The Deed

Edgar Drachen #13831

 Dear Edgar Drachen esteemed Aedile of the House of Hoth,

 As a representative of the Odan-Urr Clan, you are cordially invited to a welcoming celebration of your arrival and to help further strengthen the bonds between the Jedi and the citizens of the Empire.

 Therefore I humbly invite you to my home for dinner on Essadan in 2 days at 5 in the evening.

Respectfully,

Yalisti Keldra

 After reading the invitation for the tenth time Edgar finally put it back into his coat pocket and sat back and looked out of the transports window. He tried to take in the sights of Kiast, but it was all just weird to him. He heard about sky cities before I mean what Jedi had not heard the stories about Bespin, but for himself the Savant never seen such a amazing feat of engineering.

 The only problem with such cities was the lack of physical connection with the world itself, the Grey Jedi prefered to be able to go out and meditate with nature but here the only “nature” you could find was in artificial gardens.

“Sir we are approaching Essadan and we got clearance to land, we should be there in about 15 minutes.”

“Thanks Lieutenant, hopefully you and the crew can get some food and refreshments while we are there. Otherwise, just relax and stay close to the ship. Just in case Turel contacts us.”

With that, the Aedile started focusing on the real reason he was going to this “celebration” apparently Ms. Keldra had recently acquired a deed to a large plot of undeveloped land that was stolen from a very influential Noble by the name of A’dartia Etlina sometime ago. His mission was to find a way to get the deed back in exchange for the noble’s vote in the upcoming conclave.

This mission wasn’t coming at a great time, Edgar had a house to contend with and they were all getting a bit too stir crazy being stuck on the fleet for so long. It took some doing but he was able to convince the new Clan Liaison, Colonel Cortel, to let the member’s and staff of the House some shore leave just to keep them from wrecking the fleet while he was gone.

“Five minutes out sir we are starting our landing procedures now, sir!” the Pilot announced

“Thank you, can you please send a message to our host that we are arriving?”

“Already done, Sir. She is waiting for you on the landing pad.”

He sighed morosely. “*Time to get to work I guess. At least, I’m guaranteed some good food and drink tonight, so much better than the mess hall*.“ Edgar thought darkly to himself.

As the transport jolted and bounced as it landed, Edgar was jolted back to reality and took a moment to compose and focus himself. Of all the missions he’d been on, it was the ones where he had to delicately dance around politics and protocol that drove him crazy the most, but here he was. All because he got too friendly with this noble at the Imperial reception after they arrived. He sighed softly and shook his head. “Next time I have to not be so drunk at those things.”

The ramp made a loud thump as it hit the ground as it opened and Edgar gave a few final orders to the crew and disembarked the ship. He immediately saw his hostess and met her halfway on the landing pad.

“Greetings, Master Jedi welcome to my home.” Ms. Keldra said in a sweet and friendly tone. Edgar thought to himself “I *never expected her to look half as good as I remembered*.” Ms Keldra was a little shorter than he was and had light purplish skin tone that even the Jedi almost said a loud,”*Maybe I wasn’t as drunk as I thought!*” he exclaimed in his thoughts.

“Greetings to you as well and thank you for the invitation Ma’dam, I brought with me one of my best wines as a gift from me and my clan.”

The young-looking Sephi smiled at the Aedile and meekly said, “Thank you, but there was no need. I have plenty of food and drink for us.”

“Well, when I was growing up, my mother always told me that it’s impolite to arrive without a gift when you are invited as a guest to someone’s home, and so I present this bottle of wine to you as a goodwill gift, my lady.”

The noblewomen smile and graciously accepted the gift, “Well, then to honor you mother, we will have to drink a toast in her name then. Because that is our tradition you see.”

Edgar then smiled as his Hostess took him by the arm and led him inside the mansion. After a brief tour of the grounds, and meeting some other esteemed guests, Edgar was seated next to his hostess at the head of the table when she silenced the gathered guests and spoke in a soft, yet powerful voice that filled the room, “Ladies and gentlemen, we are here to welcome our guest of honor from the Odan-Urr Clan and Aedile of the House of Hoth, Edgar Drachen. We all welcome you to Kiast and hope the conclave decides to let you and your Clan remain here with us.”

Her speech was briefly interrupted by some mild clapping from one seemingly drunk noble who cheered out loud as well. Once the guest quieted down, Ms. Keldra continued. “We would like you to let your superiors know that most of the nobles and the the people at large see a beneficial future for both of our people. You also honor us with joining us this evening and for that I wish to toast your parentage this evening and to you, Edgar Drachen, we welcome you!”

 With that, the gathered guest saluted the young Aedile and settled in for what was a beautiful and impressively well-cooked meal. The Jedi had to force himself not to gorge on the meal since it was the first real meal he has had since leaving Florum and even then it was mostly hastily made food.

 After dinner was over, most of the guests started to leave until it was only Edgar and Yalisti remaining, sitting on her balcony enjoying a quiet drink while overlooking one of those artificial parks that Edgar disliked so much.

 “Isn’t the view and the park so beautiful tonight?” she asked the Jedi is a very soft tone

“Beautiful!?!? Are you …” Edgar quickly interrupted himself and thought. “*Whoa there, remember why you’re here and try not to insult the lady before you get the deed.*”

Quickly coughing to cover his change of tone, he spoke softly. “Excuse me, but yes the view is one of the best I have seen since being on Kiast and the company is very nice as well.”

His hostess was taken aback, by that comment and so was Edgar since that just slipped out of his lips. She blushed and quickly changed the subject.

“I really do hope the conclave lets you all stay, but I know you face a uphill battle there are some Nobles not liking your presence at all.” she commented

“You are correct. In fact, a noble by the name of A’Dartia Etlina is been one of strongest opponents of ours in the conclave. She holds a great influence over too many votes for us not to ignore her.”

 Yalisti became visibly upset at the mere mention of the nobles name and in a huff stood up and angrily walked to the railing clearing trying to compose herself before speaking. Edgar sat in silence watching her for a few moments and was about to speak when she beat him to it.

“THAT…” the Sephi paused to take a deep breath After a moment, she calmed and started again. “Ma’dam Etlina is well-known as being ruthless, cunning and wicked. She single handedly destroyed my father company and then cheaply bought all of his ship building factories on Deleem, only leaving him with a fraction of the corporation he once had and our political status suffered greatly for it. I vowed to my father on his deathbed that I would regain our honor and rebuild the family name.”

“So, is that why you bought the deed to her property at the black market auction just last week?” Edgar questioned bluntly.

Yalisti spun her head around and looked the Jedi in the eyes “What are you talking about?” She said with a shaky and cracked voice which Edgar noted was the first time her voice ever showed signs of stress “Did she tell you this lie? Are you working for her to destroy what’s left of me and my family?”

Edgar took a minute to carefully think about his response and what he had learned over the course of the evening. Yelista was a very intelligent and proud woman. She was strong, hard-working, determined and above all scared. Not scared of going to jail or of being in danger but the way she talked about her father and her family history the grey Jedi sense she was more scared of failing her father’s memory above anything else.

So with care he said to her, “First of all, calm down and I will be honest with you. Then, I hope you will be honest with me. Once I received your invitation, the Clan was contacted by Ms. Etlina and I met with and was instructed by her to get this deed back from you. The deal was that if I am able to do so she promised to vote for and sway others to vote for approving the Clan to stay in the system. I could have done that in so many ways. I could have commanded a strike team or have come in to steal it while you slept. Except for one simple fact. Ms. Etlina could have just done it herself by calling in the authorities and having you arrested but instead has made a secret deal to handle the matter. So my question is why? What is this deed and why does she want to keep it secret? So I’m not here to force you to do anything. I’m here to negotiate the return of the Deed so My Clan and I can stop traveling the stars and make a new home here. So I ask you do you have the deed and will you help me?”

The Sephi Noble just stared at the Jedi for a few long minutes even turning her back to him to look over the park. Edgar focused on her and felt that she was in conflict within herself. She truly wanted the Jedi to stay, but she refused to give up the only bargaining chip she had against her rival to restore her family's holdings.

Edgar broke the silence by saying calmly “If you help me understand and give me something to bargain with on your behalf besides the deed, I promise the Clan will help you as much as we can.”

“You don’t understand she is too powerful, even with the evidence I have that proves she was involved with pirates to raid my father’s holdings, killing his workers and forcing him to sell everything. Iit will never see the light of day she is too well connected and the evidence will be destroyed before it ever got to the council.” The Sephi turned to Edgar and bluntly stated “That’s why I paid a high price for the deed to a large plot of land on Solyiat. It’s on the main northern continent and all I have these are rumors she was planning on using it to allow the pirates to set up a base without the Empress knowing.”

It was Edgar’s turn to be stunned silent, even with his brief encounter with powerful noble he knew she was going to be trouble and no matter how he protested to A’lora and Turel about working with her they insisted and ordered him to proceed with the mission. Little did he realized how deep this hole went. He had to decide and quickly on the best course of action. With that, the Young Jedi walked over to his Sephi Hostess. He took her by the hand and calmly offered a solution.

“I feel you are telling me the truth and as I said I’m here to negotiate for this deed. So if you show me this evidence that you have, and if it’s viable, I promise to help you regain your family’s honor.”

Back on the transport the men were getting restless and bored when the comm system crackled into life.

“Lieutenant, I have accepted my host’s invitation to spend the night in the guest quarters, so you can go back to the Vision and return for me tomorrow at 09:00 sharp is that understood?”

“Copy that, sir. Enjoy your night and we will contact you upon our approach in the morning.” the Pilot responded as the com link was turned off.

“Well, looks like the Jedi is getting a little closer with the locals, hey boys?” The Lieutenant joked as they lifted off all laughing and making other rude jokes.

 Meanwhile sitting back in the young businesswoman's study, Edgar watched Yalisti spread out documents, datapads and images in front of him and detailing her rivals involvement with a very dangerous band of pirates that worked from outside the system, but with this noble’s help they would be set up to do some real harm in the system and be protected from the outside in the exact fashion the Clan is hoping to be protected from the Inquisitors.

They talked long into the night and finally came to agreement in the early morning hours. It was then his hostess retired to her room and Edgar went to the balcony to think for a while but was startled awake when his com link went off with the crew announcing their arrival. He must have passed out on the chair and now had a stiff back for his troubles.

After gathering all of the evidence, he look at Yalisti in the eyes and asked. “Are you sure about this? I know you are putting a lot of trust in the Clan but I believe this is the only way to achieve both of our goals.

“Yes, I’m sure it’s the right thing to do for my father’s sake and I believe the only way for me to regain what she stole is to go through an outside force. I just hope my faith in you is not my undoing.”

Edgar felt like he was just punched in the gut at those words, but understood her feelings all the same. He was asking for a lot of trust, in people she barely knows, not only in the Jedi but in him as well.

After he said his goodbyes and boarded the transport they made a direct path to the Estate of A’dartia Etlina.

Since Ms. Etlina’s winter estate was in the more densely populated portion of Essadan, she had no private landing site and they were forced to use the main starport 2km away. Edgar left the crew with instructions to head back to base yet again and he would contact them when he was ready to leave.

 It was also here that Edgar knowing his “boss” was expecting him before 10:00, purposely decided to walk the distance instead of taking a faster mode of transport. Not only to get to know the city better or for exercise but to have plenty of time to think over his next move and of course a Plan B just in case things go sour quickly.

By the time the Grey Jedi reach the estate the guards gave him this annoyed looked and said “You’re late! The Ma’dam does not like being kept waiting,” said the junior guard in a gruff tone.

“Oh really? I must have lost all track of the time and I do apologize for my tardiness but please tell Ms. Etlina I am here and I have what she is looking for.” the Savant said in a somewhat sarcastic, yet jovial tone, ignoring the way the guard spoke.

Edgar was made to wait in a cold, sterile room that was sparsely furnished. He remembered being here a few days ago and now, knowing more about this noble, he realized this how she deals with business, cold, direct and to the point without distraction. Now he knew exactly how to handle this meeting with her.

Once Ms. Etlina sat behind the desk and was about to speak Edgar cut her off immediately “Ms. Etlina you’d be happy to know that not only did I retrieve the deed to the land on Solyiat that you wanted me to attain, I also learned a great deal about you and your dealings with the band of Pirates under the leadership of a Garok Rex as well. Apparently, you have had your hands into a lot of misdeeds my dear and it would be a shame if the evidence I have obtained would be leaked to the council now, wouldn’t it?”

Infuriated the noble screamed, “HOW DARE YOU?! You dare to come into my home and start accusing me of crimes! I hereby withdraw my support for your clan and will see to it that not only your clan but the refugees you brought with you are removed from this system entirely. Now either you give me what is mine and get out of here or you will spend the next 20 years in our prison system!”

Edgar started laughing which only made the Noble woman even angrier and screamed even louder. “GUARDS Get in …“, she only stopped when Edgar tossed pictures and documents on her desk and just as she was realizing what they were her guards rushed through the door with weapons drawn.

Sitting back down looking and gathering the documents she gloated “Stay outside the door, men. This won’t take long.” With that, they close the door and Edgar heard them set up right on the other side of it.

“You realize that I won’t let you leave with these and I still will not agree to voting for your clan to stay till I see you extremely punished for threatening me.”

“That’s fine. I had no intentions to leave with those at all.” The Grey Jedi said calmly. Which confused the irate noble. “You see those are only copies of the originals and the deed itself are already on the way to my leaders with my recommendation they bring them to the council only if my negotiations fail. You see I’m here to do what I was instructed to do and negotiate a deal in which let the clan and my house have a new home and that’s what i’m going to do.”

“You think you this will ever get to the council and do you think they will ever listen to you?!” She retorted

“Oh no you are right they won’t listen to me but the Empress will listen to A’lora my consul and then I’m sure the council won’t ignore the Empress.” the Jedi Smugly said.

Taking a few moments to process this and look over the documents with an attempt to call his bluff she relented and questioned “What is your offer?”

In a cold and direct tone Edgar said “My offer is simple, first you do as you promised and support our relocation to the system and use your influence to help it pass the vote. Secondly you will return control of the shipbuilding interesting back to their rightful owner Yalisti Keldra, we will call this the negotiated price for the deed. Finally as for the Deeded land on the continent of Strokera on planet Solyiat, you will donate this land, without recourse, and out of the goodness of your heart to House Hoth to use for their base and any way we see fit. In exchange I promise that I will not turn this evidence over to the Empress.”

The Jedi finished by saying “It’s either that or you lose everything and you're the one spending time in your lovely prison system. So what say you?”

The fury was clear in her eyes and he can feel that he just made a powerful enemy, but it was worth it to secure the Clan and His House’s future. They both sat there staring into each other's eyes silently and for such a long period that even the guards got nervous and opened the door to peek in to see if they were still alive.

Finally she broke the Silence and relented “I have no choice but to accept this blackmail but I warn you don’t ever cross my path again or you will wish you never came to this system!”

“If you don’t wish us to cross paths again than you better hope I never catch you going after Yelisti’s or my Clan’s interests again.” The Jedi said calmly as he stood up and head for the door. “I look forward to seeing the outcome of the vote and for, safe keeping you understand, we will hold on to the deed and the evidence just in case you try to change your mind. You see it only makes sense since you donating it to us anyway. Saves the trouble of getting from you later.”

 As Edgar opened the door he was met with a pair of guards blocking his path. Only then did he hear the Noblewoman say in a stern tone. “Take him and throw him out into the street and if you ever see him again deal with him!”

 With that and before Edgar could comment he was dragged from the building and thrown out of the mansion.

Brushing himself off he looked around and wondered out loud “So, where is the nearest bar?”