Oligard Estate
Cor'neria System
37 ABY

"Lord Superior, please slow down! Please, just listen to me!" Kiffars rarely raised their voices to those in higher authority to them, but [Rado Theon](#) needed to get his patient's attention.

"Doc, I told you I was fine." Rath continued to storm down the hallway of his estate back towards the study, where his council was waiting. His loud steps drowned out the cohort of staff following him, trying to get his attention for one matter or another. His day was filled with various meetings, discussions, and a regularly scheduled physical, one that he was trying his very best to avoid.

The Kiffar continued after his patient. Doctor Theon had been Rath Oligard's personal physician for over twenty years, dating back to the Lord Superior's time spent fighting for the Iron Throne. Rath and Radio, as he was collectively known, had grown close after the loss of Elizabeth and Oligard's three daughters. Radio remembered being there for the birth of Isabella, one of his proudest moments as a physician. He cared for the couple's daughters' corpses after their deaths on XL374 and even spoke at the remembrance ceremony to honor the Oligard family. Ever since the rise of the Collective and subsequent attacks on Dark Brotherhood forces, Doctor Theon had become increasingly worrisome over the health of his friend.

"Rath, we need to do this today." The Kiffar had finally caught up to Rath, as his guardsmen began to open the door to the Grand Study.

"We will, Doc. After this meeting, I promise!" Rath turned around and looked at the taller Kiffar. "But I told you," he began to turn around and head into the meeting, "I'm fine."

Without hesitation, Radio continued to follow the leader of the Liberation Front into his impressive study. *I won't take no for an answer again!* he had told himself at the beginning of the day. Theon had taken a few steps into the Lord Superior's grand study and was nearly taken aback by the wall to wall shelves, filled with countless holovids, datapads, and anything else that would tell the story of the past. There was so much knowledge packed into one room, Theon couldn't help but feel excited to take a look around after the physical. *Ohh, I'm sure this meeting will take a while, I'll take a look around now while I wait.*

Meetings between the Three Pillars of the Collective typically ran in excess of two hours, and today was no different. Radio had been listening intently for the signs that the meeting was wrapping up, but wasn't actually paying any attention to the subject being discussed. He was too busy with his face buried in a holobook titled *The Battlefield Medicine of The Hundred-Year*

Darkness. Theon quickly replaced the holobook back on the shelf and rushed towards the exit, in order to meet his patient; he was determined to complete this physical today.

"Doctor, please, follow me to my chambers, we can begin once there." Rath continued down the corridor, intently reading a secured datapad filled with notes about the previous meeting. "We have some things to discuss regarding our progress against Grand Master Cantor and the Iron Forces."

Oftentimes, Radio was a breath of fresh air to the Lord Superior. Rath has always treated everyone in the Collective as equals, but was almost never offered that same treatment. The former Guild Master of the Technocratic Guild and countless other allies often held Rath up on a pedestal, and would tell him exactly what he wanted to hear. The gave him the title of Lord Superior when all he ever wanted was to see a swift end to the destruction caused by Force users. Radio treated Rath like a normal man. While he did refer to his patient by formal titles in public, their friendship was clearly evident behind closed doors. Radio often would try to lighten the mood with a poor joke, and Rath would laugh up a storm, if not to make his friend feel better.

The pair approached the door to Rath's personal chambers, another vast room filled with various datapads and holobooks, though not to the extent of the grand study. The Collective leader stepped behind a desk and pulled out a bottle filled with liquid that nearly matched the color of his hair and offered his friend a glass, to which he politely declined. "So, what do you have for me today, Doc?"

"What do you call a fish with no eyes?" asked the Kiffar anxiously awaiting a response, only to receive a blind smile from his patient. "A fsshh!".

Rath couldn't help but let out a small chuckle as he brought his glass to his lips. "Not your best one, Radio." He moved to the front of the desk and allowed for his friend to begin to examine him, first by extending his right arm, sleeve removed. "I take it you want to check blood pressure first?"

"Well, I usually start with the known problem areas. Hypertension is no laughing matter, Rath." The doctor continued on with his physical exam, often interjecting with a one-liner or a quick story. The jocular nature of the relationship made things progress much smoother than his normal patients. Radio typically didn't ask the head of the Liberation Front too much about the strategy or plans for war against the Brotherhood, but he wasn't ignorant of the rumors that floated about. "Rath, care to touch on the rumors that we are going to continue the war against the Dark Brotherhood? Something about a Severian Principate?"

Rath quickly began to explain the inner workings of the relationship that was being established with the Triumvirate and the Collective council. He elaborated on the plan to use stolen Iron

Navy signal codes to attack Principate forces in the Lyra-3k-a System. All of it seemed to strike a chord with the Doctor. "What's wrong, Doc? Don't approve?"

The Kiffar couldn't bite his tongue any longer. "I just thought it would all be over by now. I don't have to tell you about -" the doctor grabbed for the forearm of Oligard and proceeded to tie a band around the arm in preparation to draw blood samples "-loss, but the destruction is starting to take a toll on some of our medics and other staff." The Kiffar slowly inserted the hyposyringe into the vein of his patient, careful not to fully puncture the delicate strand. "As a physician, I'm just tired of watching my patients die. What would Elizabeth think of all of this?" He looked up into the face of his friend, who was taken aback by his words.

"Elizabeth is dead, surely you remember that." Rath retorted, rather suddenly.

"And because of you, so is someone else's Elizabeth. And hundreds more. When was death ever the answer?" The Kiffar slowly pulled the syringe from Oligard's arm and smiled. "I'll get this to the lab to run some tests. I'm sure it'll come back 'just fine' as you say."

"So what, you think we shouldn't ally ourselves with the Principate in order to win?" Rath seemed a little irritated, he wasn't used to getting so much pushback.

"I just want peace, Rath." the Kiffar sighed.

"Thanks, Doc." snipped Oligard as he quickly began to roll down his sleeves and stormed towards the door, before turning back to his friend. "And for what it's worth, I'll heed your words to the council. Maybe we can put an end to all of this and bring about peace in another way."

Skylla
Hangar Bay 48
Three Days Later

Doctor Theon typically tried his best to stay out of any situation that could result in his death. He avoided the *Skylla* like a child avoids chores. Though it was well protected, it was always a target and that scared Radio to the core. Under the circumstances, Radio thought his presence aboard the Collective's flagship was necessary. He stepped off of the ramp of his landing craft onto the cold steel beneath. His face was glued to his holopad, reviewing the data in front of him. A lowly Lieutenant quickly approached the Colonel with a salute, to which the Kiffar promptly ignored. "Need to find the Lord Superior immediately!" he managed to utter as the Lieutenant quickly scurried towards the repulsor lift.

"This way, Colonel Theon." The Lieutenant, a hefty sized Togruta with bright red skin, pulled out his identification cylinder and slid into the slot that allowed the lift direct access to the bridge. "I don't believe you've been on the *Skylla* before, Colonel. You'll see that this ship is the greatest-"

"I'm sorry, Lieutenant-"
"-Kentana" the Togruta interjected.

"I'm sorry, Lieutenant Kentana, I can't talk right now." The Kiffar's hands noticeably started to shake as the lift sped up closer to the bridge.

Theon and the Lieutenant finally reached their destination as the former began to walk quickly towards the guarded doors in front of the pair. "Doctor Theon for Rath Oligard," he said firmly looking straight towards the door. His chest was getting much tighter with each step closer to his friend. The guardsmen, both Liberation Front Zealots, quickly looked at the screen on the door to confirm the doctor's identity and proceeded to open it.

Theon was briefly shocked at how empty it was, save for a few officers assigned to their posts and a small gathering of sentients around his red-bearded friend. He had always imagined the command bridge of a command ship to be a chaotic scene. The Kiffar continued on towards Rath and those surrounding him, only to catch the eye of his patient. Rath motioned to those around him to stop the conversation as he waved Theon over.

"Doctor, interesting to see you onboard the *Skylla*, needed some supplies?" said Oligard.

"Not today, Rath, something more important."

"Ahh, well I was just speaking with some representatives of the Severian Principate here and advised them that we would be staying out of their way while they decide what is best for them in regards to the Dark Brotherhood. I spoke that you and your medics were tired of the bloodshed."

The Kiffar looked around at the Principate delegates and shook his head from side to side. "Actually, Lord Superior, I've come with proof that we could end this war quickly and decisively. It largely hinges on the support of the Severian Principate on our side, instead of the Dark Brotherhood," he spoke strongly, much to the surprise of his friend. He opened his jacket pocket and pulled out two separate holopads and handed them to the two visitors, "Please, take a look."

Confused, Oligard motioned for Theon to step to the side to discuss. "Doc, you're out of your element here," he said softly. "We don't need to continue this war any longer than it needs to be."

The Kiffar took a deep breath, "Rath," his voice sounding shaky, "you need to do this. You need to end this war quickly and having them by our side will all but end the Dark Brotherhood. This is the quickest way." His hand reached back into his jacket pocket for another holopad.

"But Doc, I can't justify the casualties. The thousands of Principate followers who just want peace will be at risk of attack from Grand Master Cantor. You said it yourself, too many Elizabeths have died already."

Doctor Theon hesitated, "Rath if you don't do this quickly, it will never get done. I ran the tests myself, Rath, I ran them myself." The Kiffar's eyes began to water slightly. "Your blood cells are rapidly growing and changing, there are white cells where there should be red, and they are multiplying at rates that I've never seen," he looked into his patient's eyes, "Rath, you have blood cancer, and it's killing you rapidly. Months, maybe."

Oligard stood motionless for a few seconds. For Radio, it felt like hours. The ginger-haired Human offered no response to Theon as he turned back towards the two delegates from the Severian Principate.

"My Doctor tells me the information you have will change the tides of the war. With your help, we can end this suffering that has been brought upon the Galaxy. Too long have the Jedi and the Sith pulled us all in to fight their battles. Too long have they killed us for merely trying to make a living. Please, take this data and urge the Triumvirate to ally themselves with the Collective and put a stop to this. Together, we can put an end to this threat of Force Users handing down their will upon us. Together, we can set free those who remain enslaved by the Force," Oligard turned back towards his Doctor, "until every cage is broken."