

Episode II

Unbeknownst to the group, and Imperial Captain by the name of Nock'nord had been shadowing them for some time and now he was closer than ever to the group. In addition to this threat, word reached the group that Croto the Crusher was tracking them down in an attempt to recover a handsome bounty that had been placed on their heads.

Against the advice of the entire group, Socatoa decided to return to Graymoore. Ket and Vic decided to go with Socatoa while Klux and A'sok disagreed so strongly that they went together to Klux's home world, Xanath IV. So, with the team divided and pursuing various interests, they departed Valex 3. Socatoa informed the rest of the team that he had cut a juicy deal with an old female barkeep on Valex 3, guaranteeing her a load of Frostberry brandy upon his return from Graymoore.

En route to Graymoore, Socatoa clarified the plan for Ket and Vic. It seemed that Akelish held tight control of the distribution of frostberry brandy throughout the sector, but with a deal Socatoa had previously struck on Graymoore, he would make enough in profits from the sale of the brandy to further upgrade his ship. Ket and Vic felt it was foolish to return to Graymoore or Valex 3. They had nearly killed a Hutt crime lord and were toting a hefty bounty on their heads, laying low at this point seemed the most viable option.

Eventually the group set down on Graymoore. While Socatoa made his way to meet a man named Grable Juxtary, Vic and Ket made their way into a local casino to waste time. Socatoa eventually returned and was waiting for it to be loaded while Ket and Vic lingered in the casino's lounge. Suddenly, Ket spotted two Nikto that he knew worked for Croto. The two bounty hunters, noticing the young gunslingers deadly gaze, made a call on a comlink and walked out of the lounge. Ket decided to trail them and raced from the lounge, leaving Vic behind at the bar. Maybe this was the day when he would have a showdown with Croto, Ket thought; vengeance racing through his newly installed implants.

While this was happening on the ground, Nock'nord was far above the planet planning his moves carefully. He had been pursuing the Wookiee for some time and knew what paths the escaped slave might take to avoid capture. Nock'nord had access to newly developed Gravitational Pulse Generator Satellites (GPGS).

Captain Nock'nord placed the satellites along suspected hyperspace routes and then he gave the order for operation Base Delta Zero to begin. TIE fighters were launched and the Reliant, Nock'nord's star destroyer, the Solace, and the Inquest moved into position and began to bath the planet and the small village of Uniontown with turbolaser fire. Back on the ground, chaos ensued as laser blasts peppered the ground, leveling buildings and incinerating civilians by the dozens. Vic immediately headed for the Trinity, Socatoa's Nova 3-Z freighter. Ket, still in pursuit of the Nikto, had to make a decision, get back to the ship or pursue the bounty hunters in his quest for revenge. So, with buildings erupting into molten flame and innocent people evaporating all around him, he pressed on in pursuit of the ultimate blaster fight.

As Ket made his way through the wooded area surrounding Uniontown, he spotted Croto, out in the open and more than vulnerable. Ignoring his training the gunslinger rushed to his adversary,

visions of a blaster scorched rodian body dancing in front of him. He had nearly reached his prey when the first stun net hit him. Wracked by energy pulses, Ket dropped to the ground as two more stun nets slammed into him. Fighting against the pain, Ket made a grab for his blasters but was kicked into submission by the henchmen now surrounding him. The last thing he saw before he slipped into unconsciousness was the smirking visage of Kroto.

As Vic reached the ship, TIE fighters began strafing runs, gunning down civilians and destroying ships before they could lift off. Miraculously, the Wookiee was able to get the ship off the ground only to be immediately pursued by TIE's. Socatoa pulled out all the flying stops to try and get away. When he programmed in one of his usual three hyperspace points, the navcomputer kicked out a gravitational interference. Panic quickly set in. The TIE's were closing in and the Reliant, a dreadnaught class cruiser, was gaining. Figuring they had nothing to lose, Vic grabbed the ship's comm. And radioed for assistance from any nearby ship. The only response he got was from a freighter that that rushed past.

"We could use some help," Vic shouted above the screaming sound of approaching TIE fighters.

"Sure well help you," the voice replied, "if you give up the wookiee."

Vic looked at Socatoa and switched off the comm., now expecting the worst.

Socatoa tried more maneuvering, but still no luck. Suddenly, a laser blast took out the Trinity's maneuverability and the ship slowed to a crawl. Socatoa, seeing death as a far better option than capture, vowed to fight to the death. Vic, in a move even he couldn't explain, drew his blaster and fired at the Wookiee. Unfortunately, the ship had jolted and the blaster bolt slammed into the ship's console, showering the two with sparks.

Vic's plan of surrendering and living to fight another day failed and Socatoa, pushed to the brink of his nerves, lashed out and knocked Vic unconscious.

The ship rocked violently as a tractor beam locked onto it and was pulled helplessly towards the imposing shape of the Imperial Star Destroyer.

As Vic and Socatoa were drug from the *Trinity* they were brought to attention in front of the stern gaze of Nock'nord.

"I believe we have someone you know," he said grinning to the two rebels. Ket was hauled into the bay and shoved in line with Vic and Socatoa. Croto followed and insisted that Ket and Vic be turned over to him. Nock'nord scoffed and told the bounty hunter that he would be compensated...and that he had one minute to leave the ship.

Captain Nock'nord had Socatoa immediately returned to the Imperial Slave labor pool. He was never heard from again.

Ket and Vic were put on a shuttle bound for Rordak. As the two were stripped of their equipment their minds raced, how were they going to escape? There wasn't far you could run in an imperial prison shuttle. Meanwhile... A'sok and Klux, after departing from the group, returned to Xanath 4, Klux's home planet. However, the planet was not in the same state as Klux

remembered it. Civil war had broken out across the planet, leaving countless dead and an atmosphere of panic and unrest. Most of the planets inhabitants had fled, and as the duo made their way through the starport, throngs of beings raced past them hoping to escape the war-savaged planet.

Klux, distressed with the situation, attempted to reach out with the force and locate his former Jedi Master, Da'Jony. This proved a waste, as the young Jedi could pick up no trace of his master anywhere nearby. Informing A'sok of this, the two decided they should locate a guide to help them across the battle-scarred wasteland to where Da'Jony had once made his home.

Upon exiting the starport, the two noticed several people fleeing a small alley. Hearing blaster fire, Klux raced to investigate, with A'sok in tow. As they rounded the corner, a violent scene unfolded before them. Several armored men in black were roughly hoisting a beautiful young woman into a speeder. Nearby, several more black armored thugs were engaged in hand-to-hand combat with a large Coynite warrior. Bodies littered the street, several of which were Coynite as well. Upon seeing the melee, Klux brandished his Lightsaber and A'sok drew his blaster. The black armored thugs took notice of this, and regrouping, hopped into the speeder and fled the scene.

A'sok and Klux approached the wounded Coynite, and introduced themselves. The Coynite, Zal Araf Th'Trar, told the two that he was charged to protect the kidnapped Tapani princess. Local authorities showed up and Araf brandished his Coynite Mercenary Guild badge, instructing the local constable to inform him should they find any clues.

At this point A'sok suggested they retreat to a local restaurant for further discussion. Over a meal of Corellian Brandy and Stuffed Rodian Svaper (A delicacy that neither A'sok nor Klux touched) the two offered to help Araf find the princess. The coynite, shamed by his ability to protect his charge, accepted the help of his two new comrades. A'sok took to the streets, squeezing information from various sources and coming to realize this was more than just a standard kidnapping. The young princess was a member of a Tapani family who had certain sway over one of the local corporations. By kidnapping her, the corporation was sending a strong and threatening message to the Tapani house.

A'sok commed the information back to Klux and the Jedi informed Araf who insisted they go to the office building immediately in an attempt to get answers. Klux agreed and the two made their way to the office building. Brushing past the front desk receptionist, the two charged to the upper levels where they encountered a corrupt corporate "yes" man who admitted to the kidnapping.

Thugs soon flooded the hallway and battle ensued, with Klux brandishing his Lightsaber and cutting a path to freedom for he and the Araf.

A'sok, who had been following up on a lead, entered the building as mobs of people fled the carnage on the upper levels. The receptionist attempted to stop A'sok, who quickly drew his holdout blaster and promptly shot the man in the face.

The trio found themselves in the upper levels of the building facing down more armed baddies. Violence ensued with the princess being rescued...but just barely.

With his honor regained, Araf questioned Klux about the elegant weapon he had seen the Jedi wielding. When Araf learned that Klux was a self-proclaimed Jedi and that he did indeed exhibit some of the traits that Jedi were rumored to possess, Araf offered to aid in Klux's search for the teacher from his childhood, Da'jony Vbrisk.

Meeting the scout on the roof of a nearby tavern, Klux questioned the price the man was charging to take the team into the deadly Xanath wilderness. The man smirked and told the team to watch the sky. Momentarily a starship battle erupted, with a freighter being blown into several pieces by a team of starfighters. "That's why you need me to take you through the wilds," the man told them. The team, impressed with the scout's ability to know when and where to avoid trouble hired him, and they set off that next morning.

Several days passed, with the team being led further and further into the Xanath wilderness. Suddenly, while the group was preparing for another daylong trek, they were set upon by several "Danchaf", a vicious tree dwelling creature indigenous to Xanath 4. The attack was bloody and claimed the life of their tour guide, along with mildly wounding A'sok. Amid the bodies and blood soaked ground Klux reached out with the force and picked up the faintest hint of his teacher, somewhere in the distance.

After several more days of travel, the group came upon a ravaged settlement at the base of a mountain. The war had moved swiftly through the area, leaving little untouched. As the group made its way through the burned out homes and scorched streets towards the mountain, the air of doom hung heavy in the air.

Klux attempted to contact his mentor again, but with no avail. Using memories and instinct, he made his way up the mountain with A'sok and Araf in tow. Soon, they came to a cave entrance, with nothing but darkness beyond. Klux attempted to reach out with the force, but felt nothing except the cool wind rushing from somewhere deep in the cave. Quietly making his way into the mouth of the cave, Klux was taken aback when he heard a low whistle.

Emerging from the darkness was Klux's R2 droid he left on the planet, TwoEE. Overjoyed at finding a piece of his past still intact, Klux followed the droid deep into the cave where he came face to face with his former master, Da'Jony.

Immediately Da'Jony noticed the lightsaber that Klux had constructed from some rummaged parts and knew that Klux was not ready for the weapon of a true Jedi. Challenging Klux, Da'Jony quickly disarmed him and sliced through Klux's Lightsaber, shattering it into hundreds of pieces. Da'Jony explained that there was more to being a Jedi than merely carting around a Lightsaber and dropping poetic whimsy on anyone who would listen. "I want to know what you have learned out in the galaxy," he told Klux, "I want to know that your travels were not a wasted effort."

Days passed into weeks with Klux and Araf learning from the wizened Jedi master. Days began and ended with the duo learning the ways of the force, not only for combat, but for spiritual growth as well. A'sok, not the least bit interested in that "Hocus Pocus" busied himself with crafting a new virus he planned on uploading into the next available computer terminal he came to. It would not only sink a few extra creds into his bank account, but would stick it to the Empire, which was always a good thing.

After several months of rigorous training, Klux awoke to find Da'jony and Araf gone. A note was

left saying that Klux had learned all that Da'jony could teach him and that he was ready to begin his path to his destiny. Da'jony left components for Klux to construct a new Lightsaber along with TwoEE. Klux, focusing his newly acquired skill in the force, cleared his mind and let it wander to the future, hoping for a glint of where his path should lead now. The image that floated in front of him was a cold desolate ball of ice drifting in space, along with the phantom-like whisper of the word "Garnib".

Opening his eyes, Klux looked at his partner who sat nearby crouched over his Datapad.

"We need to get to Celanon," he said standing.

Asok looked up. "Cool, I just need to make a pit stop at the local bank," he said smirking. __Back on the Prison Shuttle __The doors to the Lambda-class shuttle sealed shut, and the craft began its long trek to the prison planet of Roardak. Vic sat uncomfortably next to ket, his wrists bound tightly behind his back.

"We need to get out of here," he whispered to Ket.

The young gunslinger just stared ahead impassively. Paranoia crept through him as he sat against the cool bulkhead, watching the compliment of Imperial Navy troopers who sat directly across from him.

Vic tried again, but this time caught the attention of a passing guard. "shut up", the soldier warned, and backhanded Vic across the mouth.

Minutes marched into hours as the silence filled the cabin. Vic tried to lose his binders but to no avail. Next to him, Ket remained unmoving. Finally, Vic sat back against the bulkhead, feeling deflated.

As his eyes wandered around the cabin, off to his left, he noticed a Imperial trooper fidgeting nervously. The man quickly stole a glance at Vic and then looked away just as quickly.

But in that brief moment, Vic saw his salvation. The face he saw turned towards him for that split second was none other than Perfo Kryll, one of Vic's former teammates from the Ivory Brigade. The man didn't turn back however, and Vic tried desperately to make eye contact. This interest brought Ket from his catatonic state and he looked quizzically at Vic.

Vic gave Ket a wide smile, hoping to non-verbally inform the gunslinger that they at least had a minor hope of escape.

But what the young gunslinger saw was a man who he had only known for a few weeks, smiling

maniacally at him in the worst of situations. Ket's mind began to race; Was Vic responsible for their capture? Was he in cahoots with the Empire? Ket's neural implants were working overtime and he all of a sudden didn't know who he could trust. Unfortunately, Vic was noticed by another passing guard who took the grinning prisoner and slammed his fist into Vic's stomach.

"You...kaff...are gonna pay for that," Vic said between clenched teeth. The officer just smiled at walked away.

Vic's mind began to wander at the possibilities of escape. There were at least 10 Imperial troopers on the shuttle, against at the most, three men. Not great odds, but he had seen worse.

Time marched on and Vic began to wonder if he had mistakenly identified the trooper. Fear began to creep back into Vic's mind when suddenly the trooper stood up and walked towards him.

Perfo stood in front of him and reached behind Vic, checking his binders. "Wait for my signal," he whispered as something metal was pressed into his hand.

"You there! What are you doing!?" came from behind Perfo. He turned and Vic could see an Imperial officer looming behind him.

"Just checking this prisoners bindings," he answered.

"Yeah, " Vic chimed in, "Why don't you get this flunky away from me."

Perfo responded with a backhanded slap, and Vic sold it, jerking his head back in mock pain.

"Shut your mouth Rebel scum," Perfo hissed at him.

The officer nodded and walked back to his seat, while Perfo did the same. In his hand Vic could feel the cold steel on the key Perfo had placed there, and now just had to wait for the signal.

It came almost an hour later. Many of the troopers had nodded off, with a small compliment, including Perfo watching the prisoners. As Perfo made his way to the back of the shuttle, he raised his blaster carbine slightly, and fired a deadly round into one of his fellow troopers.

Before anyone could tell what was happening, Perfo had taken another trooper down, and chaos erupted in the small cabin.

Vic quickly slipped out of his binders, and Ket, rolling over on his side was quickly released as well. Perfo had dropped back behind a row of seat and was trading fire with several troopers while Vic and Ket scrambled for dropped weapons.

Lightweight prisoner coveralls were no substitute for blast vests, and Vic and Ket shortly found themselves pinned down behind a row of chairs exchanging fire with a handful of troopers.

Perfo took out the lights, and suddenly, the shuttle was bathed in darkness. Blaster shots ricocheted off the hull, and Vic could hear the small computer voice from the cockpit warning of

the ships hull integrity.

Things weren't getting any better. An ambitious trooper lunged at Vic when his blaster misfired and the two engaged in hand to hand. As Vic tried to fight off his attacker, somewhere Ket was ending the lives of several troopers.

Then the shuttle hit something hard. In the darkness Vic was almost sure it was an asteroid or derelict transport, and figured their short lived revolt would soon be at an end.

Snapping the troopers neck, Vic grabbed the blaster that now lay next to him and expected the worst. Light flooded the small room and he heard a voice boom from beyond the cockpit door.

"This is Jax Sheba of the rebellion, throw down your weapons!"

Vic slumped against the bulkhead, not for the first time during the trip. "It's about time," he murmured to himself.

The trip to Teirfon station was a short one. All of the troopers, save for Perfo had been killed, and the shuttle left adrift in space. Upon arriving Jax informed Vic and Ket that he had heard of their capture, and acted as quickly as he could. Being the only members of Raptor Squad that he was in contact with, Jax set up Vic and Ket with false identifications.

Vic took on the Fake ID of one Rodbo Valance, and as a backup, a name that he remembered hearing in the outer rim for some time, "Terminus" Ket pulled Jax aside to make his own arrangements.

Vic, concerned about Perfo's well being, asked Jax what would happen to him. Jax informed him that Perfo was going to be questioned and that from there it was anyones guess as to what the former soldiers future would be. Vic, in no uncertain terms, informed Jax that he would hold him personally responsible for anything that happened to Perfo.

With the loan of a ship, Vic and Ket decided to make their way to a remote planet where no one would likely be looking to find them. After spending hours pouring over a list of possible planets, they decided on an iceball out in the middle of nowhere, a planet by the name of Garnib.

The ice planet loomed large in front of the two as they sat in the silence of the cockpit.

"It certainly is ...*white*,"Vic said staring.

"And cold no doubt,"Ket responded, setting their course for the planets only star port.

And so it was that Vic and Ket set down on Garnib and, renting a small apartment in a non de script part of the planet, began to make preparations for whatever the rebellion would throw their

way. When the Empire had seized them, they had also cleaned out their bank accounts. Vic still had credits in reserve, as did Ket, but it wouldn't last them forever...they needed to start making some hard credits, and fast. It wasn't long before Vic came to a solution for their financial problems, and, as it would turn out, a decision that would change the team forever.

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