his followers approached.

"What is it?" Foran asked.

"There's been a problem." The man replied, "With Arrs."

Foran frowned. The engineer who was able to override the life preservation programming was exceptionally talented, but his private life was at best a distraction and at worst a liability.

"What now?" Foran asked, "Who has he cheated this time?"

"He's dead." The man said, "He was cheating at cards again and one of his opponents caught him."

"What about security?" Foran demanded, "I gave orders for them to watch him and keep him safe."

"They were too late comrade. The other man had a knife and was able to stab Arrs before they could reach him. He died shortly after."

Foran let this sink in. The tactic of using droid-controlled vehicles as weapons had proved its worth on several occasions, with some attacks being written off as unfortunate accidents. Now it seemed that the attack on the Estranian Parliament would be the last of its type.

"It does not matter." Foran lied, "Arrs has already modified the vehicle and we only need to load the explosives. Now go help the others."

The man walked away and Foran turned back towards tomorrow's target and he considered how the security staff that had failed him would be made to pay for their error.

"It'll be soon." Vorn said as he looked at the hologram, "They'll want to get things done as soon as they have everything in place. Leaving it longer than necessary just increases the risk of discovery."

"Then that means that we've already stopped them." Jaysica said, "They don't have everything they need and they're not likely to get it are they?"

"What makes you say that?" Vorn asked.

"Because we've still got all the explosives on the *Silver Hawk*." Jaysica replied.

"That's true major." Mace added, "We were waiting for the resistance to give us contact details."

"But didn't you say they already have explosives my boy?" Couran asked, looking at Vorn.

"They do." Vorn answered, "The Alliance supplied them. We've seen the result of the use of some when they murdered Jennay."

Mace shook his head.

"They got ambushed by the Empire." Mace said, "They were moving what they had left after some crates were lost in a raid when they ran into an army patrol."

"I'm afraid your mistaken my boy." Couran said, "I spoke with Moff Horatian himself two days ago and he mentioned nothing about such an ambush when we were discussing his anti-rebellion operations. He did however mention the raid where Alliance explosives were recovered in a PLAE store house."

"So what really happened to the explosives?" Jaysica asked.

"I'm guessing they're being loaded into in a droid transport that will deliver them there. Soon." Vorn replied, pointing at the hologram.

"I take it that simply informing the Parliamentary Guard is out of the question?" Couran asked.

"What would you tell them?" Mace asked, "My rebel friends have uncovered a plot by an Alliance backed group to bomb Parliament?"

"We need to deal with this ourselves." Vorn said, nodding in agreement.

"But how?" Tharun asked as he too studied the image, "That place is huge and there's only a handful of us. We can't possibly cover the entire perimeter."

"No we can't." Vorn agreed, "We need to get inside so we can act against an attack from any side."

"Same question again." Tharun said, "How?"

Vorn looked at Couran.

"Oh don't look at me my boy." He said, "I'm retired. I can get in there myself, but I can't issue security passes to anyone else. You need a serving member of Parliament to invite you in."

"Or," Vorn said, raising a finger, "we need access to the home computer system of a serving Member of Parliament so we can issue passes to ourselves."

"Got anyone in mind?" Mace asked.

"Actually I do." Vorn replied, "Your best friend in Parliament. Lady Sharva." Then he looked across the room to where a woman sat and watched the rebels without speaking. This was Jenessa Drame, doctor of xenoarchaeology at the University of Estran. She had been one of those to have assisted Vorn in his investigation recently. "Jenessa, I believe you know one of her staff don't you?" he asked.

Jenessa nodded.

"But let's get one thing clear." She said, "I'll help you with this but then I'm out. I'm not a soldier and I'm not signing up to fight. Got it?"

Vorn nodded back.

"I understand." He said, "After this we shouldn't need your help any more."

"We'll need someone's major." Tharun commented.

"How so?" Jaysica asked.

"Well we're planning on sneaking into this place right?" Tharun said, pointing at the hologram.

"We've done that sort of thing before." Jaysica replied.

"Yes, but we weren't planning on hanging around for long while we put ourselves between two opposing forces." Tharun replied, "We sneak in and we do what we have to, but then what?" How do we guarantee we've got a way of getting back to the *Silver Hawk* after we leave the place?"

"He's right major." Mace said, "We may need someone to cover our exit."

Vorn thought for a moment. Typically his team's operations would make use of either vehicles present in a target location or have the *Silver Hawk* move in to extract them. However, Vorn's knowledge of the Parliament building told him that it stored only relatively slow moving low-level vehicles that would leave them vulnerable until they could reach the safety of the *Silver Hawk*. Then something occurred to him and he looked at Couran.

"Couran," he said, "I've got an idea but it'll cost."

"Say no more my boy." Couran replied, "I'm only too glad to help."

"Good," Vorn said, "because I also need another favour."

"Lord Desh it's so wonderful to see you again." Lady Lynn Sharva said as she entered Couran's home through the front door. Behind her the luxury speeder that had brought her here glided quietly around the side of the house to wait until she sent for it.

"Always a pleasure Lady Sharva." Couran replied, "But I felt I just had to invite you over for dinner. I want to hear all about this new idea of yours to rezone the northern parks."

"Oh I'm not so sure that's a good idea." Lady Sharva replied, "They are an area of outstanding natural beauty after all. Several of my constituents have contacted me about it."

"But I thought you were sponsoring-" Couran began.

"Gracious no. As I always say we are here to serve those who put us in office."

Couran smiled, knowing full well that Lady Sharva was behind the legislation but had decided she could not risk being seen to be supporting it.

"Indeed." Couran replied, wrapping an arm around Lady Sharva's shoulders, "In fact that reminds me of one of these pictures. Have I shown it to you? You'll notice that your predecessor Lord Vorn Larcus the third can be seen beside me."

Kay Laren, personal handmaiden to Lady Sharva knew she was taking a risk shutting down the security perimeter around the house. However, she had just received a call from Doctor Jenessa Drame requesting that she allow access to her and several unnamed associates. Kay had encountered the xenoarchaeologist when they had both helped a rebel unit seize control of a star cruiser so she guessed that the associates were rebels.

She stood in a side doorway that overlooked the drive and stared towards the front gate that currently stood wide open, waiting for Jenessa and the rebels to come through it. But as she waited she somehow sensed the approach of several people from behind her. Looking around she saw only darkness and could hear nothing, but she still knew they were there somehow. Then there was movement as Jenessa emerged from the bushes, followed by two other figures.

"Over here!" Kay called out, waving them towards her. As the figures approached Kay recognised the other two as Vorn Larcus and Tobis Dorfus, two of the rebels who had been on the star cruiser.

"I take it you shut down the perimeter?" Vorn said as they reached the doorway and Kay nodded.

"Quickly, come inside." She said, "There are other staff still about, but they're all over at the other side of the house. If we're careful we should be able to get to the computer without them seeing you."

Kay led the visitors through the house towards the private office of Lady Sharva. She watched for any signs of the other household staff, but just as when she had been waiting for the rebels to arrive she just knew that they were elsewhere. Once inside the office Kay stood just inside the door and kept watch while the others headed directly for the computer.

"Do you know what you're doing?" Jenessa asked Tobis as he sat down and switched on the computer.

"What? Oh, err, yes. I think so."

"He only has to access the system for issuing security passes and run off a set for us." Vorn said.

"And what if she notices?" Jenessa asked.

"Does Lady Sharva look at this system often?" Vorn asked Kay.

"Oh no." Kay replied, "She hardly ever gives out passes. She doesn't want constituents going into Parliament and seeing what she says in debates.

"Here it is major." Tobis said and after inserting a mem-stik he began to tap at the keyboard rapidly. Then there was a humming sound as a nearby printer came to life and several sheets of flimisplast slid out. Each one bore an image of one of the rebels along with a false name and instructions to let the pictured bearer into the Parliament building, "We'll need to access the system again to delete ourselves." He then added as he removed the mem-stik and Vorn picked up the passes.

3.

The Estranian Parliament building was a massive and ornate structure, with columns surrounding the entire building. Uniformed guards stood at various points around the building itself but the primary focus of security was on the perimeter shield, the energy barrier ran all the way around the building and produced a shimmering effect in the air. At selected points in the shield were gaps that allowed access to those wishing to enter the building. These were split into two different types of entrance. The first were entrances to the public galleries, where citizens of the planet could lodge petitions with their government and visit the public galleries. The second and less common type, the type that the rebels made for were the supposedly secure access points leading to the private offices of Parliamentarians and other restricted areas.

"So will these guys recognise you major?" Tharun asked as they approached the entry point, "You did used to work here after all."

"Oh I wouldn't worry." Vorn replied, "Members of Parliament don't walk into the Parliament building, they drive in through the underground access at the back."

"I guess the little people aren't allowed to look their lordships in the face." Kara added.

Mace handed over the flimsies with their faked security passes printed on them. The guards compared the images on the passes to the faces of the rebels standing in front of them.

"Continue straight on." The guard said to them as he returned the passes, "Keep these with you at all times in case you are asked for them." And then he waved them through.

"That was easy." Jaysica said quietly as they walked towards the door into the Parliament building.

"Well technically we are cleared to be here little lady." Tharun pointed out, waving his pass.

The guards either side of the door did not react as the rebels passed between them. They had a clear view of the perimeter security checkpoint and as such had seen them cleared by security already and once inside the building they found that there were no guards in sight at all.

"This way." Vorn said, pointing down the corridor that was lined with images and statues of well-known former Parliamentarians.

"So is there a picture of you here somewhere major?" Jaysica asked.

"No, I'm afraid not." Vorn replied, "My departure was not exactly what you'd call amicable."

"They chucked him out." Kara said.

"So what are we looking for exactly major?" Tharun asked.

"The armoury is located in the basement." Vorn replied, "It's guarded, but not heavily. Security around here is based on keeping people out to begin with."

"And what sort of firepower are we looking at?" Mace asked.

"Small arms mainly. But hopefully there'll still be some of the specialist stuff we need. Ah, here's the turbolift we need." And Vorn stopped by an unmarked door that was painted to blend into the décor. Then he looked at Jaysica, "If you wouldn't mind." He said.

Jaysica smiled and knelt down beside the control panel, prising it away from the wall with a multipurpose tool she took from her pocket. She probed the wires exposed behind the panel with the tip of the tool and there was a sudden, brief flash.

"Ow!" she exclaimed, dropping the tool and shaking her hand. But as she bent down to retrieve the tool the door to the turbolift slid open.

"Thank you corporal." Vorn said, not noticing Kara scowl as he mentioned Jaysica's rank and then the rebels stepped inside the turbolift. Vorn pushed the button for the basement level and they waited the few seconds it took to travel down the single level to the security section that held the weapons they could not have brought through the scanners at the perimeter checkpoint and the door soon opened again to reveal a far more modestly decorated room.

There were two guards inside, neither of whom wore the visored helmets that all of the others encountered by the rebels so far had done. Instead these two were focused on a wall covered in monitors showing the feeds from the security cameras scattered not only throughout the building but also in the nearby streets. One of them looked around as the rebel left the turbolift and leapt to his feet.

"Who the hell are you?" the guard demanded.

"I'm sorry." Vorn said, "We were trying to get to Lady Sharva's office on the second floor, but we seem to have pressed the wrong button in the turbolift."

"That's a secure turbolift." The guard snapped as his comrade also got to his feet. Then he stopped talking and stared at Vorn, "Hang on," he said, "you're Vorn Larcus." And he reached for the blaster holstered at his hip.

Without waiting for an order from Vorn, Tharun pushed his superior aside and lunged forwards, knocking the guard from his feet. Simultaneously Mace grabbed a nearby chair and hurled it towards the other guard,

forcing him to dive aside rather than come to the aid of his comrade. There was a clatter as the first guard's weapon dropped from his holster and slid across the floor. Vorn scooped up the pistol and after he adjusted it setting to stun he took aim and shot the second guard.

"Sergeant! Stand clear!" he then yelled and as Tharun rolled aside he fired again, rendering this guard unconscious as well, "Okay," he then said, "lock these guys up and start going through those lockers over there. We want uniforms and weapons."

As they searched through the lockers Tharun looked at Jaysica.

"Aren't you a little short for one of these guards?" he commented.

"Yeah," Kara added, "they're all human. I've not seen a single Jawa amongst them."

"Hey that's insubordination." Jaysica said.

"They have a point." Mace said.

"We need someone to stay here and keep an eye on the security feeds anyway." Vorn said, "Plus someone to make sure that those two don't wake up and cause trouble."

"Ooh, Tobis should stay." Jaysica said with a smile and she pulled Tobis closer to her but Vorn shook his head.

"Actually we may need his technical expertise." He replied, "Kara you better stay. But I would like Tobis to take a look at the security records and wipe us from them. Camera footage and the record of us coming through the checkpoint."

"Anything you order Major Larcus sir." Kara replied as Tobis just nodded.

It was then that Tharun opened up one of the weapons lockers and smiled. Removing one of the weapons he held it up for the others to see.

"How about this?" he asked.

"Sergeant, I think you've found exactly what we need." Vorn replied.

With Jaysica and Kara watching over them from the security office the other four rebels made their way towards the rooms located directly above the parking garage. This place represented the only hole in the building's perimeter shield large enough for a vehicle larger than a speeder bike to pass through, so was the only weak spot in the defences. With their visors lowered the rebels' faces were hidden from the beings they encountered, an important point since it was now clear that at least some may recognise Vorn. Over his shoulder Tharun carried a non-descript black holdall that held several weapons larger than the blaster pistols they carried in holsters.

The rebels wanted a private location from which they could overlook the approach to the parking garage and this restricted their choice of location. Many of the rooms directly above the garage were meeting rooms or other communal areas so the rebels were instead forced to select an office along the same side of the building. The office was occupied by a Member of Parliament that had not been elected until after Vorn had defected to the Alliance, and the rebel knew little about the man other than his office was situated where they needed to be.

"Security my lord." Vorn called out as he knocked on the door, "We need to speak with you."

The door promptly slid open to reveal the puzzled looking nobleman. As Kara had suggested the nobleman was not used to being addressed by common security guards.

"How may I help you gentlemen?" he asked as the rebels wandered into his office.

"Take a seat and keep quiet." Tharun said, reaching out and shutting the door behind them.

"What?" the nobleman demanded, a snarl appearing on his face as it reddened, "Who do you think you are?"

Vorn pulled the helmet from his head.

"Vorn Larcus at your service." He said and then he added, "My lord."

The shocked noble turned and began to move towards the communicator mounted on his desk, but Tobis stepped forwards and blocked his way just before Tharun drew his blaster and brought the butt down on the base of his skull.

"Oh nice." Mace said as he watched Tharun and Tobis crouch down to pick up the incapacitated man, "If words don't work, smash the bloke's head in."

"Hey, it's what I do." Tharun replied then he looked at Tobis, "Over to the chair I think lad."

"Err, right." Tobis replied and they dragged the man to his chair and dumped him in it, "Err, what if he wakes up?"

"Then shoot him lad." Tharun suggested and he returned to the holdall and opened it up. From inside he took a short rifle and inserted a power cell, "So do I get to use this?" he asked.

"Well you are our best marksman." Mace said.

"Agreed." Vorn added, "I suggest the window as a vantage point."

Foran Fallir took another look at the parliament building and smiled, this was the moment he had been waiting for. Right now he could see the droid transport approaching from the opposite direction. Though the guards would be unable to seal the gap in the shield in time to prevent the explosive laden vehicle from

crashing through the outer perimeter they would undoubtedly seal the parking garage itself. Thus when the massive bomb was triggered it would not only demolish the blast door and bring down much of the side of the building, it would also blow out the nearby shield emitters from the inside and create a gap that his men would then flood through as they stormed Parliament. In his hand Foran held the comlink that would activate the vehicle's modified circuitry and override its safety features. Still smiling Foran sent the signal.

"Closing in from the west, do you see it?" Kara asked from the security office. Local traffic cameras were being fed into the security office and Jaysica and Kara had watched as it approached from more than a block away.

"Got it." Tharun replied. It was not the first transport to have come near to the Parliament building and Tharun made use of his weapon's optical sight to study the forward cabin for signs of a driver. Unlike all of the other vehicles to appear this one lacked any crew and Tharun thumbed off the safety, "Ready." He said.

Mace and Vorn stood behind Tharun and used macrobinoculars to look down on the vehicle for themselves.

"Wait for it." Vorn said, "It could be a normal transport." Then the transport made a sudden turn, crossing oncoming traffic and heading directly for the gap in the shield, "Now!" Vorn yelled and Tharun fired.

The weapon he wielded was not a standard blaster. Known as a droid electromagnetic pulse gun, or DEMP gun, the carbine was designed to emit a sudden energy pulse optimised to disrupt the operation of droids. So when Tharun directed his weapon at the transport and fired it rather than a red bolt there was a bluish white flash and lightning bolts spread across the surface of the vehicle as if an ion cannon had struck it. Unsure of how resilient the vehicle's brain would be Tharun had set the DEMP gun to maximum, a setting that would cause enough damage to most human sized droids to make them burst into flames. The transport itself did not catch fire, but there was a second flash of light from within its structure as its electronics failed in an extreme fashion and circuitry began to burn.

Left totally out of control, the transport did not straighten out its course towards the gap in the shield and instead continued to turn.

4.

"No!" Foran bellowed as he saw the brief energy blast and then watched helplessly as the rigged transport missed the perimeter security checkpoint and instead ploughed headlong into the shield.

Two types of defensive shield existed in the galaxy, first were ray shields that displaced the energy of beam weapons and second were particle shields that blocked the passage of physical objects. The perimeter shield combined the effects of both ray and particle shielding for maximum protection against all attacks. So when the truck crashed into the shield it was as if it had struck a solid wall instead. A massive 'crash' filled the air as the front of the truck crumpled against the shield, sending sparks flying. The rear of the truck spun around as the engines continued trying to push the vehicle forwards and once more the shield was there to block its passage. The shield strained under the impact and the sparks grew into lightning like arcs of energy that flowed over the truck and into the storage compartment that made up the bulk of the vehicle.

The explosives contained within the vehicle were instantly ignited by the energy discharge from the shield.

The crude homemade explosives that Foran's own organisation often made would have detonated immediately. But the Alliance supplied explosives were far more stable and instead just burned steadily instead of exploding in one go, causing smoke and flames to billow out of the vehicle.

The guards at the nearby checkpoint immediately realised that this was more than just a traffic accident and they fell back inside the shield before sealing it behind them.

"What do we do?" a panic filled voice suddenly sounded over the rather basic communications net that the PLAE had put in place for the raid. Right now more than half a dozen teams of Foran's activists were in place and waiting for the word to attack, "The shield is still up!"

Sure enough the perimeter shield had held against the impact and now all of the access points had been sealed. Foran's plan had always included a certain number of troops having to use repulsorlift vehicles to fly over the shield, but the idea had been to have a larger force of troops on the ground drawing the attention of the Parliamentary Guard towards the breached section.

Foran paused as he thought about what to do, he was just considering ordering a retreat when one of the other group leaders pre-empted him with a different suggestion.

"Attack! Take the checkpoints and lower the shield!"

In the security office occupied by Jaysica and Kara the communications system was going wild. All throughout the building the Parliamentary Guard were calling in for orders and neither of the rebels knew how to respond. It seemed that the perimeter guards had at least taken the simple step of sealing the shield and triggering the alarms, but as of yet none of the internal guards knew what was happening.

Then the external cameras picked up something else, about half a dozen airspeeders were swooping in low between the shield and the Parliament building itself.

"Major, we've got company." Jaysica said into her comlink, "What should we do?"

"Who is it?" Vorn replied.

"Me, Jaysica."

"No, who's arriving."

"I don't know." Jaysica told him, "They're in unmarked speeders."

"It's more of those PLAE goons sir." Kara interrupted, raising her voice so that Jaysica's comlink could pick it up, "The outside guards are responding, but they're outnumbered."

"Order all the internal guards to fall back to the command centre." Vorn said, "Then get out of there as fast as you can. Meet us in the parking garage." And then the channel went silent as Vorn shut off his comlink.

As Vorn put his comlink away the other rebels looked at him.

"How does pulling the guards back help them fight off the attack?" Mace asked.

"It doesn't." Vorn replied, "But what it does do is get someone qualified back into the command centre while clearing us a path to the parking lot. As soon as the first team gets to the security office they'll find it unmanned and take over. I hope. Then they can call for Imperial reinforcements and direct the defence."

"While we escape right under their noses." Tharun added, "Right?"

"Err..." Tobis made the sound as he looked out of the window at the still burning truck.

"What is it?" Mace asked him.

"Well, err, it's just that don't we need to prove that the truck was filled with the explosives that we provided?"

So the major can come back with us I mean?"

Both Mace and Tharun then turned to look at Vorn.

"The lad has a point there major." Tharun said.

"We could do with the altered droid brain too." Mace added, "Or what's left of it. We can match that to the schematic on the datapad and tie the engineer to all of the attacks."

"Agreed," Vorn said, "we need to get to that truck. But first I'd like to pay a little visit to my old office."

Leading them from the office they had occupied briefly Vorn headed directly to the office that had been his when he had been a Member of Parliament. Since he had vacated it the office had naturally been taken over by his successor, Lady Lynn Sharva.

"Tobis, knock." Vorn said.

"Huh?" Tobis replied.

"Well she knows my voice." Vorn told him, "Plus Mace's as well and I wouldn't put it past her to remember Tharun's from when they met on the *Ocean Queen*. So knock."

"Oh, err, right. Yes sir." Tobis replied and with the others keeping watch he knocked on the door. When there was no reply he looked at Vorn, "I don't think there's anybody home." He replied nervously.

"Good." Vorn replied and he held the badge of one of the guards they had incapacitated in the control room to the lock. Immediately the door slid open and Vorn went inside, the others following close behind.

"So what exactly are we doing here?" Mace asked.

"I just thought I'd give credit where credit's due." Vorn replied as he reached inside his stolen uniform and produced the security pass with his image on it. He then picked up a pen from the desk and used it to cross out the fake name before writing in 'Lord Vorn Larcus III'. Then, at the bottom of the pass he simply wrote 'Dear Lynn, Sorry we missed you but thanks for letting us in. Lots of love Vorn.' Then he set the pen back down where he found it and put the pass in the middle of the desk, "Right then," He said, "now that's done let's get out of here. I think the ladies will be waiting for us."

"Where the hell are they?" Kara muttered, looking at the chronometer on her wrist. She and Jaysica were crouching behind a wide pillar with blasters in their hands and peering out at what little activity there was in the parking lot. Most of the Parliamentarians had been in the debating chamber when the alarm sounded and the guards had kept them in that central location so they could be protected more easily. However, a small number had been elsewhere and some of these had decided that they would rather not remain in a building under attack and had headed down here for their speeders. However, the guards by the turbolift doors were instead ordering them back upstairs and to the debating chamber also. The pair of rebels had avoided these guards simply by not having to use the turbolift. The security office was on the same basement level and they had been able to sneak in through a doorway the guards had not expected anyone to use.

"Uh-oh." Jaysica said softly as she saw the turbolift door open again and more guards stepped out, "Four more of them."

Kara sighed as she shook her head.

"Can't you even recognise your own boyfriend?" she said, "That's the others. Look, Tharun's got that DEMP gun over his shoulder now."

Jaysica looked again and saw that sure enough the four newly arrived guards all carried rifles and that the tallest of them also had a DEMP gun slung across his back. Now that the alarms were sounding carrying such weapons was easily explainable and the rebels could not be bothered to conceal them.

Jaysica and Kara watched as the four newcomers spoke briefly with the guards outside the turbolift and then began to move through the parking lot, searching between the vehicles.

"Come on." Kara whispered and cautiously she moved out from behind the pillar and moved in the direction of the four disguised rebels. Jaysica watched for a few moments then made a dash for the row of speeders that Kara was using for cover. But just as she reached the nearest one she tripped and fell. There was a brief yelp of surprise and a clatter as her blaster dropped from her grip and slid beneath the nearby speeder.

Immediately the guards by the turbolift looked around.

"Over there!" one of the tem called out, waving at the rebels disguised as guards.

Kara peered out from behind a speeder and saw the four figures nearing with weapons at the ready. Just in case she had been mistaken about their identities she raised her blaster.

"Err, there's nothing down here." Tobis called out as he looked down at Kara.

"So what made the noise?" the guard who had pointed towards Jaysica asked.

"Just a rat." Mace replied.

"Weird." The guard replied, "I thought we sent them all back upstairs." And then he laughed.

Mace waved at Kara, directing her and Jaysica further along the row of speeders to where one marked in the colours of the Parliamentary Guard was parked. The disguised rebels opened the doors of the speeder and formed a barrier while Jaysica and Kara crawled inside and lay on the floor.

"Extinguishers." Vorn said softly and he pointed to where a pair of fire extinguishers were hung on a nearby pillar. Mace nodded and he and Vorn walked over and removed them from their mounting before returning to the speeder. Tharun was already in the driver's seat and he started up the engine as the last two rebels got into the speeder.

"So how do we get out of here major?" he asked.

"Just drive to the main gate." Vorn replied, "It'll open automatically." The he paused briefly before he added, "I hope."

"You hope?" Mace asked, "Oh I've got a bad feeling about this."

Tharun drove the speeder from the parking bay directly towards the only exit ramp, slowing as he drew near to the armoured blast door. But before the speeder came to a full halt there was a low rumbling and the sections of the door began to slide apart.

"See." Vorn said, "I told you it would work." And then Tharun accelerated up the ramp.

The speeder emerged into a firefight. Scattered pockets of PLAE terrorists were battling against the highly professional Parliamentary Guard and the guards' superior equipment and training was showing. All but two of the airspeeders that had set down to disgorge their terrorist cargo was now just a burning wreck and the guards were steadily closing in around the survivors.

"Keep going." Vorn said to Tharun, "Take us to the check point and tell them we've been sent to secure the truck."

Foran Fallir was furious. Months of planning had come to nothing and now one of his subordinates had thrown away resources that would have been better kept for use on another occasion. Foran could have ordered a retreat of course, but then that ran the risk of making him look overly cautious and weak while someone else appeared to be more willing to take the fight to their enemy and so now Foran had to just sit and watch as the Parliamentary Guard roundly defeated his men. The men were easily replaceable of course; there was no shortage of gullible fools ready to throw their lives away, but the weapons and vehicles carefully hoarded for this raid would not be so easy to replace. Not unless the Alliance could be convinced to send some of course.

As he watched the continuing battle Foran tried to decide exactly how he would have the man who ordered the attack killed. Between his bungling and the failure of the men trusted to protect Arrs Tellik he was going to have rather a lot of pruning to do in his organisation.

Then Foran spotted the shield at the main vehicle checkpoint open and a Parliamentary Guard landspeeder emerged and slowly drove towards the burning truck before coming to a halt. Three guards emerged from the speeder while the fourth remained in the driver's seat. Two of the guards held fire extinguishers that they immediately began to direct at the fire while the third waited until the fire around the control systems was out and then began to clamber onto the vehicle and open up a service hatch while the other two headed for the rear of the vehicle.

"Now what are they up to?" Foran said to himself and he raised his macrobinoculars, pointing them towards the guards and their speeder. With their visors down he could not make out much of the guards' faces but they had left one of the rear doors to their speeder open and inside Foran spotted a figure curled up on the floor, clearly trying to avoid being noticed. He zoomed in on the figure just as it moved its head slightly and he caught a glimpse of its face and recognised it immediately. It was one of the rebels who had been in contact with the cell the PLAE was using to trick the Alliance into supplying them with arms.

Then the guard who had been rummaging about inside the truck's control systems stood up and jumped down to the ground with what was obviously a circuit board in his hand and the other two emerged from behind the truck having discarded their fire extinguishers in favour of a single small canister that Foran knew had been packed with explosives. Evidently the fire had not yet reached this one.

"Stop them!" Foran yelled, pointing to the fake guards, "They'll ruin everything!"

5.

“Drive!” Vorn snapped as he got back into the speeder after Mace and Tobis and before he had even closed the door properly Tharun was already accelerating away.

In the back of the vehicle Mace looked around to stare at the checkpoint and he saw that if their swift departure had been noticed then the guards were still too busy with other matters to bother coming after them.

“Have we done it?” Jaysica asked as she and Kara climbed up from the floor to sit between Mace and Tobis. “I think so.” Tobis replied as he too looked behind the speeder and Jaysica squeezed his arm.

“Don’t be too hasty.” Tharun replied, reducing the vehicle’s speed, “Look like we’re caught in traffic.” And ahead of them the rebels saw that the streets had become clogged with traffic as the authorities sought to keep people away from the battle at the Parliament building.

“Increase power.” Vorn said, “Go over them.”

“Won’t that attract the cops?” Tharun asked.

Vorn reached out and flicked a switch on the dashboard and immediately a siren began to wail and the blue lights mounted on top of the speeder began to flash.

“For today we are the cops.” He said, “Now go.”

With its sirens blaring the speeder made good progress through the streets, but it was not long before Tharun spotted something.

“Major, company.”

From the front passenger seat Vorn looked around and spotted what Tharun was talking about. Three other speeders had also increased their altitude and were following behind the rebels’ stolen vehicle. So far there was no sign of any pursuit of these speeders by other authorities so Vorn guessed that people who saw them were assuming that the rebels’ marked vehicle was in fact acting as an escort for these.

“Who are they?” Jaysica asked.

“Not cops, I’ll tell you that.” Mace said.

“What do you want me to do major?” Tharun asked.

“Just keep going,” Vorn replied, “get us clear of the city and everyone get ready to return fire.”

The first strike came as the rebels left the crowded centre of Estran City and entered the quieter industrial zone nearer the coast. None of the speeders involved in the chase mounted any weapons so the occupants were reduced to leaning from windows and firing personal weapons towards the rebels.

“Cover your eyes!” Mace exclaimed as he pressed the muzzle of his blaster rifle against the plastiglass of the rear window and fired. The energy bolt punched a fist-sized hole through the window, blackened the area around the hole and sent cracks running towards the edge. Mace then swung the butt of his weapon and the entire window gave way. Thankfully the majority of the fragments fell backwards and out of the rapidly moving speeder but a handful of pieces still fell inside the vehicle. Now however the rebels had a large open space through which they could fire on the vehicles chasing them while their pursuers had to fire from side windows unless they were willing to chance travelling at speeds of up to over a hundred kilometres per hour with a smashed windscreen. Fortunately it appeared that they were not.

“Here!” Vorn exclaimed, “Take these.” And he passed both his and Tharun’s blaster rifle back to Jaysica and Kara. The two young women snatched the powerful weapons and joined Mace and Tobis in leaning out of the back window and firing at their pursuers. The combined weight of fire from four blaster rifles all set on automatic was immense and the lead speeder chasing them soon erupted in a ball of flame that crashed into the ground and continued to roll forwards until it struck a particularly well-built wall and was forced to a halt. The two surviving vehicles adjusted their tactics, dropping back slightly and moving in a more evasive pattern. This made their own fire even less accurate, but it prevented the rebels from bringing their superior firepower to bear while still letting them follow the stolen speeder.

“We can’t lead these guys back to the *Silver Hawk*.” Mace said.

“I know.” Vorn replied as he studied the navigation system built into the dashboard in front of him. Then he glanced at Tharun, “Sergeant steer right up here and take us into the country. I’m going to make the call to our back up.”

“You think they’ll come?” Tharun asked.

“They will if they want paying the thousand credits.” Vorn said as he pulled his comlink from his pocket and adjusted its frequency, “Mister Harnser,” he signalled, “we’re in a Parliamentary Guard speeder heading out of the industrial zone. It seems we’ve picked up some company. Would you like to join the party?”

“Sure.” Cam the reply after a brief static filled pause, “But I’m bringing a plus one or more.” And then the channel went dead.

“You heard him.” Vorn said to Tharun, “Keep going.”

Beyond the city limits the drivers of all the speeders were free to push their vehicles to their maximum limits and the pair of vehicles pursuing the rebels went back on the offensive, taking turns in approaching the rebel vehicle and firing a handful of shots in the hope of hitting it before suddenly dropping back when they saw the rebels take aim at them. Only the rebels returned a handful of shots and none actually struck their targets. But this did not bother the rebels; they were waiting for something else.

That something soon appeared as a cluster of dark spots on the horizon that rapidly grew into the shapes of more than a dozen lightweight swoops. The compact repulsorlift vehicles were little more than a seat mounted on a powerful engine and they had no problem in closing with the three much heavier landspeeders involved in the chase. Several of the swoop riders had blasters holstered or slung about them, but none opened fire. Instead the first of them to reach the landspeeders plucked an axe from the side of his swoop and swung it down, leaving it embedded in the engine cover of the landspeeder. Immediately the vehicle began to splutter as it lost power and its driver was forced to drop back and land. Several of the swoops also dropped back at this point and began to dive down on the crippled vehicle as its passengers attempted to disembark.

The second speeder chasing the rebels kept after them however and as another swoop rider drew along side the driver suddenly swerved, smashing his much heavier vehicle through the fragile swoop and demolished it, sending its rider tumbling to his death.

One of the swoops pulled alongside the rebels' vehicle and its helmeted rider lifted his visor to reveal the face of Gill Harnser. Gill waved at Tharun and then pointed towards a tunnel up ahead that ran beneath a wide slow flowing river. Tharun nodded and drove towards it.

The tunnel mouth was dark, suggesting that its internal lighting had been disabled and Tharun took the risk of not activating the speeder's headlights so that their pursuers would not be able to see them as they followed the rebels into the tunnel.

"Where are those swoop guys going?" Kara asked as they entered the tunnel.

Vorn looked back and saw that Gill's swoop gang had indeed not accompanied them into the tunnel but rather they had chosen to fly over the river. However, the sound of a heavier repulsorlift engine indicated that the landspeeder chasing them had chosen to follow them into the tunnel.

"I don't know." Vorn said before he looked at Tharun and added, "Just keep going."

It took only a few seconds for the light at the far end of the tunnel to appear and the rebels' vehicle sped out into the light once more. But as they left the tunnel the rebels spotted that they had just driven past a repulsor truck positioned beside the tunnel mouth. As soon as the rebels were clear the truck lurched forwards and blocked the tunnel. Just as the pursuing speeder was about to exit it.

The speeder burst through the truck and tumbled along the road ahead. Meanwhile both the rebels' landspeeder and Gill's swoop gang sped off.

"I must say it feels good to be back here." Jeeves said as he shuffled down the *Silver Hawk's* access ramp and onto the deck of the hangar bay of the rebel headquarters. Beside him Harvey chirped, "Yes, even better than being in a luxury mansion." Jeeves replied and then following another burst of whistling from Harvey he added, "No, I am not insane." and he slapped the top of the astromech droid.

Waiting at the bottom of the ramp was a tall dark skinned man. This was General Syres Kain, the man in charge of all Alliance activities in the sector. Standing just behind him was an older and slightly shorter man with white hair. Colonel Max Collis was chief of Alliance Special Forces and was flanked by a pair of his troopers.

"Major Vorn Larcus," the general called out as the rebels descended the ramp behind the droids, "I take it you can justify your unauthorised absence?"

"I can sir." Vorn replied and he held out three transparent plastic bags. Each bag contained one of the pieces of evidence that had been collected, the datapad showing how the droid transports were modified, the altered circuit board and the canister of explosives, "If you have these analysed you will see that the resistance group the Alliance has recently begun supplying is in fact a part of a group responsible for at least one atrocity and that they have been funnelling the weapons supplied to them to the main group for use in other activities. One of which my team foiled yesterday."

"Yes, I've seen the reports." The general replied as he took the bags from Vorn. The bag containing the canister of explosives he then handed to Colonel Collis, "Your opinion colonel?" he asked.

Colonel Collis removed the canister from the bag and looked inside.

"Well it looks like our stuff, going by the colour. But we'll need to do a proper analysis to be sure."

"The resistance claimed that their explosives were lost in an ambush." General Kain said.

"Our source says there was no ambush general." Mace said, wading in on Vorn's behalf, "The supposed resistance group is a front for the People's Liberation Army of Estran."

General Kain and Colonel Collis looked at one another.

"Very well Major Larcus." General Kain said, turning back towards Vorn again, "I will organise a formal inquiry into this evidence and you will assist us in looking into this matter further. In the meantime I'm returning command of the field team assigned to the Silver Hawk to you." Then he looked at Mace and added, "Assuming there are no objections from her captain."

"None whatsoever general." Mace replied with a grin.

"Good. Carry on major." And General Kain and his party turned and walked away.

"Congratulations major." Tharun said as the rebels patting Vorn on the back and shoulder in support. All except Kara who remained standing further back.

"You're back!" a woman's voice suddenly called out across the hangar bay and Vorn looked around to see his daughter rushing towards him.

"Lyssa!" he called out in return, "Its good to see you-"

But rather than rushing to her father, Lyssa ran right past Vorn and instead threw her arms around Tharun and kissed him.

"Oh it seems like ages since you were here!" she exclaimed.

Vorn looked at Mace.

"What the kriff's been going on while I've been away?" he asked.

Sploosh.

Sploosh.

Sploosh.

The sound of the bodies hitting the water echoed through the darkness. Foran Fallir stood on the deck of the boat and watched as those recently purged from his organisation were disposed of.

Such a purge was necessary if he was to maintain control. Already there were rumours that the Rebel Alliance had ceased resupplying them and Foran knew that some were laying the blame for these mishaps on him. By removing those he held responsible he hoped to warn off any potential challengers.

For a while at least.

The Parliamentary Guard were still in a state of high alert two days after the failed attack and Members of Parliament were only just being allowed back into the building. Even now however, heavily armed guards still patrolled all of the hallways and were checking passes frequently.

All of this was of great annoyance to Lady Sharva who had been forced to wait while her speeder was inspected before being allowed into the private garage beneath the building. This had little to do with the terrorist force that had launched the attack, but instead was looking into the apparent presence of another group of intruders who though they had attacked at least two guards and a Member of Parliament had apparently intervened to disrupt the attack. One of the guards had indicated that former Parliamentarian Vorn Larcus led this group. However, as yet there was no indication of how they had got through the security perimeter. They had been inside before the attack and yet there were no other breaches reported before then. To make matters worse large portions of the security recordings had been deleted, successfully wiping all footage of the rebels' breach of security. When she entered her office Lady Sharva saw that although she had been kept out for the past two days the mail delivery droids had still been functioning and left a small stack of letters on her desk. Most of these would undoubtedly be from constituents pleading for her help and Lady Sharva would have to reply in a manner that made it look like she cared about them, but there was always the chance that there would be something useful in the mix and so she picked up a letter opener and began to slice open the envelopes.

As she reduced the pile of letters she noticed that there was something else beneath them, something that had not been left by the mail droid and had not been there before the attack. She reached down to the bottom of the pile and pulled out the security pass that bore Vorn's face. Keeping the sheet of flimsiplast on the desk she read what Vorn had written on it and she realised that he had been in this very office. She screamed and brought the letter opener down on the flimsy, driving its tip through Vorn's image and into the desk below.