

Scion Altera
7/24/2016

Eradicate the Settlement

"We MUST attack now, Quaestor! They have already had enough time to dig in and fortify themselves. If we had just taken them out when they first landed we wouldn't have this problem!"

Zekk stood with both palms planted on the Quaestor's desk, while the older man seemed to take little notice of him.

"Now we must risk the lives of our men to deal with a big problem that you have let grow out of a small one," Zekk continued. "The Consul will not be pleased when he hears of this!"

Scion was engrossed in something he was reading on a data pad, and seemed to take no notice that his office was slowly filling with the highest ranking members of House Mortis. Solas had entered during Zekk's tirade, and Darknyte was already leaning casually against the wall near the door, having slipped in a few minutes earlier.

"Frosty has been angry with me before," Scion said quietly. "I'm sure he will be again in the future."

Zekk threw his hands up in exasperation, spinning on his heel to storm out.

"Maybe you two can talk some sense into the old man. I'm done here!"

"Zekk," said Scion, louder this time. "You are correct. We should have killed them on sight. In fact, I wanted to. The Clan Summit directed me not to."

The Aedile turned slowly, a quizzical eyebrow raised.

"Apparently one of them got a 'feeling' or something about these mercenaries and they wanted to wait and see how this would play out. As the Quaestor of the House in charge of keeping the Castle safe while the Clan Summit is hiding," Scion nearly spat the word, as if it tasted foul in his mouth, "I say we have waited long enough to know with certainty that they are hostile. Tebbo Jensen and Solas here nearly lost their lives trying to patrol the encampment, and that was before they were re-supplied."

"Re-supplied, sir?" Solas Night-Thorn asked.

“Affirmative. This report indicates that our sensors detected a cargo ship in low orbit last night. They have received supplies of some kind and you’re right: they are much more fortified now than they would have been if we hadn’t given them the time.”

“I’ll assemble a team, sir,” Zekk said, finally smiling.

“Listen up! Remember your orders. Blue team goes left and Red team goes right. We’ll meet in the middle and knock out the fortifications from both directions. Watch out for anti-aircraft fire. The ground teams will be right behind us to mop up the survivors. Try not to leave any.”

“Roger that. See you on the other side.”

The squadron of TIE Bombers modified for underwater “flight” broke up into two flight groups, skimming just under the waves of Yridia II toward the mercenary encampment. The underwater approach would ensure that the camp’s scanning equipment could not see them coming until they were close. X-Pilot pulled the stick to the right, and his flight followed in formation after him. Nyx Erinyes pulled her flight to the left, and her flight followed after her.

As they approached the encampment, each flight prepared to attack.

“On my mark, ascend to 300 meters and ready weapons,” Nyx ordered. *“Mark.”*

In perfect synchronization Nyx and X-Pilot’s flights rose above the waves and skimmed over the encampment. It took a few seconds for the anti aircraft batteries to spin up and return fire, and a few seconds was all the opportunity they had to track the fast moving aircraft before the Tarenti bombs had left gaping holes in the defensive barriers and eliminated most of the turrets. The remaining guns fired a few shots in retaliation, but within moments the squadron had descended below the waves again to regroup.

“Solas, my team is ready when you are,” Darknyte’s voice crackled over the comm. *“X-Pilot is en route and should open a hole for us any time now.”*

Volunteers from both Nekros Syndicate and the Deathsworn were hiding out in the brush a few hundred meters from the mercenary encampment. Darknyte could sense movement behind the walls but, strangely, could not read any thoughts or sense any emotions. A general feeling of unease percolated up from his gut as he waited for the bombers to do their job.

It was a majestic sight when it happened. A flight of TIE Bombers emerged from the ocean, water sloughing off them like snow sliding off a roof. They rose into the air like avenging angels,

leaving a swath of heavy explosions in their path. As soon as they had appeared, they were gone again. The anti-aircraft guns fired a few shots helplessly into the sky but by the time they had locked and rotated it was too late. The holes in the barricades would be more than enough for his team to make their way inside and the smoke pouring from within the encampment told him that most of the turrets were already out of commission.

“Hope they left something for us to do in there,” he said wryly over the comm.

The battleteams made their way inside the base with precision straight out of the Empire’s military textbooks. They made their way around the perimeter, planting charges on the remaining anti-aircraft turrets and locked doors. Inside, however, they found nothing.

“It’s the weirdest thing,” said Solas. “There’s nothing left here except the automatic anti-aircraft guns.”

Darknyte nodded in agreement.

“Yeah. It looks like they packed up and left. Scion’s re-supply must have actually been an evac.”

“I wonder how they knew we were coming,” Solas mused.

Darknyte shrugged. “We’ll find ‘em,” he said. “And we’ll make them wish we hadn’t.”