

The Pinnacle
Aliso
Third Month

He had hoped for Winter for what seemed to be a decade. The warm air had begun to test the nerves of the old man, making him avoidable to almost all of the junior officers. His boots clanked against the hardened floor as he made his way through from the outer doors. The building had quickly become one of the Commander's favorite places to be ever since returning to duty with Clan Plagueis. It had often pleased him to see how the Lords of Plagueis held control over the population, and turned them into the effective fighting force, yet they didn't even know they were fodder.

"Commander Caesar, the briefing will begin shortly." The voice came from the tall Pau'an man, Brigadier Lewin. *"I trust you will make your way there, rather than stand there and ponder out into space like usual."*

Gaius bit his tongue and provided his standard reply, holding back any resemblance of resentment. Had they only known him twenty years prior, or even ten, those in uniform would be addressing him in a completely different manner, that of "My Lord" instead of the worthless rank he had on his lapels. For now, however, he was forced to oblige. He made his way to the conference room, occupied by Brigadier Lewin, Admiral Ranin, and a holo of Consul Selika Roh. The Sith looked annoyed, almost angry that she had been disturbed. *"Get on with it."* she muttered.

The Admiral took the lead. *"My Lord, Brigadier Lewin, Commander Caesar. Our intelligence counterparts have been painstakingly busy over the last few hours detecting a threat to many of our holdings and bases of operation. A seemingly ancient organization, dubbed the Crimson Tide has been making headway in obtaining information about our operations. Reports have confirmed that they are in possession of a stolen Carrack-class Light Cruiser with an unknown amount of soldiers. Gaius, you will recall the Tide from your years of service."*

"Yes Admiral. The Crimson Tide was a lowly group of pirates who had been a thorn in the side of the Clan from the very beginnings. However, they had been squandered many years ago, and should pose no threat to us here in The Aliso system. They are a minor threat at best." The Commander replied.

"Kill them all and be done with this." The Sith exclaimed.

"My Lord," Lewin interjected *"I believe there is an alternative that you will approve of. We've become aware of the new leader of the Tide, a tail-head known as Marcus Brutus."* Gaius shuddered. *"We believe Commander Caesar can play an invaluable role in the capture and torture of Brutus, to finally drive this pirate club into extinction. I have discussed the matter with Admiral Ranin, and we are prepared to allocate two rifle companies, and a heavy weapon*

*platoon and full control of the **Vigilant**. The mission will be to board the vessel, overthrow the bridge, and seize control of the mind of Brutus.”*

Finally, his veins were filled with adrenaline once more, merely at the thought of being able to work his ways onto another victim. He was growing tired of torturing the slaves provided to him in the previous few months since finding his way back to the Clan. This opportunity provided a way to release his wrath on someone and to prove his worth, ever since having his Abilities stolen from him.

“Very well. Commander, take care of this.” The stern voice from the Consul’s hologram barked, and the transmission was terminated. Suddenly, winter was the last thing on Caesar’s mind.

Unknown Space

Fifteenth Day

The fight had commenced, almost immediately turning in favor of the more powerful Plagueis forces. The darkness was interrupted by the blasts of weapons from each ship. The slave soldiers of Plagueis had begun to board the Crimson Tide stolen flagship. Surprisingly, the cannon fodder was beginning to prevail. Gaius stood at the ready, with his medic bag slung over his shoulder, on a shuttle surrounded by another officer and a few heavy weapon squad members. He didn’t even bother to grab the weapon attached to his waist. *“Boarding in thirty…”* the pilot addressed his souls. The Commander remained unmoved, though the officer held tight to his rifle and his medpack. It was obvious the officer had not seen combat often. *“Twenty…”*. Gaius took a brief look at the Ravagers, unable to tell if he had been there for any of their tortures. His many years of battle had taught him that the pleasure of torture comes not from remembering their faces, but remembering their screams. *“Ten…”*. The officer’s mouth breathing grew louder by the second. Gaius stood unbothered. *“Three. Two. One.”* The doors flew open and the slave soldiers plunged into the fight. Gaius managed to snag a grenade off of the belts of one of the Ravagers. A few seconds after the rush, he flung it forward, smiling as the blast took out a dozen of combatants, some on both sides, none of them were of any importance.

“Commander, the target has been identified. Confirmed on the bridge with light armaments. Breaching momentarily.” the Officer from the shuttle relayed over the com-link.

Gaius ran briskly down the hallway, joined by a mixed squad of riflemen. They encountered little resistance, as much of the fight had already taken place. Finally, he had reached for his slugthrower from his belt, though he had little intention to use it. As they approached the bridge, the officer was outside of the open door, smiling.

“For once in your miserable life, you’ve done something successful, Second Lieutenant. Stand aside.” Gaius smirked as he walked in and reached for his medic bag. In front of him, cuffed and

on his knees was the Twi'lek, disarmed and bleeding from the nose. Apparently, one of the slaves had taken the butt end of their rifle to his face. They would be punished later.

Gaius holstered his firearm, and placed his bag at his feet. He pulled out a recently sharpened knife, the glowing steel shimmered in the bright lights of the room. Gaius walked softly to the prisoner, taking a position behind him. He reached down and grabbed at the head-tail in front of him and began to slowly but firmly glide the blade down from the skull to the tip, slicing it open. Screams filled the air, but that was music to the Human's ears. He quickly grabbed two of the throwing knives attached to his belt and forcefully shoved them into the top of the prisoner's shoulders, forcing him further down onto his stomach. He needed to be made aware that the pain was not going to stop, despite his pleas.

"Do you know who I am?" Caesar demanded. The Twi'lek could not answer, as he was focused on the pain. *"LOOK AT ME!"* yelled the old man. He grabbed the face of the prisoner, forcefully jerking it up, *"I AM THE BEST DAMN THING TO EVER HAPPEN TO YOU!"* Gaius reached into his pocket and threw a handful of blinding dust into the prisoner's eyes.

Gaius walked towards the command console, flicking on a switch that began recording and broadcasting to every Crimson Tide location and member. *"Feast your eyes on the future of your pathetic organization. Let this serve as your final warning to never seek out Clan Plagueis ever again."* he said calmly as he made his way back to his bag. He reached in and pulled out another set of knives, making his way back to the prisoner who remained on his stomach. Gaius knelt at the Twi'lek's feet, and quickly and decisively brought the blades down through the prisoner's calves and into the ground beneath. Gaius was able to ignore the noise coming from the prisoner's mouth, as he had gotten used to them. He removed his favorite tool from his holster, the one he had called *The Emperor* and took aim at the back of the knees of the prisoner, who was not writing in pain on the ground. He fire off two shots, completely obliterating any ability for Brutus to stand. Gaius stood, looking down at why lay beneath him, smirking. He reached back into his bag to grab the final piece, a C-25 frag grenade that he had taken off of one of the heavy weapons squad members. He reached down and placed it in the hands of the prisoner. *"Twist when you are ready to end this."* he whispered. Gaius began walking away, and within seconds, quickly spun around and fired off one more round from his slugthrower, this one directly to the skull of the Twi'lek, denying the prisoner the chance to end his own life.

Gaius slowly gathered his things, and walked out. *"Et tu, Brute."*