Hot tears ran down his face as Naradas turned away from his desk, shutting out reality for a long minute as he composed himself. He could feel the bile rising within himself and fought it down. Finally he looked up again and returned his gaze to the severed heads lying on a silver platter on his desk, belonging to his wife and children.

His wife and children. Whose only crime was to be visiting when Zakath launched his attempt to take over the prison.

“Sir, we’ve regained control of the command center. Except for a few small pockets of resistance, the revolt has been crushed.” Elim, his personal aide, said as he entered the office, cutting through Naradas’ bitter thoughts. “Unfortunately, still no sign of Zakath so far.”

“Elim.” His voice was icy cold in sharp constrast to his tear-streaked face.

“Yes sir.” If his aide was nervous, he hid it well.

“Ensure that the prisoners have been sealed in their cells. Maintain red alert status.” Naradas blinked away more tears as his head remained bowed. “Then evacuate all Imperial personnel off this station and execute Omega protocol.”

“We’re… gassing the station?” Elim’s voice sounded slightly surprised.

“We’re gassing the station.” Naradas’ repeated flatly. “When the purge is complete, I want our personnel searching the station from top to bottom for the Barabel’s body. I want it found and brought to me. Preferably in pieces.”

“And… if he has already escaped?”

“Then we begin hunting him.” Naradas looked up at Elim, who suddenly took an unconscious step backward at the sight of his master’s burning sulfuric eyes. “And we put Zakath down like the mad dog he is. Understood?”

“Yes sir.” Elim gulped slightly as he stiffened into a crisp military pose. “I will make preparations.”

“Good.” Naradas’ burning eyes turned toward the bloody heads on his desk. “Inform me when it is time to leave. Leave me to my grief until then.”

Elim nodded slightly and stepped out.

*You are dead, beast. I will follow you to the gates of Hell itself if need be, but you are dead.*