Dralin Fortea #9485

House Plagueis

The poorly-lit room, with its single torch, was referred to as an “interview room”. Dralin Fortea thought this was rather generous as he sat in his metal chair, contemplating the single other piece of furniture, a durasteel table covered in scuffs and scratches. He knew where he was; this was an interrogation room. The conversation would start off friendly, but Dralin knew well that the Dark Jedi Brotherhood did not care for deserters. It helped that he showed up with an apprentice in tow, but Dralin did not think that being called to Antei to be “interviewed” was a good omen.

The heavy door on the wall to Dralin’s left swung open. A robed adjunct strode into the room, and his boots clicked with each step. He let the door close with a satisfying *thud*, no doubt believing himself to be intimidating. Dralin, however, doubted that this particular underling knew exactly who he was dealing with. According to his contacts, this ongoing war that the Brotherhood was involved with has worn them down, and everywhere one looked one saw new members to replace the lost, even at this level.

“So you must be…Dralin Fortea,” sneered the man after checking the same on his datapad, “the deserter.”

Green, cybernetic eyes narrowed in the hazy darkness. “It’s pronounced with a long ‘a’, you fool.” Dralin’s name was often mispronounced, as many forgot that his Coruscanti accent lent a longer pronunciation to his vowels. He suspected, however, that the adjunct was simply being contemptuous.

The adjunct took a seat across from Dralin, glaring at him.

“Tell me, deserter, why did you return?”

Dralin leaned forward. “Why did I return?” His unblinking stare bored into the adjunct. “You have the gall to ask me that, when you so clearly need me?”

The robed bureaucrat scoffed. “Need you? The Brotherhood has no need for-“

“For members who remain loyal to the Brotherhood as a whole? Members who put their Brotherhood above their own needs and personal glory?” Dralin’s face bore a distinct look of disgust. “Yes, I left the Brotherhood. I left Arcona because of their insular attitudes and need for self-aggrandizement.”

The adjunct was slightly flustered, clearly not having been armed with a briefing of what Dralin was like. “That is no excuse for-“

“And then I hear,” interrupted Dralin, “that we went to war with someone called the One Sith; another Dark Side group with a different agenda. And we won, of course. I don’t know that we stamped them out, but we certainly showed ourselves superior, did we not? What was the first thing we began to do as the dust settled?”

The clerk blinked. “We settled into our new acquisitions.”

Now it was Dralin’s turn to sneer. “Your new acquisitions being planets you had overrun. You didn’t bother to work on your own home systems. You didn’t bother to truly unify your existing systems. You simply stormed in and set up camp, and before long turned on each other like a pack of starving slice hounds, with only a thought to personal glory.”

The clerk’s brow furrowed in thought. He did not seem a man who had given serious previous thought to the actions of the Brotherhood, but was very easily carried by religious fervor.

“But is it not the way of the dark Jedi to crave personal power and glory?” he asked.

Dralin shook his head slowly. “Not if they want to survive.

The shuttle rocked in the throes of hyperspace travel. Dralin sat at the small table, making adjustments on his datapad to what appeared to be blueprints for a lightsaber. His apprentice, Alexandra Rahl, looked on curiously, taking in what her master was doing with an almost child-like in enrapt absorption. She turned to him, head tilted in askance.

“Where exactly are we going, Dralin? What was the point of stopping there, when we would just turn around again?”

Dralin put away his design. “We’re being transferred to our new home. They first had to make sure we weren’t going to be a problem for them,” he responded with slight smile twisting the corner of his mouth. “They had to know I wasn’t planning something against them.”

Alexandra’s brow furrowed. “Isn’t that paranoid of them?”

This time, Dralin smiled with his teeth; the rare display looked more akin to a shark just before a strike than anything resembling joy. “Of course it is. But paranoia is normal for these dark Jedi. When you live to take advantage of everyone you meet, you assume everyone you meet will do the same.”

The Hapan girl tossed her hair from in front of her face. “You said they were Sith, right? Don’t the Sith always do that sort of thing?”

Dralin shook his head slowly. “Not if they want to survive.”