Xen’Mordin Vismorsus (#3783)

Knife in the Dark

Trelon Coalot pulled up the collar of his jacket. The wind and rain was chilling, making the usually bustling streets of Ohmen, eerily dead. Trelon kept his head down all the same, as you never knew who might be watching. He picked up his pace, wanting out of the cold. As he brought his hands down from his collar he let his right hand pat the small bulge that came from a package in his breast pocket. He took a deep reassuring breath as he felt the bulge.

The package was still secure.

Despite taking a long winding route to his home (to throw off anyone trailing him), he arrived home with out any issues. As the door closed with a hiss behind him, Trelon let out a sigh of relief. He quickly keyed in the locking sequence, turning his moderate living space into a virtual fortress. A perk of being a well off politician in the Cocytus system, you got good security systems.

Trelon grabbed the small package from his jacket pocket, and let the jacket fall to the floor. He could hang it up later. He had to see what was in the package. His life and many others were at stake.

Trelon sat down at his large desk and pushed aside a pile of papers. He logged on to his secure datapad and opened the package. Nestled carefully in a durable, nearly indestructible box was a singular datachip. Hands shaking he picked up the chip and pulled it into the port on his datapad. The screen began displaying the information.

Alone in the dark Trelon read and reviewed the information on the chip. Alone in the dark Trelon wept quietly at the confirming news. His system, the one he had lived in his whole life, the one he had worked so long and hard to improve, had been taken over. Far from in control of an Emperor and the people, it was securely held by something so much more.

“Dark Jedi…” Trelon whispered.

And alone in the dark, he made a vow to himself and to the entire Cocytus system. He was going to restore power to those it belonged to.

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It had been two weeks since Trelon learned the terrible truth about his home system. In that time he had gathered even more information. From what he could tell, a group of Dark Jedi ruled they system through puppet leaders. Senators, Kings, Queens, the Emperor himself were all decoys for the real power. At the center of it was a masked man, the true leader of the system. So many things snapped into place. The periodic invasion of enemy forces; the long disappearances of the bulk of the military.

He had to get this information to someone out of the system. He had sent very seemingly innocent messages out of the system. He was sure the real rulers of the system monitored everything, especially from someone such as himself. All the politicians had to be monitored incase they discovered the truth.

But nothing had come of it yet.

Trelon’s hands were sweaty. He had been invited in for a meal with the Emperor. Not unheard of, for the Emperor liked to meet and interact with all the major politicians in the system. Trelon wasn’t sure if he had been found out or just finally had his straw drawn to come in. He was sure however that any suspicious behavior would be immediately reported to the Emperor’s true masters. He took a few calming breaths and walked up to the security check for the palace.

He was quickly lead down several ornate hallways and into a moderately sized room. It was fairly plain compared to the hallways he had walked through to get here. A single retangular table sat in the center of the room, with simple chairs running along its side. There was a slightly more decorated (and by Trelon’s guess more comfortable as well) chair sat at the head.

There was a hiss as a second door to the room opened. In stepped the smiling and charismatic Emperor. The man quickly closed the distance to Trelon and enthusiastically shook his hand. Quietly two guards stepped in behind the Emperor before the door closed.

“Trelon! I’m glad you were able to make it. It has been a while. How is the family back on Caina?” the Emperor asked, with all the signs of sincerity. Trelon swallowed hard. He had always liked this Emperor. The times they had interacted in the past had always left Trelon feeling there was someone in charge who really wanted the best for the system and its people.

“Oh they are good. Don’t see them as much as I would like, but I get home on the weekends,” He finally managed to say. The Emperor nodded.

“Please have a seat, I want to hear about this public works expansion bill you’ve been working on,” The Emperor said, gesturing to a chair right next to the one he was pulling back to sit in.

For Trelon the meal was agonizingly slow. The Emperor never let slip anything that he was just a pawn, or that he knew that Trelon was onto the game. Each different item on his plate, Trelon was certain was poisoned. Each time his glass refilled, he was sure it was with the lethal end to his life.

But before he knew it the meal was over. Plates cleaned, glasses empty. Servants quickly stepped in and cleared away everything.

“I am glad there are still politicians like you Trelon. Looking out for the real good of the system,” The Emperor said still smiling. He jerked his head toward the door.

“There is something I want to show you before you get back to work. I think you are just the man we need for this.” Trelon arched an eyebrow. By now he was reasonable certain that the Dark Jedi knew nothing, and that this meeting was in fact just his turn at having some one on one time with the *leader* of the system.

Trelon stood and followed the Emperor out of the room. Two guards followed them down the hallway to the lift. The Emperor continued to chat about different ideas and plans he had for the system. Trelon was impressed, for a pawn this Emperor was very well informed about what was going on in the system and very well prepared with ideas to improve it.

The lift dropped down, lower than Trelon was aware the palace went. When the doors opened, the hallway that greeted them was very different from the ornate halls above. Trelon paused glancing at the simple dark walls and near sterile light system.

“Oh don’t worry. This is all service areas. No need for the art and gold work down here.” The Emperor said with a smile as he walked off the lift and down the hall.

“In here we are developing a new repair droid to fix some of the more… aged buildings in the system. This way we don’t have to dedicate our more functional droids to the effort. We are hoping it can improve the waste management issues that have been plaguing some of the cities on Antenora,” The Emperor continued as a door opened. The Emperor put a strong hand on Trelon’s shoulder and pushed him into the room.

Trelon looked around the nearly empty room. There was no droid to be found here. Only an inclined table with shackles on either end. He turned to look back at the Emperor. However who he now stood face to face with was not who he expected. The masked man, the true leader of the system stood before him.

“Come now Trelon don’t look so shocked. Of course we knew you had information. Lets… *talk*,” the masked man said. The menace and cruelty dripped off his final word. Trelon stepped back.

“No no no. Not you!” he screamed. Pushed back by an invisible hand Trelon found himself against the inclined table. The shackles snapped shut around his arms and feet.

“This was just meal. Why wait?!?! Please let me **go!”** Trelon continued to yell. The masked man chuckled.

“Oh I will let you go as soon as you tell me everything you know, and who else knows,” The masked man said. He pulled out a particularly sharp looking blade and stepped even closer to Trelon.

“What I know? I know you are really in charge. The Emperor is a pawn. There are a whole mess of people like you. Sith. Dark Jedi. Whatever. You are the true leader of the system and are using us all!” Trelon spat out as quick as he could. He never had a particularly thick backbone for pain, and this man was probably an expert at it by now. Dark Jedi weren’t like normal people. They relished pain.

The masked man let out a deep laugh.

“No spine eh? Well I still want to hear you sing.”

Hours of torture passed. Trelon told him everything he knew. Then started making things up hoping it would spare him more pain. Fingers were flayed, parts of him burned, parts were shocked. He had been nearly drowned dozens of times. His eyes were swollen, and many of his bones were broken. The pain he experienced was beyond anything he had ever thought possible. The masked man seemed to enjoy every second of it however.

Finally broken and begging for death the torture stopped.

“Well I think that is enough of that,” The masked man said. Trelon started to cry begging to just be killed. The masked man paused and leaned in close.

“You had a lot of real facts there. I’m glad we caught you before you undid the years and years of work that have gone into this system. But you did have one fact wrong there,” the masked man said, inches away from Trelon’s face. His hand reached up and pulled off the mask. The face of the Emperor smiled. Trelon went wide eyed.

He didn’t get a chance to speak a reaction though. Xen’Mordin, Quaestor of Scholae Palatinae and Emperor of the Cocytus system drew a knife across the politicians neck. Xen leaned back to avoid the blood getting on his face. He put the mask back on and strode out of the room, content that his Empire was still safe.