**Musically Inspired, a Competition**

*“Defenders of the Dark Path”*

By Braecen Kaeth (4520)

***The Temple of Plaguies***

***Morroth, Jusadih System***

The distress signal had broadcast nearly twelve hours before. It had come through as a priority “L2V2” to the highest members of Clan Plagueis: the Elders. A protocol established during the reign of Grand Master Chi Long, a code “Lava” was meant as extreme duress to the future, or prosperity, of Clan Plagueis. The Temple of Plagueis – training ground to the future Dark Jedi of Plagueis – had come under siege. The Masters had retreated within the innermost sanctum with their Apprentices. Unable to overcome the sheer number of attackers at their doorstep.

 A rogue element of mercenaries, associated to a Private Military Contractor in use by Plagueis, had thought to ransack the temple, take hostages, and demand the riches of the perceived elitists. They believed that any element whom held slaves and forced mercenaries onto their foes would prove to hold riches beyond their wildest dreams. As such, they had stormed the temple and take defensive positions to safeguard against a rearguard. Their best slicers and demolition experts worked through the varying layers of protection offered. A racing clock against when more forces would arrive and they would capture their bounty.

 Two humans and a near-human approached the entrance. Their features obscured by the dark cloaks over their heads, the black robes whipping in the dry wind, the boots slamming down onto the ground in unison; the Elders of Plagueis had come to the aid of their Clan. Three-wide, they marched across the open courtyard apparently oblivious of the artillery and forces that stood before them.

 “Open fire!” an order was shouted. The mechanized weapons turning to bear on the Dark Jedi. The machines groaning under their own weight. Servos sounded off as the devices powered to life. A hum building before a swarm of crimson and emerald darts would lance forward onto the mercenaries’ prey. Aabsdu Dupar opened himself to the Force, its’ molten power at his disposal and ready to be unleashed. With a single thought, he shoved his hands forward and a star went nova before the eyes of all convened. Unfazed by the pure light, Aabsdu marched forward and through the power of the Dark Side each Elder remained at his side.

 Khan, the Shi’ido, currently held the form of a near-human; though he could manipulate his appearance and mass at will. He brought his lightstaff to bear - ***Snap-hiss-hiss*** - both violet blades sprung to existence before the Sith Adept. A natural killer, he moved forward – unimpeded by his dark armor – to wreak havoc on the body of mercenaries before him. His bladed darted back and forth in the practiced motions of a Juyo disciple. Head of mercenaries rolled across the ground as he worked the flank of their formation into the heart of the battle.

 The brightness began to dim. The Sith silently plied his trade while his companions walked past the remaining forces. Their sight focused on the outer doors and their feet continuing to move with purpose, chewing up the yards before them. The sound of the outside battle could still be heard as they passed beyond the threshold into the temple.

 Aabsdu changed tactics, a master strategist, and unfurled a blanket darker than a black hole. The darkness roiled before the pair of Krath, but they marched undaunted through the halls. This was their home. They had come not only to defend their home, but to defend the future of their Clan. Possessed of a fury to safeguard their own, onward they came. Braecen drew the force about him, a tempest of swirling power and malice. Never shy to demonstrate his prowess in battle, the Juggernaught sought to display the full power of Plagueis. Unlike the outer guards, the inner ranks were seasoned bounty hunters whom had lived only through their expertise in surviving – at all costs.

 Both sabers ignited, white pillars of flame against a cloud of murk. Rage filled the Krath. With unnatural speed, he darted forward from one foe to the next. His strikes were deadly accurate, the blades working in tandem to attack the seals of lightsaber resistant armor; poking and jabbing for perceived weaknesses before utterly exploiting them. A trio of assailants came forward, as one, to unleash their combined fury on the Krath.

 Braecen burst forward and slid beneath his first attacker’s strike. As he came back onto his feet, he used both sabers to deflect a pair of well-aimed bolts of crimson energy. He threw both sabers at the furthest opponent; one taking the man in the shoulder, spinning him around before the second buried itself in the back of his exposed neck. Simultaneously, he drew his Sapphire Blade and summoned an arc of lightning. The gemmed blade halted an attack from his first assailant while the burst of dark side energy sprawled across the second foe.

 Shattered by the power of the Force Lightning, Braecen was able to turn his full attention back onto the first opponent. A grin split his lips as he began to toy with the man. He danced about his foe, harassing his defenses with flat strikes from the broad edge of the blade. Like Khan had held the outer gates of the Temple of Plagueis, Braecen would hold the outer exterior. Aabsdu walked forward, alone.

 The Krath Inquisitor held no fear. He only had room in his heart for the power of the Dark Side of the Force. It was his to disperse. He held all the cards and his mind outpaced his foes by several steps. He almost laughed aloud when he came before the inner sanctum and found a group of slicers and demolitionists. One man, whom had been hidden from sight, stepped forward in full armor: the leader. Hungrily, Aabsdu drew his sabers and moved to intercept his foe.

 The Inquisitor pulled deeply on the Living Force, his body straining with the exertion of holding so much power. As he came forward, he noted his opponent’s cortosis-laced vibro-sword. Aabsdu circled his opponent until he was at the center of the entire group. Brimming with power, the Force – Light and Dark – swirled about him with malicious intent. The Elder grinned and the power raced outward from him; a tsunami of telekinetic power crushing his foes against the ground and surrounding walls. Surprisingly, his heavily armored opponent remained standing; mag-locks on his boots holding his footing and the sound of servos keeping the powered armor upright.

 Undaunted, the Krath surged forward with both blades spinning. His opponent proved an able duelist, able to deflect the flurry of stabs and thrusts from the Elder. His brow beginning to sweat from the exertion, Aabsdu commended his opponent on his proficiency with the blade. Obviously, this man had earned his reputation through expertise or had taken it from the others by force. His counters came in measured strokes, never too far or out of line; never taking the bait when an exposed flank was provided. *A natural,* Aabsdu thought, *but only at sword play.*

 Unlike before, the Inquisitor began to funnel the power of the Force at his opponent in measured strikes; a third ‘blade’ for his opponent to consider in their duel. When the leader would move to counter, Aabsdu would extend the motion ever so slightly to force his foe to compensate. Several rapid strikes came in a rinse and repeat manner; the Krath forcing his foe out of position. Wary of the power of the Dark Jedi, the opponent rushed his attack. This played into the hands of the Jar’Kai practitioner all too easily.

 Onward, the leader came with a vicious two-handed overhead swing. Aabsdu used the Force to shove the blade to the side and to accelerate himself within the inner guard of his opponent. He brought the lightsaber up through the weak torso section of his armor. An audible gasp as the lungs expelled their final breath. Unceremoniously, he dumped the body onto the ground and proceeded to the doors of the inner sanctum of the Temple of Plagueis.

 As he punched in the access code, the doors began to open and a hail of blaster fire poured through the entrance. Easily, he deflected the storm of crimson and emerald bolts. A dismissive flick of his wrist sending the blasters flying form the hands of Journeyman and junior Equites. “I, Aabsdu Dupar,” he stated matter-of-factly, “have returned to you in your hour of need…” His words trailed off and he turned his back on them, “As your Consul and Lord. Come.” He walked out of the safe room with the expectant air that everyone would follow. And they did.