

Shadows on Shaddaa

“Orv? Impossible.”

Legorii slammed the parchment against the table and ran his fingers through his hair. He refused to believe that Orv was dead. There was no way, the man had been alive and well just days earlier. The Brotherhood wasn't at war – any more than it usually was, anyways – and yet they had apparently lost an Elder and a Dark Councilor. How?

Legorii rose and crossed the short distance to his Consul's quarters in Ol'Val, where Marick held a datapad loosely in his fingertips. When he saw the agitated Epis, the Hapan nodded grimly.

“You've heard, then?”

“He was one of our few remaining allies on the Dark Council, and an Arconae to boot! How the hell did he go and get himself killed on Nar Shaddaa?”

The Consul shrugged. “I don't know, but I'm told Darth Pravus has tasked one of the Society's best with getting to the bottom of this. With rumors of war on the horizon, we have more pressing concerns.”

Legorii chuckled mirthlessly. “One of the Society's best? He's sending me, Marick. Me.”

At that, Marick perked up a bit. “You? Interesting. Well, Legorii, we're not to speak of our assignments, are we? I'll leave you to it. Arcona will be fine in your absence, of course.”

The Anzat nodded. “Of course. I'm taking one of our XJ's, and I'll be in touch.”

As the Proconsul turned to leave, Marick called after him, “Legorii! Bring our Herald back.”

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Legorii eased the fighter into a starport on Nar Shaddaa, and was shocked to find it nowhere near the condition that he had expected. He'd been to the moon once or twice before, when he was still running assignments for his father's corporation, and had been conducting some rather unsavory business transactions with the Hutts.

The Yuuzhan Vong had clearly had their way with the place, though. Legorii recognized the marks of their Vong-forming, as he'd seen them years earlier in the Dajorra System. Clearly, a great deal had been done to rebuild the moon, and it was still a haven for smugglers and thieves, but it was not quite what the Arconan had expected.

Stepping out of his fighter, the Arconan made his way to the port authorities, and paid the exorbitant fee that they charged him. Normally, he'd have killed the filthy little aliens for demanding such an outrageous fee, but it was not yet time for him to blow his cover, and expose himself as a Dark Jedi. If someone here had brought down Orv, they could likely bring down Legorii, he reasoned.

He had secured a small room in a building nearby for two nights, and made his way there to gather his thoughts and prepare for what promised to be an interesting stay.

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Prior to leaving Ol'Val, Legorii had touched base with James Lucius Entar Arconae, an Entar brother and the Brotherhood's Seneschal. While the Proconsul had been forced to forsake his name for the good of Arcona, he had not burned his bridges, and James still owed him a favor or two. He'd gone into the Brotherhood's system and pulled up as much information on the extraction and recon teams as possible, as well as the brief file on the Herald's mission to Nar Shaddaa. Legorii had them all on a datapad, and was reviewing them when there was a knock at his door.

Instantly, the Epis was alert and on guard. *Soulflayer* was at his side, but hidden by his indigo-hemmed cloak. Instead, the Dark Jedi's hand found his familiar katana hilt, and he held the blade at his side as he cracked the door open.

There was nobody at the door. The Krath stuck his head out into the hall, looking left and then right, but saw no signs of any visitors. Confused, he closed the door once more, and returned to his datapad.

Legorii was certain that the extraction team was not responsible for the Herald's death. He'd read their dossiers, accounts of their service, tales of their selflessness in aiding the Dark Council. Many of them had worked with Orv before, and he knew some of them by name. It could not be them. Had they been killed with him, though? Were they still alive, here on Nar Shaddaa, hiding from some unseen enemy? Were they prisoners?

The Epis did not know, but he needed to find out, quickly. He needed to find them, before whatever or whoever had killed Orv found him. *One hell of a first assignment.*

The recon team, on the other hand, was less certain. A few of them were new to Dark Council service, and some had questionable backgrounds. That was nothing out of the ordinary – for most men in the service of the Iron Throne, questionable would be a compliment. Each team consisted of four men, and each of them was trained in combatting Force Sensitives. Could they have killed the Herald? Perhaps, but only if all four of them had worked together.

Again, there was a knock at the door. This time, the Epis moved more quickly, leaping toward the door without his katana. As he opened it, he found himself face-to-face with two armored men.

"You're coming with us, Arconan."

Both men lunged toward him, attempting to grab his arms before he could ignite his lightsaber. Legorii was taken by surprise, but not so slow as to be easily man-handled. He ducked under the first man and threw a punch into his armored stomach, gritting his teeth as his knuckles connected with hard plate. The other man got his fingers around the Anzat's left bicep, but was knocked to the ground, bludgeoned by a burst of Force energy.

Stepping back into his room, the Epis managed to ignite his lightsaber. To their credit, neither of his assailants rushed into the room – instead, they drew their own lightsabers. *Of course they have lightsabers, everyone has a lightsaber these days.* Legorii rolled his eyes and renewed his assault on the new men, as the second regained his footing.

The close quarters worked to Legorii's advantage, as his cuts were precise and deliberate, and successfully separated the two One Sith. In moments, he'd dispatched the first, *Soulflayer* cutting deep into the man's thigh. As he collapsed, his armor bending unnaturally, his companion decided now was as

good a time as any to flee. Legorii decided to let him go – he wanted him to carry a warning to his masters, whoever they were.

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Smack. Legorii's open palm struck the One Sith's pale face, and his eyes flew open. He was sweating, and he looked ill. The helmet had been removed, and rudimentary dressings applied to his wounded leg. He had passed out, presumably from the pain of his injury, and Legorii had dragged him into his room to interrogate him before he died. Because he would, almost certainly, die. And soon, too.

"Who's your Master, kid?" Legorii asked. In response, the One Sith spat at him.

Legorii nodded matter-of-factly. "Alright, sure, we can do things that way." Quickly, he unwrapped the bandage on the man's thigh, and pressed his thumb into the hole, applying pressure to cauterized veins and arteries, and pushing through torn muscle until he reached bone. The One Sith screamed and screamed, until the Proconsul withdrew his thumb. Then, the screaming turned into a pitiful whimpering.

"Tell me everything that you know, or I'm going to make your last hour of life worse than you ever imagined it could be. How did you know I was Arconan?"

Panting, taking a moment to find his voice, he said, "Your little 'Society' is nothing. We knew who was coming. We know you."

At that, Legorii could not help but raise an eyebrow. The Society...compromised? Was it possible? Was there someone within its upper echelon that had informed the One Sith of his mission? If so, who? It couldn't be Darth Pravus...could it?

"Fine. What happened to Orv Dessrx d'Tana?"

The man, through his agony, looked confused. "d'Tana? I don't know who that is."

Legorii knew that Orv's mission had to do with House Odan-Urr and the Jedi that the Grand Master had, for some reason, been sheltering. It had not come from the Society. Was it possible that the One Sith were here hunting Jedi, as Orv had been? Or had they come hunting the hunter?

"Your master...who is he?"

At that, the One Sith leered at him, baring his teeth. "I will never tell..."

Legorii pressed his thumb back into the gaping wound, and his thoughts were drowned out by screams.

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The Anzat left the body there, and moved into the streets. He'd ditched his rations and his extra equipment – his location had been compromised by the One Sith, and he could not afford to be ambushed in the night by a small army. He kept his hilt concealed, but his katana was clearly sheathed at his back, and he brazenly carried his BlasTech rifle through the streets. Nar Shaddaa was one of the few places in the galaxy where one could do so without looking out of place.

The Epis felt confident that the One Sith were involved in Orv's death, in one way or another. He doubted that the Herald would have allowed himself to be killed by the Jedi, and there were reports of missing Odan-Urr members that had been passed on by Legorii's contacts elsewhere. But where were the extraction and recon teams? Were they responsible for Orv's death, or had they been killed by the same enemy that had laid low one of the Brotherhood's most widely-recognized Elders?

Legorii walked down the same street where the Herald's body had been found. It had been cleaned up by now, and no signs of any struggle remained. It had been termed an "execution", and apparently Orv's body had been so badly damaged that it was unrecognizable. What, or who, could have done that? It could not be any blaster wound, and it seemed unlikely that, unless he was hacked to pieces, it had been done by the tip of a lightsaber.

Legorii's crimson gaze swept the streets, checking the alleys and the shadows for any helpful sign. He had trained with the Dajorran Intelligence Agency for a few years, and had been mentored by their leader, Timeros Caesus Entar Arconae. He knew what to look for, and he knew how to find it. When he saw a hooded face peeking out from an alley, even for just a brief second before disappearing, he knew that he had to follow.

The Proconsul's step quickened as he left the beaten path and entered the darkness of the alley. His Anzati eyes allowed him to see more effectively in the darkness than most others, and with the help of the Force, he locked onto his target pretty quickly. "Hey," he shouted to the back of the rapidly retreating figure, "turn around or I'll shoot."

The figure halted reluctantly, and raised its hands above its head. Legorii moved slowly toward him, keeping the barrel of his blaster rifle trained on the hooded head. "Turn around, slowly." The figure obeyed.

When Legorii saw his haggard, unshaven face and greasy hair from beneath the hood, his eyes widened. "Jarkan? Specialist Jarkan, of Extraction Team oh-one-three?"

The man seemed unsure of what to say. "I...yes, Jarkan is my name. Who are you?"

Legorii lowered his blaster, so that it was pointing at the man's feet. "My name is Legorii, I'm here on assignment from Darth Pravus. I work for the Brotherhood."

At that, the man seemed to relax a little, and then tensed up once more. It was as if he'd remembered something. "Assignment? What assignment?"

Legorii took a step closer. "Where's Orv Dessrx d'Tana, Jarkan? What happened to him?"

For a moment, the man did not respond. Then he shook his head. "Truthfully, I do not know. We...my comrades...things got out of hand. I'm afraid that Lord d'Tana is dead."

The Anzat's eyes narrowed. Was the man telling the truth? Did he know more than he was letting on? "You're right, Jarkan, he's dead. His body was damaged so extensively that it could not even be conclusively identified, but we're operating under the assumption that he's dead." Legorii paused, looking for a reaction. "Your team's been off the map for days, now, Jarkan. What the hell happened?"

Jarkan looked anguished, torn. He did not want to tell the truth, but he did. "Two of our team members went rogue. They were behaving strangely ever since we landed on Nar Shaddaa, and a few nights ago they disappeared. We got into an argument, you see...and..."

Legorii was impatient. "And what, Jarkan? Tell me what happened."

At that, the man broke down. He sobbed, and barely choked the words out. "I k-killed h-h-him."

"Killed him? Killed Orv?"

Jarkan's head snapped up. "No! Never, never that. Grennal, another member of our team. He wanted to go with them, to help them look for...for..."

Abruptly, the man stopped talking. He looked as if he'd said something that he didn't mean to say. Legorii was growing tired of the games – he took two quick steps forward and placed the barrel of his blaster rifle against Jarkan's temple, as the man quivered and recoiled.

"Tell me what they were looking for. If you lie to me, or tell me anything but the complete truth, I'll blow your brains out in this alley without a second thought. Nod if you understand me."

Shaking, shivering, the man nodded. Legorii was disgusted to see him so helpless, so broken. Where was his training? What had happened to damage him so?

"They went looking for the One Sith. They'd heard that there was a Sith Lord on Nar Shaddaa, and they said that the Brotherhood was growing weak. That the One Sith would pay them better, that the One Sith would soon destroy the Brotherhood...they went looking for the One Sith."

Legorii paused, digesting that. "And they found them, didn't they, Jarkan? They found them, alright." The Arconan let the barrel of his rifle fall away, and he stepped back to think. "What became of the others, then? The recon team?"

Jarkan shrugged. "Dead, as far as I know. We were meant to meet up with Orv two days ago, as his mission was to be complete by then, and we were to have done our part as well. I was the only one to show up, after Grennal...after I..." he broke off, biting his lip.

Dead? It was possible, but Legorii was skeptical. If two members of Extraction Team 013, who had served the Brotherhood ably and loyally in the past, were willing to betray the Brotherhood for the One Sith, then all four members of the recon team were willing to as well. The One Sith had likely gained a few new servants on Nar Shaddaa, and a lot of information about the Herald. Enough to kill him.

"Jarkan, you and I are going to go find the One Sith."

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Legorii decided that it was worth it to swing back by his old room, where he had a few extra weapons that he'd taken from the armory back on the NSD *Invicta*. Jarkan had somehow managed to lose all of his, and he was no use to the Epis unarmed. But when he got there, he found the place looted, and his possessions gone.

With a sigh, the Proconsul handed over his blaster rifle and one of his vibroshivs. “Don’t lose that knife, or I’ll skin you with the other one. Alright, I was assaulted by two One Sith operatives here just a few hours ago. It looks like they’ve already returned, but I have a few ideas on where they might be. There used to be a Sith Academy here, many years ago – let’s go see what remains of it.”

As the two men walked, shoulder-to-shoulder, Legorii considered whether or not Jarkan was telling him the truth. He hadn’t been able to sense a lie on the man’s lips, and he didn’t seem to be in any fit shape to be manipulating a scion of Clan Arcona. But something still felt off, somehow. How had he survived on the streets with nothing but his cloak? What was he doing in that alley in the first place?

Before long, the two arrived at the site of the old Sith Academy. It looked nothing like it once had; in fact, a cantina had been built over its ruins, but the cantina had long-since closed. It was dark, and looked abandoned. Briefly, Legorii wondered if his intuition had been wrong. But then a figure melted out of the shadows, a broad-chested man that wore robes of unmistakably Brotherhood origin. Without a word, he lifted his sleeve. Legorii did the same.

“Your work here is finished. The Society commends you.” The man reached a hand into his robes and pulled out a small pouch, and then tossed it to Jarkan. Gracefully, the man caught it, and then winked at Legorii.

“What? What the hell is going on here? Who are you?”

The broad-chested member of the Society gave Legorii a sharp look. “As I said, your work here is finished. The Society commends you.”

Legorii felt his blood beginning to boil. “So...that’s it? I can just pack up and go home now? Where are Orv’s killers?”

This time, the man made no response. The Proconsul turned to Jarkan. “What about you? You’re in on all this too? Who are you?”

Jarkan shrugged. “I’m Jarkan, a member of Extraction Team oh-one-three. After the events of the last few days, the Society contacted me with specific instructions, and asked that I work with you – all for a fee.”

Legorii cackled maniacally. “Of course you did! All for a fee! Specific instructions! Work with me! Give me my knife back, scum.”

Jarkan chuckled and offered it to him, hilt-first. “Have a safe return to Dajorra, Legorii.”

“Yeah, yeah, *you* have a safe return to Dajorra, you son of a...” he muttered as he stalked off, back toward the starport and his XJ, more confused and with more questions that he had when he’d landed. He’d be having a word with Darth Pravus.

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*KE Legorii (Krath) / PCON / Clan Arcona [ACC: I] [GMRG: III] [SA: VIII]
GC-PoDP / SC-SoF / AC-ToDS / DC-GP / GN-AgL / SN-AgL / BN-AuL / Cr-1D-13R-24A-21S-11E-8T-6Q / CF-
PF / CI-PC / DSS-AgL / SI / SoF-BL / LS-PL / SoL / S:-27Rm-1P-16U-5B-5De-12Ret-24Aff-32Rn
{SA: MVC - MVF - MVH - MVL - MVPH - MVS - MVW - DPE - DPV - SVLC - SVS - SVWP} (8893)*