**“Bloodlust”**

By Braecen Kaeth (4520)

*A Strands of Fate Competition: Ready For Battle*

**Throne Room of the Dark Tower**

**Kapsina, Jusadih System**

**30 ABY**

In the aftermath of the Ninth Great Jedi War, Braecen Kaeth had been detained by the newly appointed Grand Master, Muz Ashen. While he had been deemed a Hero in the conflict, he had been deemed a failure in conducting the war as a Consul. Removed from his Clan for nearly four months, his position as Consul was usurped by the upstart Proconsul, Alaris Jinn. In a desperate attempt to regain his lost power, Braecen had travelled to the Throne Room within the Dark Tower to confront his young protégé. In the same room he had been granted power by the Dark Lord of the Sith, Aristan Dantes, he would reclaim it and his rightful position as Disciple of Plagueis.

The Dark Adept stared down his opponent – the Obelisk Templar – with both of his white blades burning in the dark room. The harsh, white light cast the room in irregular shadows; flickering over the ancient possessions of Darth Plagueis, Grand Master Emeritus Chi Long, and Grand Master Emeritus Aristan Dantes. Alaris Jinn’s breath had become erratic with the pace of battle. While an adept warrior, he could not compete with the Fallen Son of Plagueis; Elder of the Brotherhood, former Captain of the Grand Master’s Royal Guard, Professor of Lightsaber Studies on Lyspair. The odds were stacked against the newly minted Equite in his bid for power. He slid his right foot backward, his left foot forward, both hands on the hilt of his weapon. Undaunted, he stood before his opponent.

Braecen accelerated his lithe body towards his eventual successor. If an Apprentice did not attempt to displace his Master, he was not a worthy heir. At least, that was the belief of the Krath Elder. His twin blades smashed into the single blade of his foe. The pair raced through a series of thrusts, sweeps, and counters in the span of a heartbeat. Their blades wove an elaborate tapestry of light interrupted only by the voracious cracks of their blades upon one another. The blades roared like waves crashing on the beach; steady, powerful, constant. The energy from the blades hummed, but it was nothing in comparison to the power of the Dark Side that exuded from the pair. They pushed past boundaries, dared their limits, and pressed themselves to the brink for control of Clan Plagueis.

Braecen slipped, Alaris lunged. The misstep costing the Elder a grievous wound to the hip. His defeat assured in the absence of a counter. A combat veteran, he would bide his time until such a moment exposed itself before him.

Then a miracle. In his deepest hour of need, Kalen Aquillarum entered the Throne Room. Kalen and Braecen had served in the earliest days of Plagueis together. Brothers-in-Arms, comrades, family. The moment of victory lasting only a moment before it evaporated before Braecen’s eyes. Kalen firmly standing side-by-side with Alaris Jinn before him.

A scream both raw and wild erupted in the room. Only until it ended did Braecen know it had come from his own lungs. Like a wounded animal, he was cornered and defeated - at his most dangerous state. The duo exploded into action, pushing Braecen back onto his heels. His twin white blades spinning and pushing his oncoming foe’s attacks *just* wide of his inner defenses. Alaris and Kalen continued to press until the Dark Adept was dislodged from his footing against the balcony railing of the Dark Tower. The Dark Adept fell into the shadows, a swirl of black robes and twin lightsabers.

Broken. Defeated. Bloodied. Braecen struggled to his feet. His mind willed his body to place one foot before the other. Step by step he continued for a hundred yards before he fell to his knees and crawled. Crawled until he could no longer crawl. With only his hands, he drug himself until he blacked out. Days added up into weeks. Weeks bled into months. And months ticked away into years. War. Conflict. Betrayal. The tenants of the Brotherhood had broken the Krath Elder. Should he ever return to the Brotherhood, he would be a shell of himself; a broken mentor easily managed by an upstart Equite.