

39 ABY
Sith Citadel Ruins
Exegol

Khryso Mallus, Aedile of House Tyranus and Battlemaster of Clan Plagueis, carefully traversed the massive chunks of stone and debris covering the underground cavern. According to what the Sith had read, this was the place where Darth Sidious, the last of Darth Bane's line and the apprentice of Darth Plagueis had made his final stand. He was not the first interested party to come here and he doubted he would be the last, but like all who had come before him, he hoped to make a unique discovery.

Surely the entire planet, a planet once ruled by the Sith, was rich with Sith artifacts and texts. This place, however, seemed to have one of the highest concentrations of dark power. The place where the spirits of the Sith gathered to battle the spirits of the Jedi and lost. After the Crusade on Myrkr ended with Plagueis' defeat, Khryso had needed a bit of a vacation, and he figured this was as good a place as any. A place that might allow him to redeem his failures on Myrkr and recover an artifact of worth to the Clan.

As of yet, however, his efforts had proved fruitless. After scanning from the *Solidago* had yielded no results, he had gone to the surface personally. All that had given him was a slight sweat and regret. Perhaps a vacation would have been better spent relaxing on a resort or bumping elbows with wealthy elites. Whatever valuables had been here seemed to have been long ago confiscated by the Republic or other scavengers.

It was just when he was preparing to turn back and retreat that he felt something pull on the corner of his psyche. Khryso had, for the most part, been leaving his senses open to the Force, welcoming any such sign as a dowsing rod. When the signal he'd been hoping for finally came, the Chiss jumped at the chance, moving towards the end of the rope, allowing the Force to carry him around and over obstacles like rushing water.

He soon came to realize, however, that this rope had no end. It was not something that was rooted in a physical location on the planet. Rather, it was in the Force, and he would have to turn his attention inward if he wanted to locate the source. Pausing, the Chiss took a moment to catch his breath before closing his eyes and pulling his senses in, eliminating the sound of the wind and the smell of lightning from his perception.

As he pulled himself deeper into the Force, Khryso felt the signal strengthening, a flare sinking into the ocean that he eagerly swam for. Soon, that flare coalesced into a being, a soul adrift in the netherrealm of death. Khryso did not recognize the individual on sight, but within the Force, sight mattered little. The presence and gravity of the figure before him was something he recognized as a wind at his back, a motivating speech, the will of the Dread Lord. Before him, Darth Plagueis had appeared from what little of his presence remained on Exegol after Sidious' destruction.

Immediately, Khryso dropped to a knee out of respect. The gesture was useless, as Plagueis only existed within the Force now, but it happened before the Chiss could properly take in what it was he was experiencing.

“What is it that you seek?” Plagueis asked, his voice little more than a whisper of a thought. Before Khryso could fully grasp it, its tenor and rhythm faded from his mind.

“Validation. Influence. Luxury.” The words didn’t leave Khryso’s mouth, but flowed out of his mind as if being extracted against his will.

“Is this the true legacy I leave behind? A weakened clan in thrall to more ambitious actors?”

The words stung Khryso. He felt inadequate, as if he wasn’t living up to the legacy of Plagueis. The architect of the fall of the Republic and the master of abilities that could control life and death stood before him now. All Khryso had was his vanity and pride. Then again, for all Plagueis’ power, which of them was alive now? “You failed,” Khryso said, his resolve strengthening. “Your plan didn’t last and your apprentice destroyed himself and you.”

Plagueis’ focus flared as Khryso felt the figure looming over him like a growing shadow. “Then why do you follow my name? Why do you place yourselves on that same road?”

Khryso paused. Plagueis had been a powerful and intelligent Sith, one he had always admired. Yet here, confronted with the long dead Sith’s last remaining embers of existence, he couldn’t help but feel as though that admiration had been misplaced.

“Plagueis is more than just you, Darth. It has its own legacy to build. While that legacy may be built upon your ashes, it will become entirely its own.”

“The Sith will never die,” Plagueis responded.

“They will adapt,” Khryso said, “they will ascend, and they will avail.”

With that, Plagueis faded from his mind. Khryso slowly drew himself out of his meditation, the dark misery of Exegol welcoming him back. After a moment, the Sith pulled out his comlink. “M7, bring the *Solidago* to my location.”

Khryso may not have located an artifact on Exegol, but what he had found had sharpened his focus and determination. Which meant he could spend the rest of his vacation somewhere much more pleasant.