

-EXTRACTION-

Vodo Biask Taldrya #3729

The air had a certain density to it. The scrubbers were working optimally refreshing the air and climate control maintained a perfect temperature; no readout or diagnostic would have read outside of the norm. The air was heavy with tension, a tight cord of it, wet with carefully withheld emotions. Balanced between unconstrained violence and rational calm, it was poised on a saber's blade, threatening to cut one way if not the other.

The loud clang of a gavel striking its mark brought the excited murmur of voices to a still quiet. They were the assembled jurors and those of sufficient rank or merit to sit in on the hearing. An imperious man sat at the head of a table around which a further four beings were seated. At the head of the table, in front of which Vodo Biask Taldrya stood in stoic repose, was the Proconsul. He was attended by the Captains of the *Revenant* and the *Karufir's Dawn*. Seated at the ends of the table, relative to Vodo, were more familiar faces: Rian Aslar, also a Taldrya, and Andrelious J. Mimosa-Inahj.

The Proconsul took his time gather sheets of flimsi before him and ordering them into a neat stack before speaking, "Vodo Biask, you are brought here to make your official statement."

Vodo stared easily at the man with a glare that many described as immense as they felt its weight settle upon them. To his credit, the Proconsul bore its weight well, "Statement? Could you clarify, Lord Proconsul?"

Unimpressed the man leaned back in his chair heavily and made no small attempt at hiding his disdainful sigh, "Statement: Your account of events leading to yesterday's tragedy and your part in it. Really Biask? Games already?"

"My apologies Lord Proconsul, I felt I must have your clarification because this doesn't appear to be a debriefing and I wanted to know which statement it was you wished me to offer you", Vodo's words were obsequious but his tone was anything but. It carried notes of contempt and annoyance, of flippant disregard and even a little smugness.

The Proconsul's nostrils flared as he worked the corners of his mouth in bitter amusement, "You're too clever for your own good and that will be the death of you. This is no debriefing, in that you're correct—this is a Court Martial."

The crowd was still as stone and quiet as night. No one moved, many held their breath, as the tension ratcheted up to visceral levels. Humans' flesh pimpled into bumps at the tension, like undesired hot breath upon their skin. Vodo's posture remained impassive, standing covered in

his expensive black cloak. He stood taller than anyone in the room and his broad shoulders cast an imposing shadow under the shimmery armorweave fabric.

“What am I charged with then? Benevolence? Filial duty?”, the Warlord grinned so that only the Proconsul could see his jocularly though all could hear it in his tone of voice.

“You are charged with Regicide for the deliberate murder of your Consul and your Lord”, the Proconsul’s mouth curled into a snide smirk.

“Remind me again why I’m visiting a Frigate?” The Consul’s bearing was remarkable for a man who had fallen, purposefully, into leadership only a year prior.

Vodo studied the Chiss’s back carefully with his eyes. There were few details that slid past his watchful gaze and he drank in the information. He probed the Consul’s mind with the Force, trying to find the centers of trust and reason. They were aboard a shuttle transiting between the new MC80 Cruiser where the Commander had raised his flag and the Nebulon B Frigate they’d recently christened *Altur’s Storm*, both of which were part of the navy’s reorganized Task Force Xesh.

“Meaning little disrespect, My Consul—” Vodo was interrupted by Rhy lance’s amused chuckle, “—but you aren’t a Soldier or a Warrior. You don’t know the pre-battle fear that grips men.”

Rhy lance eyed the imposing Twi’lek evenly, unaffected by Vodo’s condescension, “I’m well acquainted with the way they feel, Vodo.”

The Warlord merely bowed his head silently in acknowledgment before continuing, “When faced with the enemy do you know what keeps our men on their feet and firing back? It’s not the money; those paid well enough to stay aren’t going to be reassured by the weight of the credits in their pocket... It’s loyalty and that loyalty has a face. Your face.”

Rhy lance continued to study Vodo as he weighed the man’s words. There was little love lost between them and it was all but an open secret that Vodo would remove the Consul in a heartbeat if he saw the opportunity. This is why the shuttle was teeming with the Consul’s Fist, ten of Taldryan’s troopers hand selected for their skill in close-protection missions. They were Commander Rhy lance’s honor guard and his first line of defense against Dark Jedi who forgot their place.

“These men and women have seen my face before though, why is it I’ve allowed you to convince me to go to the *Storm*?” The hulls of the task force’s ships slid by the view-window behind the Consul.

Vodo moved up to the window to stand beside the Chiss man. “They see your face and hear your pronouncements but how often have you toured their ships, inspected their formations, and shook their hands?”

The Consul was quiet because he knew the Warlord was right. Vodo did not relent in his attack upon the Consul’s mind with his dark powers and took the silence as permission to continue speaking. “We’re about to assault an enemy force that bloodied the Grand Master’s nose, an enemy that until yesterday no one knew existed. Your presence, even for a moment, will make a world of difference to these personnel: you remember them and you appreciate them.”

Nodding to himself the Consul turned back to the window, mollified that the Sith hadn’t concocted an elaborate trap for him aboard the frigate. Rhy lance was further relieved to note that the Captain of the *Altur’s Storm* had been handpicked to replace one of the Taldryan old guard. This new Captain was not of questionable loyalty to himself. The captain, a fellow Chiss whose core name was Jerich, was firmly in Rhy lance’s camp and would brook no mutiny aboard his vessel. Perhaps in this, Vodo was not attempting to kill him for once.

He again chuckled in self-amusement as he brushed the thought away. Of course Vodo is trying to kill him still. The Warlord would never cease. Vodo, for his part, stood there motionlessly glaring out the viewport disregarding another of the Consul’s strange and unprompted bouts of silent laughter.

“We will make this visit short, no more than three hours. I need to be back aboard the flagship in time for final preparations before our combat jump,” Rhy lance’s imperious tone brooked no reply but carried the undercurrent of acceptance.

There was a few moments of silence in the shuttle’s cabin, broken only by the gentle hum of life support systems and the occasional shifting of armor or equipment from the troopers, when the pilot spoke over the cabin PA, “Lord Consul, brace for evasive maneuvers!”

Rhy lance froze in place, his eyes catching Vodo’s. The Sith didn’t hesitate and grabbed the blue-skinned man by the upper-arm and threw him into the open seat behind them before taking his own seat. The Shuttle began undulating as it dipped forward and juked suddenly to the right. The two Equites struggled to secure their restraints, as did the troopers of the Fist, but Rhy lance managed to catch Vodo’s attention.

“What’s going on?”

Vodo’s tongue was a lash, “How could I know that?”

The cabin lights darkened to a burnished red as the shuttle pilot’s voice came over the PA again, “We are being pursued by three starfighters, Fleet Command reports four unknown vessels decanted from Hyperspace and began firing on our vessels. We’re going to attempt a combat landing on the *Storm*, Lord Consul!”

The Proconsul drummed his fingers on the wood table before him impatiently, “That cannot possibly be the end of your story.”

“It isn’t, Lord Proconsul,” the Twi’lek bowed shallowly from the waist, “But I beg a moment to consider how to continue.”

“To determine how to obfuscate your statement, you mean?” The victorious sneer in the Proconsul’s voice carried the weight of condemnation and the crowd murmured amongst themselves at the possibility. Vodo was well known as a schemer.

“That’s an unfair characterization, My Lord. I’d rather not demean the late Consul’s legacy with the raw truth,” Vodo spoke with perfect innocence, seeming to step carefully as though there was a delicate issue at hand.

The Proconsul opened his mouth but it was Rian Aslar Taldrya who spoke instead, “What do you mean, Master Biask?”

Vodo smiled inwardly that Rian would refer to him as Master. He had at least one ally among the judges. “To be blunt, the Consul did not maintain his composure under fire.”

The two Captains sitting at the table remained impassive, their military bearing maintaining their outward calm, but Vodo could feel their emotions through the Force. He could feel their stomachs clench and their anxiety rise as they considered how they would fare under fire from the enemy while trapped aboard a vulnerable shuttle. They thought about how their reactions would be viewed in hindsight by people who’d never been there, who had never experienced one of those livid moments of fear and terror. Vodo of course aided their line of thinking with gentle pokes and prods through the Force but he soon found his probing blocked.

Vodo’s eyes studied the Proconsul for reproach but instead found Andrelious leveling a glare his way. That was concerning... They’d interacted only sparingly but he’d hoped the man, a Dark Jedi, would lean his direction. Vodo only needed three of the Judges on his side when it came to a vote. Rian could probably be put into his camp, he mused, while the Proconsul was firmly outside of it. That was one vote a piece in either direction with two officers of the Taldryan Navy, unfamiliar to Vodo, and Andrelious yet to be determined.

The Proconsul gauged his crowd and determined that hearing of Rhyllance’s cowardice wouldn’t aid his cause. He was a man of ambition himself and to achieve his aims he needed to play upon the former Consul’s legacy and maintain his image, “You may proceed then from an appropriate point but I caution you: no games.”

Vodo nodded solemnly to the Proconsul, “I will try.”

The shuttle bucked as a pair of laser bolts collided with the shielding. Rhy lance's hand shot to the armrest and gripped the end of it with a white-knuckled fury. The shuttle continued his evasive maneuvering for long seconds, shuddering a few more times before it literally slid across the decking of the *Altur's Storm* small flight deck. The Fist were up and out of their seats and down the ramp before Vodo had climbed to his cybernetic legs. He loped down the boarding ramp after the Consul and briefly observed the scene of a raging space battle just outside the atmospheric containment shield meters away.

"Vodo, I have to get back to the MC80!", Rhy lance's voice was urgent and there was something wild around his eyes.

"Lord Consul, that's not happening. Look for yourself!", Vodo pointed out to the battle raging before their eyes.

"Sergeant! Incoming!" One of the troopers pointed out a small shape moving toward the frigate's flight deck.

With their enhanced view sensors the troopers could see the approaching boarding craft sooner than Vodo but it soon resolved itself into a recognizable shape. He turned to the Fist's Lieutenant, "We need to get the Consul to safety!"

The man nodded through his armored helmet and began issuing orders to his sergeant, "Dobbs, take your team and secure this deck. We'll take the Consul to the Bridge and you'll follow."

The Sergeant confirmed his orders and four troopers peeled off and took up positions around the hangar moments later. Meanwhile Rhy lance was gathered up by the Lieutenant and lead from the hangar surrounded by his remaining guard. Vodo followed, his abnormally long saber hilt in hand. He backed through the blastdoor, the only substantial way in and out of the hangar, deflecting the first blaster bolts fired by the troops disgorging from the boarding craft as Sgt Dobbs and his team began pumping coherent light into the armored men and droids.

The door shut with finality as Vodo backed through it. It hissed with the noise of escaping compressed gas and a gentle clang of dense metal on metal. He wasn't breathing heavily but his shoulders moved up and down as he drew deep breaths to calm himself and to evaluate the plan. Everything was proceeding on time and in order. He needed to hurry though to get Rhy lance to the safety of the ship's Bridge. Taldryan's future depended upon it.

It was a simple thing atop his lengthy mechanical legs to catch up to the troopers surrounding Rhy lance. They walked at a quick clip, weapons shouldered, clearing side corridors as they passed. The sounds of battle permeated the Frigate; the distant banging and thrum of the main weapons, the clamor of generators working at full capacity, and the ever-present whine of alarms. The corridors of the ship were largely empty as all hands were at their Action Stations

but occasionally a crewmember would come careening around a corner at a full tilt only to find them-self tackled to the ground and a blaster pointed in their face.

“What’s the quickest way to the Bridge?” the Lieutenant consulted his forearm computer and studied the three-dimensional schematic that popped up in holographic form, “We need to get to the central lift cluster. Third right down this passageway, all the way to the end.”

Rhylance looked at Vodo, “Dobbs and his team are dead by now. You’ll carry up the rear from now on.”

There was a long moment as Vodo refused to break the man’s red-eyed gaze, “As you command, My Consul.”

With that the procession continued, but only for a few meters. The sound of wrenching metal and the terrible grinding of durasteel on durasteel filled the air. The troopers’ hearing was protected inside their armored helmets but to the Warlord and the Commander it was deafening. The air currents in the passage changed as well as it began flowing gently in the direction of the noise. Recovering from momentary shock Vodo stood erect and realized what it all meant.

“Hull breach! Move!”

It was more than a breach though. Through the sounds of battle came a clanking that Vodo had no trouble in guessing the origin of. Down the corridor, emerging from a cloud of smoke, rose the shapes of two humanoids. Their eyes glowed red and as they marched forward their forms resolved into that of heavy battle droids.

Vodo glanced over his shoulder to the Lieutenant, “Go!”

The tall Trooper grabbed Rhylance by the upper arm and pushed him back down the corridor as the remaining honor guards swelled behind him and lobbed pot shots in the direction of the droids. Vodo stood tall and proud, allowing the trained men to shoot around him. He knew their shots would miss, they were suppressing the enemy contact; keeping the enemy’s heads down. The thing about droids, their real value in combat, was that they couldn’t be suppressed. Very few were programmed with self-preservation modules and as a result often braved suicidal onslaughts. One blaster bolt found its mark on one of the droid’s shoulders but the armor there was considerable and only left a smoldering hole a few millimeters deep.

It was then the droids began firing back. Their arms were slung low, held bent at the elbow, and contained integral repeating blasters. Torrents of red light pulsed through the passage arcing in the direction of Vodo and the retreating party behind him. Centering himself in the Force, Vodo stoked the flame he kept kindled in his heart until it billowed into a scintillating inferno. Roaring Vodo whipped his lightsaber up and around his body and began batting at the bolts of energy. His arms moved with preternatural speed and agility. He was elegant in his efficiency of movement, only moving the white blade as far as it needed to intercept and deflect the bolt into a

floor plate or bulkhead. The Warlord didn't bother trying to redirect the bolts into the droids, he didn't have the time and he suspected it would have been about as effective as the trooper's own shot.

The Droids identified their target as a Force User and began to shift their targeting parameters. Their streams of fire diverged from level, direct firing vectors; they aimed each arm separately and spaced their shots at the periphery of Vodo's body forcing him to work harder to intercept each shot, arcing his blade from one side to the other. He tried closing the distance, only 20 meters or so between them, but found the fire against him increased in intensity to a point where even he could not last. Behind him he could feel the last of the troopers turning the corner to the central lift cluster and knew he needed to be with them or the plan could fall to pieces.

Vodo reached out with his off hand and pulled deeply from within himself, commanding the Force to bend to his will. The Droid on the left slipped, as though something underfoot had become dislodged, while the one on the right tipped forward and lost its balance. Vodo bellowed furiously, wrenching the Force to do his bidding like a whipped slave, and the left droid began to fly toward him as the right droid fell face-first into the decking. Vodo caught the droid that half-slid, half-glided toward him with his enormous taloned foot, part of his cybernetic leg, and forced the droid head-first into the metal deck. He drew his saber across the back of the unit's torso, and plunged the white-hot blade point first into the base of its waist-level servos for good measure. The remaining droid attempted to make its feet but Vodo cleared the distance between them in ten lengthy bounds and buried the tip of his saber into the droid's chest. He drew it up, using both hands to fight the resistance of the droid's armor and internal circuitry, to bisect the machine.

"Your prowess in battle is well known, Vodo... I fail to see how this pertains to the matter at hand. So far you've told us a long-winded, self-aggrandizing fairytale of your own bravery and obedience", the Proconsul leaned forward in his seat and rapped his knuckles on the table, "but when are we going to hear the part where you killed the Consul, left his body for the depths of space, and thought you could return to us a hero?"

It was at that point that the Captain of the *Revenant* felt compelled to speak. Vodo didn't know her personally, only by reputation, and was unsure where she stood still in this matter, "Lord Proconsul, I think you should consider calming down. This is a legal proceeding and your comments threaten to throw your impartiality out of the airlock..."

Her tone was dry and sarcastic but it had the desired effect of putting the court martial back into order. The Proconsul sat up, looked at the other judges, and nodded graciously, "You're right. I lost myself in the moment. Commander Rhylance was a close friend and a colleague and his loss has affected me."

Vodo caught the woman, he thought her name was Rylla, exchanging a quiet glance with the captain of the *Karufir Dawn* whose name Vodo did not know. Her eyes seemed to be expressing a challenge, one that the man did not seem to want to pick up. He sensed a reluctance in the man that wasn't present in his counterpart. Vodo decided he could count Captain Rylla into his camp leaving Andreious and this other captain as his holdouts. He only needed one of them.

"Might I suggest a recess then?" Rian splayed his hands in a conciliatory manner, looking each of the other Judges in the eyes, "We've heard much and there's more to go. I for one could use an opportunity to stretch."

The Proconsul opened his mouth to shoot the proposal down but it was Vodo who spoke instead, "If it is okay with you, Master Aslar, I would prefer to continue my testimony. We are all busy picking up the pieces of our Fleet and Clan and I think our time and energies would be best spent tending to those matters."

Rian nodded his assent and looked to the Proconsul who worked his jaw side to side with narrow eyes, "So be it. We'll continue. Biask..."

Vodo wasted no time, turning on his heel, and sprinted down the passageway as quickly as he was able. He rounded the corner, deflecting a blaster bolt carelessly fired by a trooper with more adrenaline than brains. The five guards were crowded into the ship's primary turbolift, weapons leveled at the approach, surrounding the Consul who held a single pistol in his right hand. Relief was evident in the Force as Vodo came into sight and they made room for him as he approached at a run.

"I fear there may be more of them aboard the ship, My Consul," Vodo tapped the button for the command deck urgently, knowing that time was running short.

"Battlenet reports suggest decks 4-6 are in vacuum, boarding parties reported near engineering and the flight deck we just left," the Lieutenant reported promptly.

Rhylance nodded his understanding, "Then we continue to the Bridge. Lieutenant. You have done well so far but we are not done yet."

"Yes, my Lord," the man snapped a quick salute.

Rhylance's red eyes fell on Vodo again and for perhaps the two thousandth time the Sith was grateful this man wasn't force sensitive, that he couldn't sense the tumult of feelings racing through his chest at that moment, "Vodo, I am grateful."

Vodo was taken off balance for a moment, unsure if he'd actually heard the compliment, "I obey, my Lord."

Rhylance smiled wryly with a knowing smile, “When you wish me to think so.”

Vodo’s heart froze for a moment until he realized the Consul was speaking in general. Thankfully his face, permanently afflicted with a passive scowl, remained mask-like. He said nothing and instead offered the Consul a warm half-smile and nodded politely. The troopers of the Consul’s Fist rechecked their equipment and replaced half-spent power packs with fully charged ones. As the turbolift’s deck counter counted down to the command deck they arrayed themselves around the Consul protectively leaving Vodo standing before the doors. He understood without asking that they intended him to be their shield if anything untoward should be standing on the other side when they opened.

The lift stopped moving and with a chime the doors opened. Vodo’s lightsaber was held out before him, though he knew with some certainty that there was nothing to fear, for the benefit of the troopers and the man they guarded. The sound of battle alarms and the rush of feet filled the air. The command deck, upon which access to the Bridge was provided, was a hive of activity as officers and midshipman raced to and from their battle stations. The arrival of the black-clad troopers and the Consul brought only a momentary stillness to the buzz. Vodo exited the lift and stepped aside so that those behind him could exit as well.

“Lord Consul, I’ll remain here. I should like to meet anything stupid enough to emerge from those turbolifts,” Vodo called to the Chiss.

Rhylance didn’t break stride, his thoughts were now on getting back in contact with his forces, “Of course...”

The Sith watched impassively as the Consul strode down the wide passageway, sensor stations and engineering booths lining both sides, towards the large blast doors leading to the Bridge itself. The doors, three layers thick, slid open at the Commander’s approach and closed behind him and the rest of the Fist.

“That was the last I saw of the Consul,” Vodo held his hands clasped in front of him. “Seconds later the bow shields of the *Altur Storm* failed and a turbolaser breached the Bridge’s forward viewport. Anyone who wasn’t incinerated immediately was vented into space.”

The room was quiet. No one shuffled or adjusted themselves in the gallery and the judges remained sitting in place making no move speak. As the silence was stretched to its uncomfortable limits the Captain of the *Karufr Dawn*, cleared his throat, “Thank you for your testimony Master Taldrya. I have one question for you, if you wouldn’t mind taking a little more time to explain?”

Vodo leveled his gaze on the man and saw something of the weariness and drain in the man’s features leftover from the battle, “Certainly, Captain...?”

“Captain Dac Ordan. It was my son, Ensign Jori Ordan you rescued from the *Storm*. How did you come across him?” the Captain’s voice was carefully measured but Vodo could feel the man’s emotions and could tell he was fighting to remain professional.

“There’s really little tell, Captain,” Vodo opened his hands and held them palm up to the side of his hips. “I ordered the evacuation of the ship and found your son unconscious of a head wound. I extracted him to the escape pod and that was that.”

The Captain’s head nodded slightly but stopped when the Proconsul’s hand slammed down on the table, “I’m pleased your Son survived the ambush Captain Ordan but it’s immaterial to this Court Martial.”

The Proconsul stood and addressed the room rather than his fellow judges, “We’ve heard this man’s testimony, we’ve heard his version of the story, but now it’s time that I give you the facts.

Vodo Biask has been nothing but a seditionist, an itinerant officer of the Clan Summit coming and going as he pleased, and made no secret of his desire to see another Sith or Dark Jedi take the place of our Consul. Here, before you, stands an exemplar of the Sith kind: he’s conniving, he’s dangerous, and he lies as easily as he breaths.”

It was Andrelious’s quiet voice that interrupted the Proconsul, “You’re proposing that Vodo colluded with the Technocratic Union to arrange the ambush on the Taldryan fleet? You’re proposing that he carefully timed the Consul’s visit to the *Altur’s Storm* to coincide with that ambush and placed the Consul in the exact location a freak accident of war would occur? Vodo Biask is capable of many things, I’m not a fan of his, but you’re ascribing god-like powers to an obsequious worm. I vote not-guilty.”

The Proconsul face was a mask of fury punctuated by a throbbing vein against his temple. Before he could dress the Rollmaster down Captain Rylla spoke up, “I see no reason to doubt the Warlord’s story. I too vote Not Guilty.”

Vodo watched the Proconsul round on the woman seated beside him but again he was preempted by the voice of another. Rian’s calm tone carried through the room like the soft chime of a bell, sweet in Vodo’s ears, “I vote Not-Guilty.”

There it was: Vodo had his three votes. Captain Ordan, cognizant that his vote was unnecessary chose to still voice his opinion, “Not-Guilty.”

The Proconsul collapsed into his seat and glared sullenly at the table, “Vodo Biask Taldrya, you are free to leave.”

Vodo paced the passages of the Clan’s flagship and awaited the visit of Rian he knew would come. Sure enough the other Taldrya found him and clasped hands. Rian wore a warm smile, “Out of one fire and into another, eh?”

Vodo's face, even among friends remained a curious mixture of a sneering scowl, "I played games of intrigue and court while on the Dark Council. Men like him were the kindling we tossed on the fire in the morning."

"Nevertheless, we're happy that a rescue won't be required," Rian grasped Vodo's forearm in a familiar, and oddly ritualized manner before he leaned in close and spoke lowly so only they could be heard, even though the corridor was largely deserted, "The plan went off flawlessly then?"

Vodo only nodded. The Old Guard had succeeded in removing the Consul.

Vodo's heart beat rapidly in his chest, under his armor, as the anticipation began to build within him. Adrenaline began to fill his veins and his senses sharpened with the thrill of the wait. He knew what was coming, he knew what was going to happen. The plan was complete and Vodo had executed it flawlessly. The Frigate shuddered violently under a concerted barrage. Moments later the Command Deck rattled as something violent exploded on the other side of the blast doors leading to the bridge. The doors, massive things of reinforced durasteel plate, bowed inward.

Crewmembers picked themselves up from the deck where they'd fallen off their seats on from their feet. Those of weaker constitutions began to wail in terror as the reality slammed home. The Bridge was gone. The Captain of the Ship, the Department Heads, and the Consul had all been on the other side of those doors. Vodo calmly stepped up to the nearest console and activated a ship-wide announcement.

"This is Vodo Biask Taldrya. The Ship has suffered critical damage and the command staff has been killed. I'm ordering a full evacuation. Abandon ship. I repeat: abandon ship."

Crew began moving swiftly, but orderly, to the nearest access hatches leading to the escape pods. On the Command Deck Vodo knew there were two lifeboats capable of holding 12 passengers a piece and up to 20 smaller pods for four. Vodo made his way calmly to one of these smaller ones, taking pleasure in his victory. The plan had gone off flawlessly and Rian's foretelling had been essentially perfect. Vodo pushed his way through the crew before him, all whom waited with a trained, but barely contained, patience for their turn to board an escape pod. Few thought to protest when they saw the tall Taldrya moving.

Vodo made for one of the hatches when an Ensign stuck out an arm barring his way, "I'm sorry, Lord. This Pod has been assigned. You'll need to take one of the lifeboats."

The boy, only about twenty or so years old, crumpled to the ground from the blow to his head. Vodo's arm had moved quickly and the blunt end of his lightsaber hilt had cracked against his skull. He moved into the hatch and seated himself in the pod, listening for signs that someone

had seen his assault on the officer. There were no noises but the Pod's airlock refused to seal sensing the boy's ankle in the way. With no small amount of frustrated disbelief Vodo summoned the Ensign's body into the escape with the Force, laying him out not all that gently inside. The lock cleared, the pod sealed itself and launched.

12 Hours later, in the clean up after the ambush, the Pod was rescued and brought aboard the Corvette Reprisal. The Ensign was taken to the medbay for treatment of his wounds sustained in their harrowing escape from the doomed *Altur Storm*. Vodo himself was taken, under guard, to a shuttle and flown to the Flagship where a court martial greeted him.