

# Betrayal

*Dark Brotherhood Shadow Academy*

*Lyspair*

Vivackus Kavon di Plagia, flanked by Teylas Ramar, Orian Aries Rial, and several squadrons of soldiers, strode through the shelves of books. Occasionally gesturing to his left or his right, the Consul wordlessly directed pairs of Plagueian Ravagers in either direction off to comb the rest of the Hall.

As expected, the Shadow Academy was manned by a skeleton crew at the moment, and Brotherhood members had been called to their respective Clans and Houses to engage the One Sith on Nicht Ka. Vivackus reached the final row of shelves and stopped at a door. As it opened, he was greeted by the arboreal mass which was Ood Bnar.

“Vivackus, punctual as always.” The Neti paused. “Though I would have preferred a few minutes of tardiness in this instance.”

Inside the Praetor’s office, behind the Pontifex, was a scared looking student - Apprentice or Novice, by his robes. Vivackus shot Ood an annoyed glance as he pushed by. “Do you know who I am? I am the Consul of Clan Plagueis. Which Clan is yours?”

The Sith’s disarming posture put the Journeyman somewhat at ease. “A-Arcona, sir.”

“Don’t you worry, young Arconan.” Vivackus patted the young man on the shoulder reassuringly, leaning in close before whispering. “It’ll all be over in a second.”

Panic flashed in the Apprentice’s eyes for a moment as Vivackus’ lightsaber ignited against his chest at point-blank range, instantly vaporizing a hole before deactivating again. The body slumped against Vivackus’ own before crumpling on the floor, twitching slightly for a few moments.

“Ood, we are about to enact a complete coup against the Dark Brotherhood, and you thought this was a good time to get in some last minute tutoring?”

The Krath sighed, shrugging slightly, though it was Rial who spoke up. “Was that... entirely necessary?” He said tentatively.

“Maybe not.” Vivackus responded. “Or maybe that one would have found a way to communicate to Marick, ruining our advantage of surprise in this whole operation. I don’t take chances.” Teylas nodded in assent, and the silence from Ood was all Vivackus needed.

The Consul turned on his comlink. "Ravagers, terminate any contacts on sight. Over." The Sith stepped over the fresh corpse, taking a seat and propping his feet up on the desk before changing the channel. "Aabsdu, Dacien, Lyspair is secure. I repeat. Lyspair is secure."

With a click, Vivackus ended the transmission and addressed the three others. "So, it looks like we've got a few hours to kill. Anyone have a pazaak deck?"

"That's my desk." Ood said, annoyed.

Vivackus grinned. "Probably not for long."

Three Ravagers, having stepped in behind the Dark Jedi, in unison struck out with stun batons. The Anzat, human, and Neti, all crumpled to the floor. "Find a place to hold them. I have intel to feed to the Grandmaster."

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*Two weeks ago*  
*KSD Transcendent*

The intoxicating rush of adrenaline coursed through Vivackus' veins. Across the holotable, two Dark Council members - and fellow *di Plagia* - stood, bathed in the cool blue light. The Headmaster and Master At Arms had first approached Vivackus some time ago. What they were planning was as dangerous as it was unprecedented. Brotherhood forces were routing the One Sith at every turn. While two Dark Council members were well-positioned to turn the fleet on itself, there would still be the Clans to contend with. This was where Vivackus would come in. With one of the largest forces within the Brotherhood, Plagueis was in an ideal position.

"Nicht Ka." Aabsdu spoke as the planet projected up on the holotable. "Here Lord Esoteric will make his last stand..."

"Or so they will think." Dacien continued. "Ashen will want to quash this with overwhelming force, once and for all. There is no doubt that he will send everything. As they descend, they will find out too late that they are compromised from the inside."

"You want the Plagueis forces to turn on the other Clans?" Vivackus leaned over the table. "Once the trap is sprung, there will be little time to react to any unforeseen developments..."

"You have a better idea?"

The Consul took a deep breath. "The clans are a distraction. Only Ashen and Pravus matter. If they are taken out, we will succeed, if not, we will surely fail. Where would they retreat to?" Vivackus activated the holotable, bringing up the Antei system. "My Proconsul will lead half the

Plagueian forces at Nicht Ka. The confusion created among the clans will be enough to cause friendly fire in all directions. Should the Grandmaster or his Deputy escape, I will be waiting for them here. With our respective positions, Lyspair could be taken and held without a fight before anyone realizes what is happening.”

Aabsdu nodded slightly as he listened. “Cut off the retreat. That’s not a bad plan. I can make sure a team of Nephilim will be at your disposal.”

“I’m not sure that’s necessary... or even wise. That might draw suspicion. The Shadow Academy is well fortified now. I can hold the position with Plagueian subjugates. And truth be told, I don’t wish to test the loyalty of a Nephilim if they are to go directly against the Grandmaster.” Vivackus glanced back and forth, gleaned nothing from the impassive, expressionless faces of Dacien and Aabsdu. “I will take a few hundred soldiers. With the help of several of your assistants, that should be more than enough.”

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*Present day*  
*Lyspair*

The dim red LEDs around his wrists and neck provided the only source of illumination. In this state of almost-complete sensory deprivation, Teylas wasn’t quite sure how long he had been unconscious - or for how long he’d been awake. At least the ache in his back was subsiding. Thank the Force for Anzati healing capabilities. Assuming he was still on Lyspair - far from a given - Teylas’ best guess was that he was in a storage room somewhere, locked digitally from the outside.

The mass of branches on the floor beside him finally began to rustle.

Ood groaned. “I feel like I’ve been through a woodchipper.” The Neti slowly propped himself up. “Plagueian, is that you?”

“Yes, and before you get any ideas, these shackles are the ones we use during the slave indoctrination process. They’re pressure-sensitive and the ring is filled with explosives. If you try to change your shape to get free, the resulting explosion would likely take us both out.”

“So much for that,” Ood grumbled. “I’m surprised you’re in here with me.”

Teylas didn’t have a chance to respond. The two were temporarily blinded as the storage room door opened. A blob landed with a *thud* in front of him. As the Battlemaster’s eyes adjusted, he made out the bruised and bloody figure of the Tarenti Knight. Rial’s eyes were glazed over and he was muttering something incoherent that Teylas couldn’t make out.

A figure was silhouetted in the doorway. "Teylas. Would you be so kind to join me?"

Not like he had much choice in the matter. Two Ravagers appeared to drag the Anzat out and through the Shadow Academy Hall, before leaving him unceremoniously on the cold granite floor. The Plagueian Consul stood behind Teylas, grabbed him by the scalp and roughly pulled his head back. Teylas felt a twinge of pain in his neck as a syringe buried itself in below his chin and injected noxious yellow liquid into his vein.

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Pupils still dilated, no response. Vivackus snapped his fingers in front of the Anzat's nose and waved his hand back and forth. Maybe a double dose was too much. Check the pulse... well, the heart is still beating.

Vivackus stood up and crossed his arms. The ixetal cilona he gave Teylas was about twice the concentration of an average death stick, but it shouldn't have been enough to cause an overdose... probably. This was admittedly slightly outside the scope of Vivackus' primary area of expertise.

"Come on, wake up!" The Sith delivered a frustrated kick to his prisoner's stomach, causing Teylas to roll over on the floor and curl into the fetal position and becoming motionless once more.

*Guess I just have to wait the trip out.*

At least he didn't lack reading material.

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Teylas tried to focus, but the room spun around him, leaving blurred streaks of color as it went.

"How I-long are we going to do th-this, Viv?" Teylas stammered, spitting red as he tried to get the taste of copper out of his mouth.

"When you get it." The *di Plagia* responded simply, punctuating the statement by delivering the hilt of his lightsaber across Teylas' cheek. The Quaestor hit the ground again and waited for his vision to stop spinning before staggering back to his knees.

"Get what? You haven't asked me anything!" Teylas let out a defiant, bark-like laugh. "You really suck at this."

Vivackus smirked. "Sure about that, are you?"

“Rial would know everything that I do, and he’s got to be easier to get information from.”

The Battlelord pulled over a chair and straddled it backwards. “Why do you assume I care about what you know?”

Teylas stammered. “Why else would you be interrogating me?”

“Torturing you.” The Human corrected. “Why would I interrogate you? I’ve been in on Aabsdu and Dacien’s plan for as long as you have. Besides, if you thought you had anything special, you’d try to bargain with it.”

The Anzat let out a cry of exasperation. “Then what do you want? Shouldn’t you be leaking that information to Lord Ashen?”

Vivackus waved his hand in the air. “He already knows. I told the Grandmaster of his Headmaster and Master at Arms’ treachery from the beginning. No. I want to know where it ends.”

“What?”

“Where it ends.” Vivackus said, as though repeating the phrase would clarify it. “This hall is a library because of the books in it.” Standing up and walking over to the nearest shelf, the Sith pulled a book. “Anatomy of the Krayt Dragon, 5th edition.” Vivackus threw the tome into the air, ignited his lightsaber, and slashed across its spine, causing an explosion of pages to fall down around him.

“That book didn’t make the library.” He observed. “It’s still a library without it. But if I destroy all the books, this would just be a room. When does it end? When does this stop being a library? Would I know it when I see it?”

Vivackus looked down the row of books and called out, “Ravager 109. To me.” The black-clad soldier jogged down the aisle, standing at attention.

“Remove your helmet.”

The figure complied, holding the helmet under his left arm. A human male stared back, about 30 years old, with dull grey eyes and pale skin - clearly a testament to the Plagueian indoctrination process.

With no more care than he showed the book, Vivackus made a horizontal swing with his lightsaber, separating the head from its shoulders. Retrieving the decapitated head and holding it by the hair, Vivackus crouched down in front of Teylas.

“This coup was over before it began. Those responsible will be dealt with. Ood and Rial, I’m sure will be turned over to Arcona and Tarentum respectively. But you’re mine. This Ravager at one point had hopes, dreams, thoughts of his own. That was before the indoctrination process. Now he is - was - just Ravager 109. He didn’t even flinch before I killed him. When did he stop being the man he was born and become the one we made him?”

He tossed the head unceremoniously to the side. “When will Teylas Ramar end and the Ravager begin? Will I know it when I see it?”

For the first time, Vivackus saw fear in Teylas’ eyes.