

Introspection

Khryso Mallus studied the datapad with casual curiosity. The new reports coming in from the Inquisitorius about this new contact, the Severian Principate, had caught his attention. "What are you reading?" a voice asked him from over his shoulder, a bit deep but still quite feminine and lilting. Khryso turned his head slightly to regard the Devaronian teen standing behind him and looking over his shoulder at the datapad.

"Just an Inquisitorius report," Khryso responded, tilting the screen slightly to obscure its contents from her vision, "probably above your clearance level." It wasn't an entirely secret report, as Khryso had no qualms sitting out in the open Shadow Academy library as he read it, but Nefilee, the Devaronian girl he was here with, was still only a Novice and not a member of the Inquisitorius like he was.

Nefilee sighed and made her way over to the opposite side of the table, sitting across from Khryso. "You know telling me I can't see it just makes me want to see it more," she said, leaning back in the chair and folding her hands behind her head.

"Unfortunately," Khryso said, reaching up and tapping the button on the edge of the datapad to close the screen. "I suppose I could indulge your curiosity." He placed the datapad on the table between them, but when Nefilee reached for it, Khryso placed a hand on it protectively. "I can tell you some things, but that's it."

Nefilee withdrew her hand and smiled. "Excellent, let's hear it." Clearly she had expected something a bit more excited than a list of random facts about some foreign entity, because after only about twenty seconds of Khryso explaining the Severian Principate and what they were about, she raised her hand, signalling him to stop. "Are we about to go to war with these people?"

Khryso shook his head. "At least, it doesn't seem like it."

"Then what's the big secret?" Nefilee said, frowning slightly.

"Big secret? There isn't one, really. I'm just not entirely clear on whether or not you would have had permission to view the report." Khryso glanced at the datapad that was still under his hand. "That's not to say there isn't valuable information in there, but for the time being, it's just intelligence."

Nefilee shook her head, resting her elbows on the table and her chin in her hands. "Then why even bother reading it now? You've never read any other Inquisitorius reports around me..."

Khryso offered her a slight smile. "I just found the information interesting. It's an Imperial splinter group that rose to power after the fall of the Empire."

“Weren’t there lots of those?”

“There were,” Khryso admitted, “but this one is different. Most of those splinter groups ended up dying out or infighting to the point where they collapsed. The few that have managed to survive long-term became entities like the First Order. The Principate, however, seem to be doing things differently. If these intelligence reports are correct, they are taking some serious divergences from the usual Imperial doctrine.”

“You’re going to put me to sleep,” Nefilee said, “this is even worse than when you’re trying to actually tutor me.”

Khryso shrugged. “You’re the one who wanted to know. Not to mention, this information could be valuable down the line. I’m sure the Brotherhood isn’t gathering all of this intelligence on the Principate for fun. If we’re not going to war with them, the Council may be looking to make them our allies.”

Nefilee yawned. It was obviously not a natural yawn, it was something she had forced to try and make some kind of point. “Fine,” Khryso said, picking the datapad up and turning the screen back on. “Five more minutes before we go back to reviewing your essay on the Krath. I suggest you get a caf or something if you’re tired.”

As Nefilee left the table, the Chiss resumed his perusal of the report. The truth was, he was having trouble forming a proper take on the matter. They were an Imperial splinter group, which was enough to make him cautious. Imperials had a tendency to be self-destructive in their methods and fall short of their true potential. Then again, the Principate was clearly trying to separate themselves from their brethren. They did things differently.

Of course, they had valuable resources of many kinds, so whether it was through war or peace, the Brotherhood could always use that. Even if the Brotherhood absorbed or became friendly with the Principate, though, Clan Plagueis didn’t seem to have much in common with the organization. Khryso could very easily see the two groups taking issue with each other. Thankfully, none of that was his problem. At least, not until he had to start killing more former Imperials.

Switching off his datapad, Khryso paused to gather his thoughts. Time to get back on task. He turned to the chair next to him where Ufie, his pit droid, had been seated quietly the entire time. “Go find me a collected treatise on the Krath.” With a tweedle, Ufie was on his feet and moving through the library. Putting his datapad away for now, Khryso stowed away the lingering thoughts on the Principate for later.