**“Security Blanket”**

By Braecen Kaeth (4520)

*Strands of Fate: Precious, My Precious*

**The Citadel**

**Dajorra System**

He caressed the tome. His fingers knew every square inch of its exterior. The leather was rich, but stretched thin from time. The pages were once snow white, but you could see they had aged from exposure to sunlight. The exterior held only three glyphs in Aurebesh that stated ‘C-E-K’; a memory from a time long past for the Dark Adept.

 Taken by impulse, he cracked the tome open and read the inscription once more. The beautiful, looping penmanship of his mentor still there. The kind words from a Dark Adept who would train a future Dark Adept. It was an offer not only to join House Byss within Clan Exar Kun, but to join the Isradia family. A family Braecen had joined. A family he had betrayed. *Power in your youth only leads to folly,* he thought.

 He replaced the tome to its proper place inside his desk. Within the book, Braecen had penned his deepest secrets: relics of power, backroom dealings, and secrets from the Iron Throne. It was careless to keep it after all these years. He should have burned the book and its incriminating information. Should it fall into the wrong hands, he would expose more than just himself to prosecution from the Justicar and punishment at the hands of the Lord Marshall. The Adept grimaced at the thought.

 He sensed the presence before he heard it – ***knock, knock, knock –*** a firm hand behind the heavy blows. *A firm hand at the helm,* he thought before he admitted his Aedile into his office. The man whom entered was changed from when Braecen first took the mantle of leadership for House Galeres. Gone was the wild eyed youth and inexperience. It was replaced with resolve and confidence. It swirled about him. A heady mixture that infected those whom he came in contact with.

 “And how may I help the Hero of Galeres?” Braecen purposely used flattery to keep his upstart Aedile off balance – he did not respond well to compliments. Uji Tameike paused to consider the words then proceeded to take a chair before the Quaestor’s desk. He fell hard into the chair before kicking his feet up onto the Adept’s desk. He boyishly grinned. *Returning my insult with one of his own,* Braecen silently applauded his young mentee.

 “I need your guidance,” Uji began. “I have some intel that suggests Plag-“

 Braecen interrupted the Aedile, “*Clan* Plagueis.”

 “That *Clan* Plagueis is attempting to destabilize our Clan and House by targeting you. Do you have any idea what they may have on you?”

 A long silence ensued. Braecen had to weigh out what the current-state Plagueis would have on record about their former Consul and Father of Plagueis. He had fallen in and out of favor so often with the Clan he had co-created that he could no longer remember all of its intricacies. The gears inside his head kept spinning as he considered the ramifications. He already had so many irons in the fire within Clan Arcona. *There is too much work to do right now. I can’t deal with this shit.*

His thoughts drifted back to the tome that held his darkest secrets. Within that book lied the answer, but it also held so many more questions. He reached into the Dark Side of the Force to glean some insight – a pulse, a direction. He knew that Uji would be his prodigy in this age, but was unsure if he should burden him with so much so soon. *No,* he thought, *I cannot do that to him yet.*

“Dispatch our assets in the Dajorra Intelligence Agency. I want to know what they *think* they know. And they want something, find out what it is so we can pay the price.”

 “How do you know they want something?”

 Braecen smiled. “Everyone wants something.”