

Star Wars: Imperial Treachery

Chapter 6

Luckily for Jax, Nayt and Celeste, opening the doors had started a prison riot. That hastened their journey since they barely had to deal with guards. “Ignore it,” Jax said as they passed another group of guards engaged in combat with prisoners. The group continued on, passing battle after battle. There were more prisoners than guards, and from how it looked, the prisoners had the upper hand.

“Caucasus is finished,” Nayt commented. “They’ll never recover from this.”

“Remember that that is both a blessing and a curse,” Jax said, peering around a corner. “Clear.” They continued on.

“How so?” Nayt asked. “This place is a sour note on our planet. It only houses wronged individuals.” A prisoner charged past them, completely ignoring them. “Close call.”

“There *are* criminals here as well,” Jax replied. “Once this riot’s over, these prisoners will be free to roam the landscape.” Before he could continue, a pair of prisoners approached them.

“Kill the guards!” one of the prisoners screamed as they charged them. Jax cocked his shotgun and fired, blowing both men to meaty pieces.

“See what I mean?” Jax said, wiping the blood from his face.

Skoti, Mila, Echon and Aurea had little trouble as well on their quest to find and rescue Arcia. In fact, as they got deeper into the solitary wing, it seemed like the prisoners were much more organized. “Three people approaching from around the corner,” Aurea warned. “They’re unarmed, but one of them is pretty burly.” Skoti readied his rifle. Aurea had been right every other time so far. Sure enough, three prisoners turned the corner and stopped in the middle of the intersection.

“Stop,” the burly prisoner ordered. “Mistress has warned any guards to leave now and they won’t be harmed.”

“Well good for the guards,” Skoti said. “But we’re not guards, we’re rebels come to free Arcia.” The prisoners stood completely still.

“Unlikely,” the burly man said. “This is your last warning.”

“For fark’s sake, we’re not guards!” Skoti exclaimed. “Does she look like a guard to you?” he asked, pushing Mila forward. One of the prisoners looked weirdly at Mila. Echon aimed his rifle at the man.

“Watch it,” he warned.

“Three men heading towards us,” Aurea said. “This time, they’re armed.” The third prisoner turned around.

“Fark!” The man exclaimed. “It’s an ambush!” The prisoners scattered in opposite directions as Warden Bedacus and his personal guard approached. Aurea and Mila quickly hid in the shadows.

“Good to still see some guards around,” Walther said. “Arcia’s pinned up in the next room,” he informed, pointing down the hall where the three prisoners had come from. “Now I know we’re undermanned, but Sinius said that if it came to this, that the Krayt maiden would have to go.” Skoti swallowed hard. “I want you guys to charge in and distract them long enough for me to get a clear shot.” Skoti saluted the warden. He and Echon then walked down the hall towards the door. They could already tell that it had been forced shut by the broken latches at the tops of the doors. Arcia and the other prisoners didn’t want the guards coming in.

“You know,” Skoti said as he cocked his rifle. “I think I got a better idea on how to deal with the maiden.” He nodded to Echon, who nodded back. The two then turned towards the warden and his cronies and opened fire, killing the warden’s bodyguards. “Go on,” Skoti ordered, motioning for the warden to open the door. Echon kept his gun trained on him as he walked by.

“This is insubordination,” Walther grumbled. “Sinius will have you hanged.”

“I think Sinius would hang us for different thin’s,” Skoti replied. The warden’s eyes widened once he realized that they were working with the rebellion.

“I don’t know how you guys use these things,” Echon said, talking about his rifle. “It almost flew out of my hands!”

“You get used to it,” Skoti told him as he lifted his leg to kick open the door.

Jax broke the door open with a powerful kick as Nayt and Celeste stormed in. The processing center was one of the only places in control of the guards. All of the would-be prisoners had been piled into a corner of the rather large room, which was good for Jax and company, Jax dropped his shotgun and quickly drew his rifle, opening fire as fast as possible. Celeste focused on the guards coming from behind the counters while Nayt was busy taking out the guards near the hostages. In a matter of moments, the three of them had been able to clear an entire room. “Great job team,” Jax said.

“Captain Ial!” Oulu said, standing up. Celeste walked over to her and the rest of the Imperials.

“Oulu,” Celeste said, embracing the woman. “I feared that everyone had been killed when they crashed here.” She looked around. “Where’s Evan?” Oulu looked down at her feet.

“We don’t know,” she answered. “I had hoped that he’d been captured with everyone else.” Celeste looked away from the rest of her crew and smiled. She hoped that he had died in some awful and painful way.

“Is everyone accounted for?” Jax asked. “We need to get out of here soon.”

“Where’s Meda?” Nayt asked.

“They took one of your men to the interrogation hall, wherever that is,” Oulu answered. “I can’t be certain that he’s the one you’re looking for though. Never spoke a word.” Nayt and Jax left the room and ran down the hall. The interrogation room was only a few doors down from the processing room; done that way to quicken prisoner processing. Jax switched to his shotgun and approached the open door. Inside were two soldiers, both lay fallen next to Meda.

“I take the doors opening was your idea?” Meda said as soon as Nayt entered the room. “And I doubt that anyone authorized this little-” he paused as soon as Jax entered the room, prompting Meda to execute the former army’s salute. He made a “v” with his right index and middle finger and laid it across his chest. “Master Refeik?”

“It’s been a long time Tyno,” Jax said, put the shotgun back in his harness. “At ease.” Meda put his hands to his sides. Nayt found it funny to see his commanding officer react like this. “Give me a sit rep,” Jax ordered.

“I landed at base camp sometime after sunrise,” Meda began. “Not too far after, a lone hornet broke the perimeter and opened fire. We didn’t have enough time to bring out anything to even phase it. A squad came in after it and cleaned up any survivors. Afterwards, I and those Republics were taken prisoner. When they said the rebels were attacking I was brought here for questioning. Next thing I know they talk about pulling a maximum security lockdown right as the doors swing open. These guys tried to ‘protect me’ when they heard a commotion down at processing. I took that as my chance and stuck. Then you two showed up.”

“Good,” Jax said, thinking. “We’re going to need to make some kind of signal to let the rest of the group know that we got you.”

“The ENP should be wearing off,” Nayt said. “Plus the sun is rising. If we get to the radio tower we could contact Bedlam to send us an evac.”

“That’s a horrible idea,” Meda said. “Their radio tower could trace the signal and locate Bedlam!”

“It’s risky,” Jax said. “But that’s how we got in here. Let’s go for it.” Meda looked visibly ticked but knew not to talk back to his master.

As Skoti kicked open the door, they were greeted by an entire room *filled* with prisoners. Most looked ready to tear the guards to bits, the same guards that Echon and Skoti were dressed

as. “We warned you,” a woman’s voice said. The crowd parted to reveal a woman. The first thing Echon noticed was her blue hair. That was something he normally only saw on Zeltrons. The second thing he noticed was her attire. She *was* wearing the prisoner orange jumpsuit, or what was left of one. She had torn the thing to shreds, leaving only a strap to cover her chest and a used the rest of it to wrap around her waist. He was surprised to see her still standing next to these animals dressed like that.

“Arcia,” the warden said. “Sinius already told me the bad news. It seems that I’m here to kill you now.” The prisoners had a chance to pounce on them, but they remained docile, if not angry. Echon wondered why they hadn’t attacked yet.

“You won’t be able to walk out of here alive,” Arcia warned. Echon swallowed hard. He really wanted to say something at the moment. Tell them that he wasn’t a guard. That he only worked for the Empire. But he was pretty sure that no one would believe him, or know what the Empire was. They thought they were only a part of the Republic, which was a good thing for Celeste’s cover he guessed. Now he was starting to regret not probing Celeste more on this mission. It finally dawned on Echon that he was panicking.

“I really don’t care,” the warden said as he drew his pistol. Suddenly Echon heard the most haunting tune. It felt like every ounce of strength was being sapped from him. He watched as the warden fell to his knees and the prisoners jumped upon him.

“What’s going on?” Aurea asked as she and Mila spied on the confrontation.

“The maiden sings,” Mila answered. Aurea produced a book from her waistband. Mila peered over the girl’s shoulder as she flipped through the pages. “What are you doing?” Mila asked, confused as Aurea ran her fingers across the pages as if she was reading it. The sun had started to come up, but it was still too dark to read. Besides, the pages appeared to be blank

“My mother wrote this to further study the Force,” she answered. “It describes all the sensations one feels when tapping into specific streams of the Force. There!” She exclaimed, tapping her finger on a page. “Battle meditation, amazing.”

“Battle what?” Mila said.

“She alters the Force around people to inspire confidence in her allies while drowning her opponents in fear,” Aurea explained. “She utilizes it by singing though. My mother never wrote about that.” They looked back at the scene. The warden by this time had been beaten to a bloody pulp and the prisoners looked ready to finish off Echon and Skoti. “Poodoo,” Aurea said. “They’re going to kill them.” Mila and Aurea picked up the rifles from the warden’s dead bodyguards and ran down the hall. A prisoner punched Skoti in the face, whose hat fell off as he fell to the ground. Just as the man went to stomp on his head, another prisoner stood over Skoti.

“Stop!” the prisoner exclaimed. He knelt down to the ground and picked Skoti up. “Skoti?” the prisoner asked.

“Neek?” Skoti said, his vision blurry from the punch. “Oh fark, it is you!” The two embraced.

“It’s the rebels!” Neek exclaimed. “They finally arrived!” The prisoners cheered as Arcia approached them.

“Forgive us,” Arcia apologized. “I had no idea you had infiltrated the guards.”

“Oh no problem madam,” Skoti said, bowing slightly. “He had to do what we did to save you.”

“Oh good, you guys are okay,” Mila said as she and Aurea walked in, rifles in hand. Suddenly the lights flickered on. “And it looks like the ENP just wore off.”

“Skoti, Echon, come in,” Nayt said over the newly working radio.

“We’re here,” Skoti answered, snatching the radio from Echon. “And we got the maiden. Also, Neek’s here.”

“That’s great,” Nayt said. “Bring them to the radio tower in the central complex on the double. Nationalists are sending troops in as we speak.”

“Got it,” Skoti said. “Ma’am, we’re goin’ to need to get goin’.” Arcia turned to the prisoners.

“We understand mistress,” one of the prisoners said. “We’ll stall those Nationalist bastards until you’re safe.” Arcia smiled.

“Farewell,” she said as Skoti and the rest of the group ran out of the room.

Nayt fiddled around with the dials on the radio until he found Bedlam’s frequency. “Weather station Barnacle,” the man on the other line said. The weather station was a cover so Nationalists didn’t think to investigate. “This is operator Joie, how can I help you?” Nayt thought for a moment.

“Operator this is Nayt of house Fillion,” Nayt said into the microphone. “Override code Eye-Tea-Sea-Oh, requesting emergency evac from the Caucasus prison complex.”

“Request denied,” the operator replied. “There have been reports of a large Nationalist force in the area.”

“I know,” Nayt said, rubbing the sides of his forehead. “That’s why I need an evac. We have VT’s. I repeat we have VT’s in possession.”

“Valuable targets,” Jax explained to the Republic survivors.

“Request still denied,” the operator replied back. Nayt gritted his teeth.

“I told you this wouldn’t work,” Meda said. Jax stepped up and pulled Nayt away from the microphone.

“This is Jax of house Refeik,” he said. “I’m requesting an emergency evac. Override code Roger-How-Easy-Able.”

“Sir, I have no idea what you just spouted at me but the fact remains that we will not send any form of evac.”

“Damnit Joie!” Jax exclaimed. He took a deep breath. “Okay, here’s what I want you to do, go find one of your higher-ups that has been in the military *before* the civil war and repeat my override code to him.”

“Sir I-” the operator tried to say.

“DO IT NOW!” Jax screamed, losing his cool by the second. There was silence on the line.

“This is Colonel Joson,” the radio said. “How did you get that override?”

“Like I said,” Jax answered. “This is Jax of house Refeik. And we need an evac asap.” Just then, the rest of the group arrived with Arcia in tow. “We got VT’s here Joson. If you guys don’t send an evac, they’re going to kill us.” Celeste turned to look at Aurea; her eyes were brown, just like before the lockdown. Maybe she was seeing things before.

“Jax, my hands are tied,” Joson replied. Arcia approached the microphone.

“Colonel, do you recognize my voice?” she asked.

“Ar-Arcia?” the Colonel asked, surprised. “What’s she doing there?”

“I’ve been held captive here since the start of the war,” she explained. “If you don’t send help, Sinius *will* kill me and everyone else here.” There was silence once more. Skoti peered out the door. The coast was still clear but he wondered how much longer they had.

“Alright,” Joson said. “We’re sending a *turtle* your way, ETA five minutes. Be sure to pop smoke at the extraction point, weather station Barnacle over and out.” The entire crowd cheered.

“Let’s get out of here,” Skoti said. “This many bodies in one room is a fire hazard waitin’ to happen.” He opened the door and headed out into the hall, with the rest of the group following him. As he approached the stairwell he heard a buzzing noise. Something was slowly coming up

the steps. “Oh no,” Skoti said, backing up. He knew what was coming. He had been anticipating it once he had heard the Nationalists had sent reinforcements. “Turn around right now.” Suddenly it appeared; a large metallic helmet with glowing yellow eyes. Attached to the helmet was an air tube connected to a pack on its back. The thing was completely clad in armor and was wielding a large machine gun. Each step it took shook the ground around them. Once it had made its way up the stairs it stopped and readied its gatling gun. “It’s a hornet!” Skoti exclaimed. Jax looked down the other two halls. One was a dead end, the other lead to the roof.

“Head for the roof!” Jax ordered. The entire group ran towards the roof exit as the hornet’s gun began to whirl.

“Message to HQ,” the hornet said in its loud, booming voice as it opened fire. “Encountered unidentified individuals fleeing radio station. Beginning pursuit onto roof.” Three crewmen from the *Frayed Hunter* were struck by the barrage of bullets and fell dead to the ground. The monstrosity stopped firing and started its slow march towards the roof.

The group rushed out onto the landing pad located on the roof. Jax slammed the door shut and pulled a few crates in front of the door. “Like that’s goin’ to hold,” Skoti said. “We’re dead.”

“We can take it,” Echon said, trying to boost morale.

“*You* could try,” Meda said. “It’s your funeral. That thing is impervious to damage.” Just then, there was a banging at the door. Jax quickly threw himself against the crates, hoping to hold it back until the *turtle* arrived. Echon ran over and helped Jax.

“We’re so dead,” Mila whispered. Suddenly the door flew open, knocking the crates—as well as Echon and Jax—to the ground. Celeste opened fire on the monster, only to watch as the bullets reflect off of it. “Yup, we are definitely dead,” Mila then said. The hornet’s gatling gun began to whirl and everyone braced themselves. Then, right when they thought they were going to die, the gun stopped whirling.

“Message to HQ,” the hornet said. “Child found, following protocol seven: bring potential child candidates to Hornet Labs.” The monster then started to walk over towards Aurea. Suddenly, the hornet staggered forward as a shotgun blast struck it from behind. The hornet quickly regained its footing and turned towards Jax, who was wielding the shotgun. Jax fired another shot, making it stagger backwards. He fired again and again, hoping to drive it off the roof. As the hornet teetered on the edge, Jax cocked the shotgun and pulled the trigger, only for it to click. Jax’s eyes widened. The gatling gun began to whirl. Echon leapt forward and grabbed the hornet by the arm. With all of his strength he pulled down, knocking the hornet off balance. As the thing tried to reorient itself, he pushed the thing off the roof. Everyone ran towards the edge to watch as it fell off the tower and onto a roof halfway down.

“Nothing’s invincible,” Echon said, smiling as he took a deep breath. The hornet’s corpse lay lifeless on the roof below them.

“Such a strong man,” Mila said, rubbing Echon’s arm.

“I don’t believe it,” Nayt said. “I never thought I’d see one of those things die.” Before anyone else could cheer, the hornet moved its arm.

“No way,” Skoti said as he watched the thing stand back up.

“We’re doomed,” Mila said again, taking her hand off Echon. Nayt looked up at the sky and saw a large, armored vehicle flew towards the complex.

“They’re here!” Skoti exclaimed as he looked for a flare. Once he had one he struck it and let the smoke flow from it towards the sky. The *turtle* came closer and closer. As it approached Echon noticed the thing was controlled by propellers. Once it had finally gotten close enough, it opened its doors to reveal rebel soldiers. The soldiers motioned for the group to climb aboard.

“You got a lot of VT’s,” one of the soldiers said as Nayt got on.

“We got a long story,” Nayt replied.

“You can tell it to Ialad when we get to camp,” the soldier said.

“Ialad?” Nayt said, wondering if he heard the man correctly. Ialad was supposed to be in Bedlam right now, hiding. The man gave the okay to take off as Jax climbed aboard.

“It’s an honor to meet you in person,” the soldier said to Jax. Jax ignored the man as he tried to find a place to sit. Nayt reached over and tapped the man on the shoulder.

“Did you say Ialad?” he asked. “What’s she doing out of Bedlam?”

“Didn’t you know?” the soldier asked. “We’re taking back Viscera.”