**Behind Enemy Lines**

**CSE Adeodatus and PRT Seridan Brehevik**

 Adeodatus squirmed in his seat. Though the chair in which he was sitting was rather large and comfortable, the office warm and inviting, still in the depth of his heart he was uneasy. And it was wearing off on his student. From the corner of his eye he saw Seridan trying his best to remain still as he stood along the wall. It was a noble effort and one doomed to failure. They had been waiting for a long time and if his past experience was of any value Adeodatus knew they were going to be waiting for quite a bit more. It was just the way things were. Consuls and Quaestors, Aediles and Tetrarchs they were all the same. The bigger the title the longer you had to wait for them even though they were the ones who had made the call.

 Adeodatus was just beginning to silence his thoughts and slip into an uneasy rest when the door to the office flew unceremoniously open. Either those who were to enter were in great haste or an extreme state of rage. Adeodatus assumed the later. It would have been protocol for his to stand when his superiors entered the room but Adeodatus remained sitting. His leg was sore today and moving just took so much effort.

 None too slowly they entered, first Revak his team leader with A’lora the Aedile. Liam the Quaestor following closely behind. Taking their places behind the large desk that dominated the one end of the office Liam tooh the chair with his Aedile and Battle team leader by his sides. The spot for the rollmaster was mysteriously absent, Adeodatus noticed. A good sign since they couldn’t expel him without the approval of all three summit leaders.

 But why then had he been summoned? It was Liam that at last broke the silence as he addressed the Inquisitor. “Master Adeodatus, due to your previous service to this brotherhood we have decided to question you privately regarding your actions over the last several days rather than submit you to public inquiry and shame.” Adeodatus was right they weren’t going to kick him out but then why were they here.

 A’Lorra continued. “Master you look confused. Perhaps we can illumine you on these matters.” “Four days previous our sensors indicated that you and your student boarded one of our transport vessels and without properly filing travel permits removed yourselves from House territories.” “Further, the sensors indicated that you made for the territory of House Scholae Palatinae.” “Knowing of your previous attachments to that clan and owing to our longstanding animosity with them we must ask what you intended with such an action?”

 Adeodatus swallowed, dropping his eyes before he spoke. He was still unused to having returned to Brotherhood space and having to answer to a superior that was far his junior. But despite his quiet and reserved nature Adeodatus also had the confidence that comes with age. He had been a leader himself once and had dealt with many others. By the light he had been trained once by the Krath High Priestess herself. And so when he spoke it was without fear but clearly, yet with sufficient deference that none of his questioners would be insulted. “I felt that it was time.” Good to begin with a vacuously true statement.

 A’lora continued the questioning, “Can you perhaps be slightly more specific?”

 “I felt that it was time for my student to understand how the others live. Those who do not hold to our beliefs and have long since abandoned the Jedi code.”

 “Do you think that very wise? Surely, you considered bringing this before the council before undertaking such a reckless undertaking?”

 Now they came to the heart of the matter and Adeodatus felt that his leaders were at last ready to hear what else he had to say. With words well thought out he continued, “First, I truly felt that my student was ready for this task and he has proved himself admirably. That said there was another reason for going forth from our territory. A reason which I felt would be compromised if it had been spoken aloud before this moment.” This got their interest. “We went to pick up some of my things.” And now he stood. Rising to his feet Adeodatus tossed upon the desk a simple brown folder. Filled to overflowing it was held together by a frayed and worn string wrapped around it several times and knotted upon the top. And upon the front was stamped a single name in bold red ink, “KSCHAMEHELLAN.”

 Yes, this made the summit interested and so their next question was no surprise. “This contains your history then? Or is it something more?”

 “No,” Adeodatus responded. “It is their history as seen through my eyes and my words. It is all that I once was and all that I once did.”

 At last Liam spoke up. “Master, this changes some things. Would you mind explaining some of the highlights of this file?”

 Adeodatus sat back down as he spoke, a rare smile spreading across his face. He liked to be useful and this was as good as it gets. “Sure, let’s talk.” And turning to his student he said, “Would you mind telling our friends what we’ve discussed over the last several days?”

 Seridan took a deep breath, and gathered his thoughts. The events of the past few days had been exciting, if not exhilarating; it was his first venture from New Tython since he graduated from the Academy.

“We went to Scholae Palatinae space.” he began “We recovered much lore, and Master has told me much about their traditions.” Seridan turned and looked each member of the Council in the eye. “House Scholae Palatinae were formed 24 years ago, in 13 ABY. They are named after a group of Dark Jedi who guarded the Emperor’s storehouses of knowledge. They have their origins in the Intelligence Division. Scholae Palatinae grew in strength and became a clan, splitting into three Houses and increasing their reach over the galaxy, with the inclusion of another planet. They are based on Judecca, a mainly continental planet in the Cocytus system. Their capital is Ohmen. Ohmen is a large city carved into a standalone mountain in a mountain range. The many years spent there has meant that much of the stone has been used to construct a barrier of untold strength. Upon the peak is the Imperial palace - the home and headquarters of House Scholae Palatinae. It has no great military advantage, but all of the city is visible from its windows, and a small deflector shield cn be used in times of need.” Seridan paused, and took a deep breath. Was there anything else he could remember about the planet? He didn’t think so.

“ There are three Houses: House Caliburnus, House Acclivis Draco and House Dorimad Sol. Their main naval force is the Emperor’s Hammer Strike Fleet. House Caliburnus was created by the Hammer’s Intelligence Division; their purpose was to be the hand of Justice, but they slowly evolved. They became an influential House, and started to have less ties to the Intelligence Division.

“They are named after a legendary sword; a story you might already know. The sword had a mind of its own, and never failed to kill. The search for Caliburnus has been going on for centuries. Numerous Sith lords have tried to obtain it - including Darth Sidious. He set up many searches for the weapon. It was found on Korriban, and claimed by the Dark Jedi who had found it. The weapon killed its owner - clearly unhappy with such an owner. The sword was lost again. According to their records, the name Caliburnus still instills fear into anyone who has heard the story. The House is intended to do the same.

“The next House, Acclivis Draco, has their origins in a report to the Emperor. The initial concept was to be a combination of Royal Guard and the Scholae Palatinae, combining the numbers and prowess in battle of the Royal Guard with the Force skills and abilities of the Scholae Palatinae. They were intended to be an elite unit - able to do whatever was asked of them. The plans for this group was never carried out, and when this information was recovered, the Consul of the House created a House in inspiration of this group.

“Dorimad Sol is the name of famous Dark Jedi, whose power in the Force and lore is legendary.” Seridan waited for the lore to sink in. It had taken him hours to memorise all that. But still there was more. Seridan sighed. Did there have to be so much? Of course, he reasoned. If the Council wanted to use this information, it must be in its entirety.

“After the founding of the Clan, Scholae Palatinae has a long history. Master Adeodatus has a deeper understanding of it than me,” he talked to the so if you have any queries regarding it, please address him.

“Clan Scholae Palatinae grew in power, but the Star Chamber destroyed the Clan, in an event that the enemy refer to as ‘The Exodus’. Houses Acclivis Draco and Dorimad Sol were relocated to Clan Arcona. The members of these houses had their memories wiped, after extensive torture. House Caliburnus was attacked and its base of operations on Thor was razed. However, years after this exodus, House Caliburnus’ buildings were once again standing. After the Brotherhood made contact, they became an independent house. Soon, they were granted to rebuild their clan. Caliburnus learnt of the atrocities that Arcona had done to the House Acclivis Draco and Dorimad Sol. They systematically removed each memory wipe and therefore developed a strong hatred of Clan Arcona. In late 33 ABY, a purge was initiated by Grand Master Muz Ahsen, rooting out any who may be ‘treasonous’. All clans were downsized to houses; the houses into battleteams. That is the way it has been. They remain a House, unable to gather enough power to become a Clan.”

Seridan felt the familiar presence of his Master in his mind. *I’ll continue now, Seridan.*

“There is much I have learnt in the recent days.” Seridan concluded, “but it would be more beneficial to you for Master Adeodatus to continue now. He can tell you more accurate information, for you to use against Scholae Palatinae.”

Liam nodded. “Okay, Seridan. What you have told us already is of some use. But I must ask: did you experience anything strange on your journey into Scholae space?”

Seridan gulped. He hadn’t been ready for that question. “Erm, we didn’t encounter and dangers, if that’s what you mean.”

Liam picked up on uncertainty in Seridan’s voice. “Mmm. Perhaps Master Adeodatus could expand? Thank you, Seridan”

Seridan bowed his head in thanks, and sat back down. He hadn’t realised how shaky he had been. He accepted the support of the cushioned chair gratefully. He glanced at his master, who met his eye and gave him a smile that said ‘*Well done, I’ll take it from here*’. Adeodatus stood confidently. “Allow me”

 Adeodatus was proud of his apprentice. He had handled himself well for his first experience before the council. It was an experience he was going to need if he was going to continue as his student. A gentle cough brought the seer back to his senses.

 “Master Adeodatus,” Liam interjected, “perhaps you might be interested in explaining to us what really happened on your little vacation? For, as interesting as facts and figures are each of these things could have been discovered without taking such a risk.”

 Adeodatus nodded his head in agreement and was silent for a moment. Allowing the silence to go on for just long enough to cause discomfort he continued, “I took Seridan out there to complete his training.” From the look on the faces of his superiors Adeodatus knew that he had struck a chord. Though not technically forbidden to a master taking a student for unapproved training exercises was frowned down upon in most circles. “There are many things he needs to learn.” the Master’s voice dropped into a melodious form which indicated that he was slipping into his old teaching habits, “And sadly not all of them can be learned in our time and space.”

 The council was silent now. To break the obvious tension in the air A’lora picked up the file on the desk and flipped through it pretending to look for some fact. As she did so Adeodatus continued his lesson. “I was trained by one of the most powerful and important members of the Dark Brotherhood and though I may have failed my training in so many ways I will not let that happen to him.” He turned to his student standing now along the wall his face as passive and stoic as those of the council. He however, had good reason to be silent after what he had seen. “I wanted him to have the same experiences that I had.”

 A’lora stopped her thumbing through the file as Adeodatus turned in her direction. “There on page 4579 you’ll see some archaic promotion rituals from the clan.” “I took Seridan to some of those locations, especially those on Antenorra, to test him. No harm done.”

 Now, it was time for the disappointment to set in. Liam wrenched the file from A’lora’s hands and he scrolled to where it was written, “Ritual for promotion from Acolyte to Protector.” “This should be good,” Liam thought to himself as he began to read.

When the Acolyte's Master determines the time has come for this ritual test to be performed, the Master contacts his/her student's Battleteam leader, who actually performs the ritual. The test begins at noon, when the dark side is at its weakest. The battleteam leader and the acolyte travel out into the wilderness around their House's headquarters, to a prearranged place. Then, both are "attacked" by mysterious assailants (in actuality members of the testee's battleteam) who act as though they wound the leader before fleeing, destroying any vehicles in the process. Thus stranded, the Acolyte must prove his worthiness to bear the title Protector by standing guard over his leader until the next day's dusk. Success earns the student the rank of Protector, and permission to wield a lightsabre in the presence of his/her Master, for the sake of training.

Liam swallowed hard, choosing his words carefully. On the surface this ritual didn’t seem so terrible. It taught a lesson that everyone needed to learn. Further, it would prove useful to his house to have members who were equivalent in every way to an enemy they would one day face in battle. But the real question was did the young Protector standing in his office understand this or was he simply questioning the hidden reasoning of his Master, who many rumored might be slightly impaired. He decided to ask, “Protector, can you please explain to me your feelings and anything you learned during this trial.”

 Back in the spotlight Seridan decided to play it cool this time. Keep the answers simple and there would be less for them to catch you on. Not that he had done anything wrong however. “Sir,” he responded, “I wondered at first why I needed to travel across the galaxy to learn love and respect for my Master when I could easily have done so here.” Liam nodded in agreement as the young student continued. “But I came to understand that circumstances change everything. I would never have found the courage to defend my master if I hadn’t felt that we were really in danger.” The council seemed to enjoy that based upon the light that now shown in their eyes as they gazed intently upon. So far so good it seemed. Seridan continued, “I also saw what those other students see every day and I got to experience what they experience and for that I am grateful.” Yes, it was clear now that the council was hanging on his words. Seridan took a quick glance at his master. Adeodatus nodded ever so slightly in approval and Seridan knew that it was time to reveal the next stage of information. “I also learned something out there.”

 Before he could continue Adeodatus stepped in. “Brothers, I’m sure you know that each clan and house has its secret learning. Things they share only with the highest levels of their society and membership.” “Well, Scholae Palatinae has secrets proper to their clan as well. I know some of them and now he knows them too.”

 His interest peaked Liam leaned forward. Grasping his hands in front of him as he leaned on the desk he inquired, “And these secrets are?”

 “It’s the animals!” Adeodatus nearly shouted. “From the beginning Scholae Palatinae has had a fascination with living biological life. This has led them to develop the power of plant surge. The power to manipulate the very forces of the world is in the hands of those who know how.” “But, the Tome of Nature, stored deep within the vaults of their House citadel contains more. The younger members of their house have lost the ability to decipher it but I remember what it said and so I went to show my student.” “The force in the Cocytus system allows a Jedi who is even remotely talented to speak to animals and control them.” “The preference has always been to use squirrels since people instinctively trust them in a pinch but any animal will do.” “Think of the possibilities, for fighting, spying, whatever you want.”

 Adeodatus sat down with a smug smile on his face. This was what the council wanted to hear something that could be used for war. Now the only thing that remained was to make it sound like this secret was worth the risk he had taken. He turned to his student. “Seridan, why don’t you tell the council a little more about the experience we had on Judecca?”

 “With pleasure” Seridan once again stood. His unease of public speaking was beginning to show, and his legs were beginning to shake. Seridan went through his calming exercises. Once he was gathering himself, he reflected on the past few days: the excitement, the fear and the magnitude of knowledge that was bestowed on him. What he had done had made his master proud; that made it worth it. He took a deep breath. He was ready.

“We went to one of Judecca’s moons - Cassius, I think. It was close enough to Ohmen that we could scan the city for its defenses. We found the impenetrable barrier, of course. It is massive. Even by my meagre understanding of military might, I know that it could easily defend any ground assault. Even assault from above would be difficult. We saved our readings and technical readouts of the city, if you should want to examine them. After calculating a landing site safe from their sensors, we descended to the mountain range in which Ohmen is housed. We were only a few leagues from the rocky city. Adeodatus told me about the Imperial Palace, and its restrictions.

“The Imperial Palace on Coruscant has secret entrances and pathways for the use of the Emperor and his closest servants. Scholae Palatinae did not know of this until word leaked out from Coruscant itself a few decades ago. Since Scholae Palatinae, highly respected of the Emperor and all his decisions, they decided to implement the same structure in their Imperial Palace. However, Scholae Palatinae is, as you know, also from the Intelligence Branch, and so were very secretive. My master tells me that they only built a few secret paths, and only told the Quaestors of the Clan. Thankfully, Deo was a Quaestor in his time there. So we had a way into the Imperial palace. Master has told me that the entrance is inside the barrier. That is when I got quite confused. After inquiring, Deo said that he had a plan. He told me that a common nuisance was the Katarr birds that were prevalent in the area. He said that we needed only to find a Katarr bird and we would have our way in.

“And so we searched the surrounding area for this Katarr bird. We found a nest of one on the noon of the second day. It came in, to defend its eggs, and it was flapping and showing maternal defense of its offspring. I grew uncertain, and was close to running, when Deo lifted his hand and just like that, the beast calmed down. I hadn’t realized it, but a pressure on my mind also calmed. I reached out in the Force and realized I could feel the bird’s presence and mind through the force, and also the minds of the birds in each of the eggs. I looked up at Adeodatus, who was smiling at me. He said that he knew what I felt. He explained, just as he has here, that the Cocytus System helps attune a Jedi to nature and to animals. He also explained that he thought the Katarr bird would be particularly effective with me, as the Katarr bird is native to Katarr, the site of a Miralukan colony. That is, before it got destroyed by Darth Nihilus.

“Master Adeodatus trained me in this technique - he helped the connection between me and the bird to develop. The evening on the second day, we set off for Ohmen. We stopped just behind a ridge to block the city’s sight from us. I, with Deo’s help, flew down behind the barrier, the bird’s natural inky black feathers blending in with the shadows; its graceful movement surrendering it invisible to the sensors. We landed, and released what we had been carrying - a rat-like creature - small, silent and very stealthy. We had found it in trying to get into our rations case the night before. I tried to change my control from the bird to the rat whilst Deo controlled the bird out from the barrier. I found it quite difficult, as I’d practiced heavily with the bird, but not with the rat. Its mind was different - smaller and more singular in its approach for life. Not only that, but it was getting quite a long way away. It was the least I could do to keep it from running off. Instead, I awaited Deo’s power to assist me.

“When he rejoined my presence, we ran through the secret entrance Deo knew, and made it to the Vault Chamber. Deo had thought ahead, as usual, and had piloted the mouse into the ventilation shafts above the tome, so that we could still read it. At this point, I had no power over the rat at all. I could only look through the rat’s eyes. As I read the tome, I felt understanding in what I was doing. I gained more knowledge about Scholae Palatinae and lots of lore. There was also many principles and philosophies in the tome; statements I considered cruel and wrong. I only learned their knowledge. If anything, their statements made me dislike them. You probably know this, but we are their enemy. Many houses are neutral to Scholae Palatinae, but only two are enemies: us and House Tarentum. They are allied to House Plagueis.

“I hope that none of either my or my master’s actions have been negative. I tried to stay attuned to the Force and have stayed a servant of the light side. I realize that this mission could have turned out differently, but I sincerely hope my master will not be reprimanded. He did what was necessary.” Seridan stopped. He had gone on speaking for too long. The Council’s faces looked thoughtful, if not grim. He glanced at Deo, who responded in a grim smile of his own.

“Thank you Seridan.” Liam stood, signaling that his time of questioning had been completed. “Seridan, could you please step into the hallway for a moment while the council discusses some things with your Master?”

Seridan did not need a second invitation. Almost forgetting the traditional and therefore mandatory signs of respect he made several quick bows to each of his superiors and before a word was out of their mouths he was away. Now it was time for the real discussion to begin.

“Deo,” Liam began with smile spreading across his face, “you certainly are becoming very casual with your apprentice.”

“I’ve always felt that this is the easiest way for people to learn,” Adeodatus responded. “We all learn best when we feel comfortable.” “There’s no problem with this, I assume?”

“No,” Liam agreed, “there is no problem with this. Just make sure your student remembers there is still a long way for him to travel before he becomes like us.” Adeodatus bowed his head briefly obviously understanding the meaning of his Quaestor’s words. “No, the real problem for us is the danger into which you took your student. Did you truly believe this was a wise decision?”

The eyes of both his peers were upon, drilling into him in fact. He knew what they wanted him to say. He was supposed to agree with the decision they had already made. His job was not to think freely but to follow along like a good soldier. The problem was that Adeodatus was not simply a good soldier. Even when he was a leader of his own house he had preferred to work alone and often boasted of how much he could accomplish by himself. In his eyes, the issue on the table was not important enough to change who he truly was at heart.

And so they stared, one at another without blinking. No one saying anything but with a thousand thoughts rushing through their minds the Jedi stared and waited for the first make his move. It was Liam who first broke the silence. “Brother Adeodatus, unless you can provide us with any more information I believe this council is ready to render a verdict on your actions.”

“I wasn’t aware that we were on trial,” Adeodatus spoke up before thinking through his words carefully. He needed to be more careful with that pesky habit.

The Quaestor continued, “Master Jedi, your actions were reckless, especially with the state of the brotherhood at this moment. I feel that the same lessons could have been given to your student in a more secure environment. However, that is my personal preference. The information you obtained for us may still prove useful and so I release you with a warning. Go back and take care of your student since soon we will need all the hands we can get.”

Holding back his disbelief at his quick and relatively painless dismissal Adeodatus rose as did the council and with a bow that was less than solemn he turned and departed.