

## Homeward Bound

Battlemaster Khryso Mallus set down the datapad on his desk as the gentle blue glow faded from the device's screen. His luxurious office in Tyranus Citadel was bathed in the soft yellow glow of carefully controlled artificial lighting that was tinted slightly orange by the Alisoan sunset leaking through his barely open windows. After a long day of work, the gentle sounds of an Imperial orchestra whispering out of the office's speaker system brought him some measure of relaxation. The Chiss held no love for the deceased Empire, but he'd grown up listening to recordings of the Imperial Symphony Orchestra. The music held a unique sense of nostalgia that reminded him of a life that seemed centuries in the past.

As Khryso moved out from behind his desk, the door to this office slid aside with a soft hiss. Like clockwork, Ento had brought his after work refreshment just in time. The Geonosian slave rushed to his side, offering up the serving tray clutched between her tarsal claws. A variety of beverages had been arranged in various flutes and glasses. After a moment of deliberation, Khryso selected a flute of Merenzane Gold. Without a word between them, Ento quickly retreated out of the office.

Taking a careful sip of the amber liquor, the corner of the Sith's mouth twitched slightly as he enjoyed the slight tingle the drink left on his lips. As he let himself enjoy the moment of calm and gentle pleasures, Khryso made his way over to one of his office windows. With a gentle press of his thumb, he activated the blinds. They retracted fully, granting him full view of the encroaching dusk as well as the skyline of Fort Dooku spread out around the Citadel.

Watching the setting sun and occasionally sipping from his flute while the orchestra played on in the background, the Sith's mind began to wander. He'd been back at work as the Aedile of House Tyranus for months now. His new bosses had taken some getting used to, but the Chiss finally was beginning to feel as though things were in order again. Ever since the Clan had returned from Dandoran, things had settled into a simple tedium. When he was younger he might have found it boring, but as things were now, he appreciated the break.

Khryso couldn't help but wonder, though, if he was growing too complacent. He had solidified his place in Plagueis after years of feeling like he was lagging behind. That being said, he still hadn't quite achieved the success he was looking for. This office and the position it came with were no simple accomplishment, of course, but he knew this wasn't the end point he had been seeking all this time. He was closer than ever before, but still short of where he wanted to be.

At this point, thanks to his drifting thoughts, Khryso's mood had taken a turn for the worse. He took one more glance out of the window before thumbing the activation switch again to seal the blinds completely. His half-finished drink was left on the corner of his desk, on top of the Plagueis branded coasters that they seemed to have an infinite supply of. Rather than think about pushing himself further, he wanted to distract himself more thoroughly.

The door slid open as he approached. Ento, who was waiting just outside in silence, declined her head slightly as he passed her by. "After you clean the office," he said, barely glancing at her, "I'll take dinner in the lounge." The Geonosian responded with silent affirmation, immediately jumping into action.

Khryso pulled his commlink from the pouch in his cape, tapping out a few commands before holding it to his lips. After a few moments, a soft chime confirmed the commlink's connection. "Hunter Ath'muss," he began, "are you free this evening?"

"I will be in a bit, *Battlemaster Mallus*." The voice that responded was clearly only using the formal language in jest, but Khryso knew not to interpret Nefilee's tone as disrespectful. In fact, he found it to be just the refreshing distraction he was looking for.

"Freshen up when you have the opportunity and report to my quarters," he said, the corners of his mouth lifting slightly in a tight-lipped smile.

"Orders received, sir. Executing mission at earliest availability." The mocking tone that accompanied her response vanished as she amended a quick "see ya soon, Khryso," to the end of her message.

Khryso nodded, satisfied, and switched off his commlink, putting it away. With a new slight spring to his step, he arrived at his Citadel living quarters and stepped inside.