

Entry 637:

*Today is the greatest day of my life! My beautiful wife has brought a son into the universe. He without a doubt the most beautiful thing I have ever seen. He spared no time opening his eyes and what beautiful eyes they are! I cannot wait to teach him to play catch and how to solder wires and how to fly. I am no longer the last in the line of the House of Kast. I will celebrate this day until the end of my life. My heart is so full of love, I fear it may go supernova!*

Entry 973:

*We've reached a major breakthrough. The trouble of supplying reactive current to the synchronized phase detractors has been solved. By running a series of high frequency short duration capacitive burst functions on the quaternary G-delta magneto reluctance stators, we were able to pre-emulate a logarithmic return from the output transmission meters. The results reduced waneshift by a factorial efficiency measure of upwards of 98%. There is conjecture among my colleagues regarding the effect this may have on sinusoidal repleneration, but now that we have reached such a high-level development of the repulsor plates and field bearings I am certain that any score-motion seen on the lambda and gamma phase girdles will be well within the allotted tolerances for operation. We will soon have an additional test of the relative unilateral flux in positrons of the hydrocoptic vanes. Moff Jerjerrod will be present to oversee the test. I am confident that this time we will have no issues with non-reversible springs in repulsor field generation.*

Entry 989:

*Final testing was a major success. The station will be at full operational capacity within days. This is welcomed news. I overheard several Fleet officers discussing rumors of a rebel fleet gathering near Sullust. There is some growing concern that the Rebels will attempt to engage the station. Though I have no doubt that any assault on this station would be a fool's errand, I have asked that I be allowed to return to Bakura to begin work on the next phase of Project Whirlwind. All of my requests have been denied. I am broken hearted, as it is Derc's birthday next week. I miss my boy so much. I wish I could just be with him now.*

*Alas, Moff Jerjerrod has more than doubled the work load we must undertake. Although the hours are grueling, his reasoning is sound. The Emperor himself if coming to the station. What an honor! I have been reassigned to assist with the calibration of crystal harmonics for the station's main armament. Though my technical expertise in this field is limited, the core concepts of the physics behind it are not dissimilar from repulsor field generation and we have already made much progress.*

**Kast-Coral Penthouse**

**Tokare City, Seraph**

**Caperion System**

"My father was a genius. I cannot understand half of what he is writing here. Look at this...Sinusoidal repleneration? What does that even mean?" Thran said, tilting the glowing datapad to show the text.

"I don't know. But I can tell that he certainly was brilliant." Emily said, lovingly stroking the short hair on the back of his head.

“Em, do you think I’d be different if the Rebels hadn’t killed him? What if Death Squadron had stopped them?” he said, looking down at holophoto present in his Imperial record.

“What do you mean, my love?” his wife asked, tilting her head quizzically.

“I mean, if the Empire had won at Endor or if he had been able to come home to Bakura, would I have been different? Do you think he would have taught me about how to replenerate my sinuses or whatever? Would I have been smart like him?” Thran asked.

“You *are* smart, Thran.” She said.

“No, I mean smart like him. Like, actual smart. Do you think he’d be proud of even though I don’t know how to test unilateral flux of hydro-whatevers?” Thran asked, frustrated

“Oh, yes. He would be so proud of you. Your mother even said so. Look at everything you’ve accomplished. You’re a paragon of the Imperial ideal. You’ve put the House of Kast in the hearts and minds of trillions across the galaxy. You’ve ruled Empires and you’ve mastered the Force. My love, if you had done half of what you’ve done, your father would still be the proudest man in the galaxy.” She said, resting her head on his shoulder.

There was a light clack as he dropped the datapad on the low stone table in front of him. His father’s work was being put into practice in the research and development wing of Sal-Mal Repulsor and the profit from the implementation of his work paid for their lavish accommodations. However, glimpses of his past had been showing up with increasing frequency. It set him on edge and his fingers gripped the loose cloth of his lounge pants.

<b><u>SEALED FILE</u></b>
<b>Bakura Planetary Bureau of Justice</b>
<b>Department of Criminal Investigation</b>
<b>Parliament Building 2, Salis D’aar, Precinct 6.</b>
<b>Special Report: Statute G-1332 Bakuran Code B.P.P. 18.22.4423</b>
<b>Case No. VT-3320-K,D -3462/4/4/5</b>
<b>Date: Day 25, Month 7, Year 157(local)</b>
<b>Reporting officer: Head Constable [REDACTED]</b>
<b>(S) Criminal Incident(s): Homicide (23 Counts), Cannibalism (12 counts), Desecration of a Corpse (21 counts) Kidnapping (15 Counts), Attempted Homicide (1 Count), Endangerment of a Child (1 Count)</b>
<b>(S) Narrative: On 13/4/157 DOCI investigators were made aware of a series of disturbing events occurring in [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. The local law enforcement agency had reports of 8 missing persons reports filed in the last 6 months SEE CASE ADDENDUM 1-8. These cases were under investigation and DOCI concludes those cases may be included in the closing of this case file. Local law enforcement, unable to contain media breeches in relation to this particular event, requested the intervention of DOCI agents. On 13/4/155, victim [REDACTED], aged 6, was found by residents of the mountain town. Victim was emaciated, dehydrated, covered in mud, dried blood and particulate human remains. Victim clutched a local venomous colubrid, identified as a Scarlet Banded Slipviper, in his left hand. When prompted the child would not release the snake. No attempt was made to separate the child from the snake. Initial reports suggested animal attack. Victim had minor injuries catalogued by officers on site, inconsistent</b>

with animal attack. Injuries consisted of minor scrapes, contusions about the wrists and ankles consistent with being bound by ligatures. Victim was struck with selective mutism, likely a result of the trauma experienced.

Report was reviewed by DOCI investigators upon arrival. DOCI notes the thoroughness and skill with which evidence was catalogued and recorded. Commendations to the [REDACTED] Office for adherence to protocol noted. Word of the incident spread among members of the town, originating from witnesses. No breach of protocol was detected from within the [REDACTED] Office. In small communities, rumor spreads quickly and local law enforcement was soon inundated with a panicked public and could no longer resolve the case within their jurisdiction.

Interviews with witnesses can be found in this report: SEE Exhibit 1. Little evidence from these initial interviews proved to be substantial. Investigators ascertained that the victim had emerged in that state from the southern mountain wilds in the state he was found. The victim would not furnish his name or family information. Parties involved with the "rescue" of the victim, immediately sought local law enforcement. Interviews and investigations of the homes in the area cleared local residence of any wrong-doing. Victim was placed in medical and psychological custody, until next of kin could be identified.

DOCI investigators utilized orbital scans of the mountain range in the direction the victim had appeared from. Orbital scans revealed an encampment [REDACTED] into the forest, SEE Exhibit 2. Dense vegetation and rocky terrain made repulscraft transit impossible. DOCI agents and local law enforcement joined in cooperative effort to reach the location. Transit to the area took agents [REDACTED]

Upon arrival, investigators found the camp devoid of life. Makeshift cabins and tents had been erected around a centralized firepit, equipped with a large cooking spit. SEE Exhibit 3. Upon investigation of the camp, investigators located 23 bodies. 12 bodies had been mutilated in a fashion similar to the butchering of livestock. SEE Exhibit 4. 2 bodies were found hung by the ankles, bound with crude ligature. Victims had lacerations across the throat, cutting both jugular vein and carotid artery. Victims were nude. Cause of death: Exsanguination. SEE Exhibit 5. 9 bodies were found clothed, distinctly identified as the perpetrators. Bodies suffered various fractures caused by trauma to the head. Trauma appeared to be post-mortem. Autopsy reports later revealed a wound shared by each of the 9, quadruple puncture wounds. Each wound was central to a substantial portion of necrotic flesh, consistent with posthumous envenomation from a colubrid snake. Autopsy also revealed these 9 bodies had ingested human flesh. SEE Exhibit 6, Exhibit 7.

The largest central shack had been ripped from its foundation by an apparent explosion from within the building. Walls had been cast outwards from the foundation and the presence of electrical burning was noted on the fragments of the walls. SEE Exhibit 8. Analysis of the damage corroborates explosive force applied to the building. At the origin of the explosion, compressed soil created a small crater less than 1 meter in diameter. Chemical analysis for explosive residue on site revealed no data. SEE Exhibit 9.

Further investigation of the area revealed a disabled escape pod from a vessel of unknown make. Flight records were recovered from the pod. SEE EXHIBIT 10

The site was secured and evidence collected. Evidence was transported back to Salis D'ar to undergo intensive investigation at DOCI laboratories. Recreation of the scene occurred in the lab in an attempt to complete the investigation. Investigators were unable to determine the cause and origin of the explosion. Approximate detonation location was hypothesized, but physical recreation was not possible. Investigators were able to determine through biological analysis and analysis of the escape pod flight records that the alleged perpetrators had crashed in the local area some 5 years prior after having been rescued themselves from a failed colonization on a world known as [REDACTED]

grid coordinates unknown, but surmised to be in the Wild Space Territories. SEE Exhibit 11
In medical custody, the victim began speaking to caretakers. Family was identified and victim's mother ██████████ attended for custody of the victim. Investigators noted victim's reticence to rejoin family and emotional distance from his mother. Before custody was relinquished to next of kin, investigators conducted a series of interview with the victim. SEE Exhibit 12.
Information attained from interviews determined that victim had been playing in a local stream when he saw something move in the bushes, upon investigation the child was incapacitated by the alleged perpetrators. Victim awoke bound in an unfamiliar location, later to determined to be the alleged perpetrators' camp. Victim confirmed he had been bound about the hands and feet with jute rope. Victim recounted the atrocities that he had seen at the camp. Victim confirmed cannibalism and mutilation of corpses. Victim's testimony described in detail his escape. Sections of the interview report have been redacted, due to the traumatized mental faculties of the child. Investigators have deemed the redacted material irrelevant to the case notes. Investigators deem this information to be supernatural in scope or wholly fabricated by the imagination of a severely traumatized child and thus cannot be included in an evidence-based report. Victim referenced ██████████. Victim admits ██████████, ██████████. Victim described a torrent of emotions. Victim stated he was paralyzed by fear. Victim describes in detail and emotional shift from ██████████. Psychological analysis confirms this is an expression of the hyperarousal acute stress response and is typical of parties that experience a traumatic event. Any further analysis of the victim's testimony should be view through the psychological analysis and should not be taken as entirely factual. SEE Exhibit 13.
In conclusion, faced with no perpetrators wholly identified or alive to face trial, DOCI Investigators recommend this case be closed. All Matter regarding 14 counts of homicide, 12 counts of cannibalism, 12 counts of Desecration of a Corpse, 15 Counts of Kidnapping, 1 count of Attempted Murder, and 1 count of Endangering a Child are hereby closed. It is the opinion of the investigation team that what occurred in ██████████, was nothing short of monstrous. Investigators have not been able to ascertain a reasonable hypothesis of the events that lead to the victims escape from this ghastly situation. Any charges that may be brought upon the victim would be inadmissible under Bakura Statute A.t. 324-1, under grounds to self-defense. The remaining 9 Counts of homicide and 9 counts of Desecration of a Corpse are hereby dismissed.
Personal Notes:
In all my years of working for this agency, I have never come across a case as puzzling and as chilling as this one. Beyond the nature of the crimes committed, the testimony of the victim frightens me. I imagine my son or daughter in this position and fear they would not have survived the camp, much less the treacherous journey back to civilization. I am left with a deep concern for the ongoing mental health of the victim. I have no idea how he made it out of there and in truth, I believe everything he said in the interviews. Being in the presence of such evil has left a permanent mark on him. But, I will not share any further personal beliefs on the matter. Perhaps what puzzles me most is how the Slipviper never bit him, as he held it so tightly.
CASE STATUS: CLOSED – SEALED – AUTHORIZATION LEVEL 6-A.
Signed: Head Constable ██████████

Kast-Coral Penthouse

Tokare City, Seraph

## Caperion System

### Two Weeks Later

"Put that away. You're meddling in things you shouldn't be." He said.

"I...I didn't know...I found it in your old things." Emily said, her blue eyes full of tears.

"It was away for a reason." Thran replied, short in his tone.

She stood up, seeking to embrace him. She wanted to hold him as close as she could. His tattoo, the blood red snake around his neck, wasn't just something he liked the look of it had an impossibly deep meaning for him. Behind the dazzle of his green eyes, she could see the vestiges of a lingering wound that could never heal. It stabbed her soul. Her arms reached for her beloved, but before she could capture him, her reach was shunted away.

"Put it away." Occasus said, pulling from same the darkness of emotion mentioned in the report to enforce the command.

She instantly complied. She put the datapad back into footlocker and covered it with the other contents.

"I'm sorry. I didn't know. You've never spoken about it." She said, begging him to open up.

"And I won't." he stated. "Do not bring it up ever again, forget you've seen it." He followed.

"You must have been so afraid..." she said, disregarding the warning he'd issued with his tone.

"You have three questions. I will answer those and no more. Think wisely and ask, if you must." The Sith said, giving quarter on the topic only because it was she who inquired.

Emily was flustered, she wanted to know so much about what she'd read. She spat the first thing that came to her mind "Is that where you learned of the Force?"

"No. It is where the Force learned of me. Next Question." He replied.

"Is it all true?" she said, swallowing hard and regretting the question. She knew it was. His mastery of the Dark Side could only have been born out of such horror.

"I did not start my career of lying until they stopped believing me. I tried to tell them...but they could not or would not believe it. They expected to see scared little boy, but I took dominion over fear. Fear showed me the path. Fear gave me the strength to break the rope. I had the power to see the totality of the Force. The Force set me free. Next question." He said, snarling.

"The snake..." she couldn't finish her last question before he cut in.

"I kept him for four years. He was my best friend... my only friend. We went everywhere together, I kept him in my pocket. I fed him namana skins and huskmice I caught. I loved him very much." He paused, he squeezed his eyes close for a flash of a moment. "I hid him from my mother. Gem found him one day, she told mother. They killed him. I still hate them for it. Yes, he is my tattoo. My agent said I needed something that would make me stick out. He was the only thing that stuck out in my mind. He was called Thran. Yes, I took his name."

The sincerity of sadness in his tone brought her stifled tears free from her sky-blue eyes. When he spoke with affection for someone, it would often carry a histrionic elevation of his feeling for that person. There was no flash in his words. The dejection in his eyes and plainness of tone when he spoke about the little venomous reptile broke her heart. He'd never spoken about anyone like that before. They had been married for nearly eight years, but it was as if she was just now truly seeing him for the first time. She'd lusted after his beauty since she was young, she stood at his side in awe of him for years, but only now she could really understand the depth of evil that could drive such an angelic figure to seek the shadows and darkness found among the Sith.

His name had not been in the Case Addendums for missing persons reports. He was alone and no one was looking for him. Self-Preservation, the base instinct of all living creatures, was all he had left. Fear consumed him and he became fear. In that black abyss, his young mind was filled by quiet whispers from the breath of the universe itself. The reality of the battle of good and evil hit her hard. It was not light that met the challenge of darkness in that mountain camp, but a deeper and far older darkness. Derc Kast died on that mountainside and the boy that came down bloody and broken was someone different. So was born Thran Occasus, yet to assume the moniker, but already compelled to prove that the galaxy he could not and would not be forgotten again. He was given no other choice.

<i>Ertagette Academy</i>
<i>Disciplinary and Academic Record</i>
<i>Student Name: Derc Alphons Kast</i>
<b>Grade 3 Academic Report:</b>
Card: 1.9 GPA
Instructor Notes: Derc is a very quiet boy. He is frequently distracted during lessons. He scores exemplary marks on examinations, but fails to complete his course work during the required time period. His academic marks would be considerably higher if his course work was completed in a timely fashion. I have no doubt that he is a very bright boy, but his disregard for authority borders on the pathological. No disciplinary actions have been effective in remedying his delinquency on coursework. Any disciplinary action is met with stronger resistance. Derc fails to engage in play and social interaction with other students. He appears to have no friends among his classmates and is frequently the object of ridicule. I fear he may experience a great deal of difficulty in his home life as well.
<b>Grade 6 Disciplinary Report</b>
<b>Student: Derc Kast</b>
<b>Incident report: Derc participated in a physical altercation with four other students. The other students state that Derc attacked them. Faculty found Derc straddling one of the other students, repeatedly striking the boy in the face in spite of him being</b>

unconscious. All four boys were injured during the fight. Due to the severity of the injuries sustained, Derc has been suspended from attending class for 30 standard days and issued 15 demerits.
<b>Grade 8 Disciplinary Report</b>
<b>Student: Derc Kast</b>
Incident report: Derc was caught cheating on coursework. He had verbally coerced a classmate who scores well in coursework to complete his assignment for him. Academic dishonesty holds with it serious penalties. This is the first time misrepresentation of coursework has been confirmed. Student has received a 0 for the course, has been placed on academic monitoring, and received 10 demerits.
<b>Grade 11 Disciplinary report</b>
<b>Student: Derc Kast</b>
Incident report: Student was found entirely nude in the academy swimming pool with female students grades 10, 11 and 12, who were also nude. Female students informed faculty that Derc had encouraged that they go "Skinny-Dipping" and leave the dormitories after curfew. Derc is found at fault for influencing the female students to participate. Student has received a 30 day suspension and 15 demerits.
<b>Grade 12 Disciplinary Report</b>
<b>Student: Derc Kast</b>
Incident Report: Derc has been caught sabotaging the studies of his Feather and Bowl pairing Jenny'ri Sanniran. Repeated attempts to place her behind in her studies have been noted. Derc intentionally stole study materials from Jenny'Ri, ensuring there would be sections of the examinations that she would fail. This would give him strategic advantage in placement during the trials. It is noted this is not the first case of academic dishonesty in the student's file. The severity of the offense requires severe punishment. Never in all of my years of educating, have I seen such a deliberate and grievous attempt to undermine the academic process. Worse yet, the intent was specifically targeting another student. Derc Kast has been a recidivist of the worst degree. Student is heretoforth Expelled from Ertagette Academy.

**Kast-Coral Penthouse**

**Tokare City, Seraph**

**Caperion System**

**Two days Later**

"Why do you still insist on going through all that old stuff?" he asked, placing a hand on his hip in frustration.

"It's inventory, love. You have all this stuff squirreled away and I'm just tidying up." She said with a smile.

“It feels like snooping. You’re snooping.” He said with a scowl.

“Ok, maybe I am, just a little. I just wanted to know more about what you were like before we met. There are a lot of entries here. School was difficult for you, huh?” She said, placing the tablet down.

“Yes, I never finished at the academy. You’re smarter than me and I don’t do good at studying. Happy?” Thran replied.

“Well... You don’t do well at studying.” She said, correcting him.

He tapped his foot. He was not pleased with being corrected. She had been digging into his past with such increasing frequency that she wasn’t even hiding it anymore. His patience with the inquiries was growing shorter with each time she was found with an old data-pad in hand. He glared at her.

“Sorry. What changed between grade 8 and grade 11? You stopped fighting all the other boys. The reports change entirely.” She asked, hoping he’d answer.

“Puberty happened. The other boys stopped looking at me and the girls started looking.” He said.

She smiled. “I see and you started looking at them too...”

“Attention is my love language. When given, it is matched.” He affirmed.

“Yes, that is definitely true, my love. I do just have one question, why did you have to try to ruin Jenny’Ri? Couldn’t you have just rigged the trials? Why destroy her?” she asked.

“I don’t think you understand the importance of the Feather and Bowl on Bakura. When the pairing trials are complete, your course in life is set. If you’re given the Bowl, you are destined to be a servant. If you don’t go to serve the church, You’d be treated worse than the Kurtzen and will likely never move up in life. That was not my destiny. I did what was necessary. It was me or her. Plain and simple. And besides, She shouldn’t have broken up with me...She had it coming.” He replied, with an utter lack of remorse in his tone.

In hubris, he’d given away a morsel of information. He didn’t just try to the young woman he’d been paired with to get ahead. It was personal for him. He was heartbroken. She smiled to herself, certain that she could never meet that side of his wrath, but oddly reassured to know that under all his deceit and vanity there was still room inside him for a heart big enough to be broken.

## **ZAPP - TEEN HOLO MAGAZINE -**

### **Fashion! Celebrity! Trends!**

#### ***Hot New Faces – Green Eyed Surprise – Derc Kast***

Do you believe in love at first sight? We do! When we first saw up and coming star Derc Kast our beliefs were

confirmed. Be still our beating hearts! We sat down for a chat with Derc to learn more about what makes him tick.



Have you ever wonder what you'd talk about on a date with a hunk like Derc? We found out for you!

Firstly, you'll immediately notice his gorgeous eyes. Make sure to comment on how green they are! Derc loves a compliment. Once we started chatting, we found that this beau was so much more than just a pretty smile and hot body! What an absolute charmer! He didn't want to talk about his modeling career or his first roles in holofilms. Business talk took a back seat to getting to know us. Derc insists that he's just a regular guy from the Outer-rim, though we know that he's anything but ordinary! (Just look at him!) If you ever land a date with Derc, we recommend talking about swoop-racing or starships. He's a bit of a nut for anything that flies (which we'll take as his proof that he's a regular guy at heart)! We would also recommend

bringing up his favorite music: Gliz and Symphonic music. We'd recommend going to the symphony on a date! Although he's "a regular guy", Derc sure does love living the high life. (Makes sense for a man who's on the cover of fashion holomags!)

You can always bring up romantic things too! Our man Derc certainly is the romantic type and he'd be keen to take you on a sunset swoop ride on the beach. (Does it get more romantic than that? We don't think so!)

Whatever you do, don't get tongue tied! Stay calm and get him talking! If you get him talking that will give you a chance to get lost in those dreamy eyes! Quick witted Kast loves to banter and values intelligence in his mate. So, study up on your starfighters and symphony tunes and you're sure to get that second date!

**Kast-Coral Penthouse**

**Tokare City, Seraph**

**Caperion System**

**One Week Later**

"I remember this article! I had it pinned on my wall!" she exclaimed. "Look at these photos! You're so young! So hot!!!" she said, rolling over on to her stomach and kicking her feet with excitement.

He slipped his dressing gown over arms and stood up from the couch, tying the belt around his narrow waist. She could see he was not happy with her commentary on the old article. He had tolerated her incessant delving into his past over the last weeks, but she had crossed the line with that seemingly benign comment.

"Oh? I guess now I am just old and ugly. Yesterday's dream date, soon to be forgotten in the bottom of some old footlocker." He said, cinching the silken belt around his waist.

“Stop. I didn’t say you were ugly and old. You’re more handsome than you’ve ever been. You’re just being sensitive.” She replied looking up at him.

“I am not! So sorry that I cannot turn back time and be nineteen again, just so you can stand to look at me!” He replied, starting to storm off.

“Thran, stop. Why are you being like this?” Emily asked, sitting up and taking his hand.

He turned his head away, but let her take his hand. She ran her thumb back and forth over the back of his hand and squeezed his fingers tightly. She had a positively unmatched ability to disarm him and talk him off the ledge of an emotional escalation. He glanced down at her before turning back away to feign continued discontent.

“I don’t understand why you’re so insistent on digging up the past. Those things have been put away for a reason.” He said, returning subtle intimacy of squeezing her hand.

“I believe that you did put them away for a reason. But you also kept them for a reason...please babe, will you sit and talk to me?” Emily asked with an earnest plea.

“Fine.” Thran replied, whipping back the tails of his wine-colored paisley silk robe so as to not sit on the gossamer thin cloth.

Thran batted at the datapads on the coffee table like a bored feline. The pile toppled over. She’d been cataloguing all of the records he’d squirreled away in his personal effect, from his early portfolio work to present. It was full of advertisements for undergarments, images from designer clothing lines, “art pieces” and all the subsequent reviews of his work. Ever fastidious, Emily had arranged the information in chronological order and was working through the backlog with amazing pace. He gripped the old faded plasteel of one of the records and casually inspected it and placed the beaten-up device in his lap.

“You are the love of my life and I would do anything for you. Even if those are things you don’t want me to do. If that means looking into your past to help focus you, then I will do it. Even if that makes you mad. We were away from the Brotherhood for so long and things were going so well... It was just you and me, working to realize your father’s dreams. We’re so nearly there. But we come back and...You’re lost. You’re floating around, aimless. I can see it. You just hang around, half finishing things. When was the last time you Saber sparred? Your daughter is begging for you to teach her your preferred form. You’ve half scribbled ideas for a new palace and a new villa, but haven’t finished it. What about the water park? Not done. Instead, you jaunt off to Hutt Space help some pirates and come back empty handed? Why? Because someone said you had to? The Thran I know doesn’t do what he’s told. He does what he wants, when he wants. I’m looking into your past so I maybe I can help you to once again see the future. What is wrong? Something is bothering you, I can tell. I don’t need to be able to read your mind to pick up on that. You have to tell me so I can help you. Same team, remember?” She said placing a hand on his cheek.

Her words cut him open, sprawling out his vulnerabilities out like a paddy frog’s organs ready for anatomical dissection. Thran’s brilliant green eyes darted back and forth as he calculated an escape route. Like a prodded nexu, his knee jerk reaction was to meet Emily’s interloping with a great wrath and a gnashing of teeth. Even face to face with her and met with her earnest attempt to reorient him, he wanted to button away his past, cast her offer of aid as interference with his persons, and accuse her

of wanted to change him. He scowled and drew a sharp breath in through his nose. He'd spent so many years using all manner of deceit to cover his deepest vulnerabilities, that even in the intimacy of his own home with his wife he struggled to let himself show. It was exhausting and she was too tenacious to just let this subject die. Had he felt any real sense of purpose as of late, he would fight on, but everything she said was true. He surrendered.

"All the industry rags say I'm washed up. I haven't gotten a role in a film in three years. There is no place left for me in Holo-wood. I've transferred all of my stock holdings to you, so I have no stake left in the business. There is no place for me in the boardroom. We've gotten back the patent rights to my father's inventions. My mother and my sisters have been rebuked. There is no place for me on Bakura. We've come back to my beloved Empire and they don't even remember who I am. They aren't even afraid of me anymore. Arx Ondorii is gone. Caliburnus is in the hands of the Grand Master. They won't even let me push paperwork for the Consul. There is no place for me in the Empire. There doesn't seem to any place for me in this whole damned Galaxy." He said, enveloping the feminine hand draped across his cheek. "I was a titan once and now that's nothing but forgotten history."

"I have put up with a lot from you over the years, Thran. Maybe too much... But, I will not idly stand by while you play king of the pity party with yourself. First of all, you have never once paid attention in a board meeting. Discussing profit margins isn't exciting enough for you, so don't pretend like that is what you want. What's this about there is no place for you in the Empire? There have been eyes on you since we've come to this accursed sector. The Empress has had agents watching you for months. The Regent has been monitoring you. The Inquisitorus shows up in my office twice a month. You think you don't matter? Why are they watching you? You're upset because they didn't just hand over the position of Regent or Proconsul or the House Acclivis Draco. Do you know why? Because...You..." she stuck a finger in his chest. "Are dangerous. Your presence alone means they all have targets on their backs. Evant, Shadow, all of them, they know exactly what you are capable of. You won't roll over and just follow their rules. They can't let you waltz in and undermine their authority. You know that."

"There is no place for you on Bakura? Do you think Bakura is big enough for you? Yes, it's beautiful, yes, it's your homeworld. But listen up toots, Bakura is a backwater on the ass end of the galaxy. You, my love, are meant to shine in the bright center. Bakura is too small for you. And don't get me started on the films and the tabloids. You haven't starred in a film in three years, but they are still talking about you. If you were actually washed up, why are they still talking about you? Oh, and I read Dame Sooni Crezz's script. Take the role. You're perfect for it. It's like she wrote it specifically for you. Stop all this 'there is no place left for you' business. The only person who thinks you're out of place is you. The galaxy is screaming that they need you to take them away. The Empire is happy that you've come back. They didn't dare proclaim it, but when you came back it lit a fire under the Empire's ass. Look at how they are mobilizing now. You're so worried about having an official title in their ranks. I don't get it. How did you even get here? Why is this so important to you?" she asked.

He'd been anticipating this question. It was the one piece of his story he'd never really given insight on. The best anyone had to go on was a series of rumors. Some claimed he was seeking refuge from angry pimps or disgruntled drug dealers, others claimed he was on a bender and passed out on a shuttle bound for the Shadow Academy, each tale had the air of plausibility but lacked any concrete evidence. Every tale she'd heard was hearsay.

The Warlord clenched his fist, tensing his wrist to let out a slight pop from the joint. Thran passed the tablet he'd fished from the pile to her. She lifted it and began reading.

Emily's brilliant blue eyes went wide reading the document.

*I have taken a new apprentice. The Headmaster has answered my demands and he has been transferred to Clan Exar Kun. I have long sensed his presence and such a vessel requires the gifted hand of a Grandmaster to be molded properly. As a student, the boy has proved promising. He seems aware of the depth of power contained within him, though like any Sith he is limited by the power of his own will. He does not yet possess control, but the depth of potential seems endless. Hubris and vanity will undoubtedly be his downfall. His connection to the Dark Side is unmatched. He has shown he is an able duelist as well. If I can teach him to cultivate and harness all that potential, the boy will be a powerful tool for the Brotherhood.*

*The Headmaster's intake report suggested that during a Brotherhood Operation to retrieve a cache of Imperial intelligence, he was able to integrate into a group of Equites and convince them that he had been sent on the mission with them. He simply boarded the transport with them. Impressive. He had gathered a datapad with intelligence regarding a some repulsor technology. I do not know why this was of particular interest to him. The Headmaster was impressed with his ability to deceive his agents and immediately began his trials. This is not the first time someone has lied their way into the Shadow Academy, but this might be the first time it was done on accident. Nevertheless, he has passed his trials.*

*He has weaved such a masterfully complex maze of lies, it is nearly impossible to differentiate between the true and the false. I have spent a fair amount of time probing his mind from afar. Of the truths I have isolated, there are few. He's been aware of the unnatural ability granted to him by the Dark Side since he was a youth, this is a truth. He has been delving into secrets far beyond his ability; eternal youth, regeneration of life, control of time. This too is true. His lust for power is all consuming. This is truest of all. I posit it was only a matter of time until he found the Brotherhood.*

*I am eager to teach him, but I am cautious. Deep behind the memories and shallow fears, there is a voice. It is faint, like a suggestion of whispers on the wind. The voice is ancient. It is not his own. The boy is not a mere conduit for this spirit. There is symbiosis contained within their union. It is as if he has struck some sort of deal with the Force itself, power for a corporeal form. It seems to tolerate my intrusions, but defends the boy with such ferociousness I fear any further intrusion will unleash something I do not yet fully comprehend.*

*As he grows comfortable in my tutelage, I will endeavor to learn more about his connection. I have arranged for him to move to House Zlost. Having both Braecen and Jonaeth present to monitor him will facilitate his growth.*

*-Chi Long*

She set the datapad down, processing what she'd read.

"Your Father's research. You were looking for it." She said.

"Yes. The Brotherhood was looking for records the Empire had on ancient Sith artifacts. I happened to be there on my own mission. I panicked when I saw their lightsabers. I did the first thing I could think of, convince them I was meant to be there. When we arrived on Lyspair, I could feel the power there. It spoke to me, like it had done on the mountain side when I was a boy. On Byfrost, it was the first time like I felt like I belonged. A Grandmaster deliberately plotted against others to take me as a student. I felt important. I was given a place to grow and a direction to point. I was so important that when my Master vanished, Braecen couldn't help but lure me over to Clan Scholae Palatinae. No one had ever had any faith in me before. I was a sought-after commodity. I care so much about this place because it, if only for a minute cared about me." He replied, looking out the window at the approaching sunset.

"So, you found the Brotherhood on accident? It was all an accident!? Go figure, with all the stories I've heard...and when you found it you felt like you were wanted and belonged...It felt like home. You'd never had that feeling before. I understand now..." She replied, she reached out to take his hand but was interrupted by a buzzing from the communicator imbedded in the penthouse's wall.

There was a click and the intercom squawked to life. "I apologize for the interruption, Ms. Coral. This is Me'Tchan at the Security desk. We have a priority message for Mr. Kast. I am putting it through now."

The emitter at the center of the table spat forth a cloudy blue projection of a man. His hair was silvering at the sides and slicked back with what must have been industrial grade pomade. His posture was rigid and the bars on his breast indicated a position of high Imperial authority. Every button on the grey jacket was done up to top button around the slightly loose skin of his neck. He wore a garish cape around his should and a stoic reserve across his face.

"Thran Occasus. I don't think we have had the pleasure of personal introduction. I am certain you already know who I am, but so as not to be too presumptuous, allow me to introduce myself. I am Proconsul of Clan Scholae Palatinae, Kamjin Lap'lamiz. Your reputation precedes you, sir. It is my honor to speak with you now." The figure said with the slightest of bows.

Listening to the message, Thran crossed his arms over his chest and reclined into the soft cushions of the couch. Kamjin had been selected over Thran for the role of Proconsul and the Warlord already possessed contempt for him as a result. He was expecting this message to be salt in the proverbial wound.

"Sir, The Empress has tasked me with evaluating the strategic position of the Clan's assets and it has come to our attention that our position has been found wanting. It has also come to my attention that you have conducted an independent analysis of our fleet and armed forces. I understand you have completed this assessment months ago. I am impressed that you could have executed such an audit, without full access to Clan Records and resources. I have taken the liberty of familiarizing myself with your personal records within the Clan. You have routinely demonstrated knowledge and execution of Imperial tactics which would have scored you exceptional marks had you attended the Academy on Carida. Antei, Salas V, New Tython, and the return to Antei... The list goes on. I have also read the accounts of your flying in our recent campaign on Seraph. Your skill in a starfighter is unmatched. Sir, the Empire marks itself fortunate to have an agent of such a caliber and vision among its ranks." The Adept continued.

“He’s smart, to lead with flattery like that.” Emily said.

“Yes. He’s done his research.” Thran replied, eager to hear what would next come from the administrator’s lips.

“As you undoubtedly know, the duties of a Proconsul are numerous. Some of these duties require my direct attention, which precludes me from devoting my attention to all the matters which pass over my desk. I humbly approach you today with a request to aid me with such a matter. Sir, as you are aware, our military assets are in rather tragic a state of disarray. We require a refitting and reorganization of our forces and course for future expansion of our Military forces. The Empress has advised that this is to be addressed immediately. As I am not in a position where I may devote my entire energy to the completion of this task, the Empress has granted me authority to assign our most able to the task. I am in need of an individual who understands the integration of fleet and army resources and possesses the clarity of vision to create a suitable Order of Battle for today and the future. The list of candidates who are capable of executing this task with the excellence befitting the Empire contains but one name, Sir. That name is yours.” The image of Kamjin said.

“Well, well...Is there still no place for you in the Empire?” the woman said.

“You have been authorized by full authority of the Empress to undertake this project. Necessary matters of caution and attaining authorized access to the Clan fiduciary records require that you report to the Rollmaster, and I am sure you understand the prudence of such a restriction. Otherwise, you may proceed with this task unencumbered. I am certain you will find this invitation to assist the Empire and its endeavors to be agreeable. I will be eagerly awaiting your response and I will be all the more the eager to be given the opportunity to finally meet you in person. For the Empire.” The ghostly blue image of the Sector Admiral faded away.

Thran was standing before the message had fully terminated. An unseen energy lifted his flight helmet from across the room and drew it to his waiting grasp. Likewise, the leatherbound hilt of his lightsaber took flight from a hidden location to answer his silent beckoning. The metal cylinder careened through an earthenware vase, shattering it to bits before meeting his free hand. Stones and water spilled over the floor. He poked the red button on the holorecorder at the center of the table with the deactivated hilt. He stood as straight and tall as he could.

“Kamjin, I see Shadow couldn’t muster the courage to ask herself. What a shame. Have the crew of the ISN Palpatine prepare for my immediate arrival. I will sort this mess out for you.” He said, placing the helmet over his head. He depressed the button again to end the return message.

A simple spark was all that was needed to bring back the flame of his passion for life. This olive branch from the Empire seemed exactly like the type of thing that would help him to shake off the cobwebs of self-doubt and return to his normal self. It was as if a new energy had suddenly consumed him. Lethargy and complacency had filled him over the past months, but it had been instantaneously replaced with childlike excitement. Emily breathed a sigh of relief. He needed a task to consume his focus and put him back on the beam and it came with suspiciously good timing. He was already making his way for the door in nothing but a flight helmet and silk dressing gown.

“Hold on, Mister.” Emily said, grabbing his wrist. “You need your flight suit. You can’t just rush off to the meet the fleet in your underpants. They’ll be expecting you to be dressed properly, not like you’re ready for a mid-day nap.”

“Right. I forgot. I’m just so excited.” He said, pulling at the robe’s waist belt and removing the carbon black flight helmet.

She laughed quietly to herself and placed a kiss on his cheek. “Go on, get yourself ready. I’ll organize transport for Jasmine and Phantom Squad to join you. She needs to see her father in action, it will be good for her to be at your side. And you’ll look more official with a security detail. I’ll also send Saris to negotiate terms with Sooni’s people. You need to take that role. I won’t let you pass on it. If you do, you’ll regret it forever. And we can’t have that can we? Go on then. They’ll be waiting for you.” She said with a smile and a firm pat on his behind.

**Warlord Thran Occasus-Palpatine (Sith) / House Caliburnus of Clan Scholae Palatinae [SA: VII] [GMRG: IV] [SYN: II] [INQ: IX]**

**SBx2 / GCx3 / SCx5 / ACx4 / DCx7 / GNx6 / SNx5 / BNx5 / Cr:3D-2R-7A-14S-21E-8T-9Q / CFx220 / Clx121 / CGx15 / SI / LSx10 / SoLx4 / S:5AI-3D-1Do-4Dk-7Rm-8P-17U-5B-18Dec-17Aff-3Cr-14En**

**{SA: MVF - MVH - MVHL - MVL - MVLD - MVLO - MVPH - DPCM - DPCP - DPE - SVHL}**

**Legacy of Palpatine**