

“Father.”

The large Barabel ignored the quiet voice coming from behind him, his open eyes staring ahead in meditation into the infinite vista of the Dark Side. Its power flowed through him and out of him, its icy touch sending shockwaves through every nerve ending in his body, combining the most painful of sensations with the sweetest of pleasures.

According to the research he had conducted over his long decade and a half in the Brotherhood, Zakath Agrona knew that the Jedi merely communed with the Force, obeyed its will as if it were their own.

But Zakath was no Jedi.

The Barabel Sith could feel his eyes grow cold as the Dark Side’s touch reached it, icy violet fire erupting from his sockets as Zakath reveled in the feeling of dark power, feeling as if he were a colossus, bestriding the center of the Galaxy.

The Jedi obeyed the Force. The Sith enslaved the Force to their will.

Zakath was Sith. And the Force answered to his will.

“Father.”

Zakath let out a long hissing sigh and turned his head slightly toward the speaker, his annoyance at having his meditation interrupted clearly obvious, even on his inscrutable reptilian face.

“What is it, Nath?”

Soft footsteps sounded as a pale-skinned Iridonian woman circled around him until she was looking down at him, her thin face devoid of expression. Her dark eyes flashed with the reflection of Zakath’s own glowing orbs.

“My sister has an assignment for us. We are to help the Jedi.”

“Of course Atyiru would want to help the Jedi,” Zakath let out a snort as he finally rose to his feet, his muscles protesting as he began to stretch out the knots that had gathered inside him during his long meditation. “What troubles them this time?”

“We don’t know,” Nath replied calmly as she turned and strode over to a small cabinet next to the small kitchenette, opening it to pull out a dark nondescript bottle. “The Jedi sent someone to retrieve a list of people from a trusted courier in a cantina on Nar Shaddaa. They checked in when they arrived on planet. Since then, nothing. We are to recover the list and deliver it to

Odan-Urr by any means necessary. We're also to find out what precisely happened, but the list takes priority."

"Hmm," Zakath pondered as he raised his arms skyward, his talons touching the ceiling as the bones popped in his shoulders. "And why are we being tasked with this? We are no friends of the Jedi."

"Atyiru believes that the Inquisitorius is involved," Nath said as she set a glass down on the counter and lifted the bottle to pour into it. "And since the Tal'mahe'Ra's primary mission is to oppose them..."

".we are the natural choice," Zakath finished before sighing softly as he felt the pleasant burn began to spread through his arms' muscles as he held the stretch. "And our instructions if we encounter the Inquisitorius on Nar Shaddaa?"

"We eliminate them, quickly and quietly." The Iridonian replied before taking a sip of her glass. "Hmm. Good year."

"Mm," Zakath ignored the compliment. "Are we allowed to extract information first before elimination?"

"Atyiru says no torture before she left," Nath said before a slight smirk touched her lips. "Uji pointed out afterwards however that her directive was by any means necessary. I believe his hint was clear. As long as she doesn't hear of the details, we can conduct any interrogation we deem fit."

"Good," Zakath's eyes grew brighter as he released the stretch and smiled down at his adoptive daughter. "Then ready our shuttle. We leave at once."

Nath smiled back. "It's already being prepared for departure."

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Thanks to the information provided to them by agents of Odan-Urr, it did not take long for the two to track the Jedi's movements to the Sunken Sarlacc cantina, located at a midway point between an industrial and residential sectors of Nar Shaddaa. It took a visible effort for Zakath to clamp down on his glowing eyes, keeping them in their natural jade green color. He let out a hiss as they entered the cantina, feeling the pounding music vibrating into his scales.

"Talk to the bartender," Zakath growled as he cast a glance around the bustling cantina. "Find out what happened. I will sweep the area for Inquisitorius agents."

The Iridonian woman nodded silently before slipping into the crowd, heading discreetly toward the main bar. Zakath kept to the outer edges of the cantina, soon finding a seat at an empty table. Reaching out with the Force, he carefully probed the bustling crowd, searching out for any signs of Force sensitivity that would reveal a potential Inquisitorius presence. Finding nothing inside the cantina, he pushed out his mind to just outside the cantina.

He was about to pull back inside when he finally felt it. A small distortion in an otherwise flawless landscape. He narrowed his eyes and then relaxed, allowing the Force to slip away. A moment later, Nath approached the table and slid into a chair opposite him.

“Apparently there was a minor gas attack yesterday,” Nath said as she glanced around at the crowded cantina. “Not that you can tell now. Anyways the bartender wasn’t very helpful. The only thing he could tell me was that after the attack, one of his waiter droids was malfunctioning, so he shut it down for maintenance, which is due to happen later day. Otherwise, it’s business as normal.”

“Then I think it’s time we paid this droid a visit,” Zakath said after Nath finished. “And keep your lightsaber handy. This place is empty, but there is someone cloaking himself with the Force outside.”

“Inquisitorius?” Nath asked quietly, her black eyes flickering to the entrance.

“Or Jedi,” Zakath replied with a slight shrug. “We will find out soon enough. First, let us see this droid.”

The two rose and made their way toward the employee entrance near the back of the cantina. As they approached the door, a burly Gran stepped in front of them, crossing his arms as all three of his eye stalks stood staring straight at them.

“Employees only,” He grunted out in harshly accented Basic. “Go back and enjoy the drinks.”

“We are employees here,” Zakath growled out, his talons glinting in the dim lighting as he waved it subtly in front of the Gran.

“You are employees here,” The Gran repeated, his three eyes blinking blearily all of a sudden.

“You want to let us by,” Zakath continued on, directing his will onto the Gran’s weak mind.

“I want to let you by,” The tanned alien repeated before stepping aside. “Go on back, do... whatever it is you need to do.”

Zakath nodded slightly and stepped through the door, quickly followed by Nath. The back rooms were sparsely populated, with the employees busy out front serving customers or cooking food,

so the two were left alone. It did not take them long to locate the sole shut down droid propped up in the corner.

Zakath approached it and studied the droid for a long moment before grasping the droid's head in his talons. His eyes began to flare violet as he drew upon the Force and directed his senses toward the machine in his hands.

Endless days and nights of serving customers. Food and drink orders were recorded and relayed back to the cooks and bartenders in the back. The routine was occasionally broken by the odd rude customer who would dump an improperly made drink onto the droid or try to bash in its head before the Gran bouncers came along to escort the offending customers out.

It was another routine day of serving customers when suddenly a hissing noise occurred, and billowing white gas obscured most of the room. The droid squawked in confusion and stopped in place as it tried to analyze what was going on.

Suddenly an alien appeared out of nowhere and was prying open the droid's chestplate where its data import connector was located. A quick scan revealed the alien to be one belonging to the Omwati species, clearly evidenced by its blue skin and its feathery hair.

"I'm sorry, my friend, but this is important," The alien was speaking as it slipped a datacard into its chassis and suddenly pulled a few wires. "I hope you will be repaired."

The droid emitted a few beeps and suddenly everything went black.

Zakath blinked as the vision faded away. After what felt like a long few minutes but was likely only a few seconds, the room swam back into focus.

"Father?" Nath was speaking softly. "Were you able to discern anything?"

"The Jedi hid the card behind the front chassis," Zakath grunted as the last vestiges of the vision finally disappeared. It took no more than a few minutes to pry off the chassis plating and locate the datacard. "Check it."

Nath slipped the card into her datapad and turned it on. A few seconds later, she was nodding as she studied the list. "This is definitely what they were looking for. Looks like a list of people... oh huh. You're on that list. And Atyiru, Livana, and names from other Clans."

"Ah... no wonder the Jedi wants this list so badly," Zakath shook his head. "If it fell into Inquisitorius hands, it would advance Darth Pravus' cause considerably."

"Indeed," Nath said as she switched off the datapad and tucked it away. "Now let's get out of here and get this pad delivered."

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The two slipped out of the cantina and headed to the spaceport, with Zakath keeping a wary eye out with the Force for any sign of the mysterious cloaked figure he had detected earlier. But whoever was hiding themselves did not reveal themselves on the way back, and soon they reached the spaceport without incident.

But as they stepped inside, Zakath suddenly felt that brief distortion again in the Force. His eyes narrowed as he reached out with a probing thought and suddenly felt a presence near their hangar bay... a presence strong with the Dark Side.

“The Inquisitorius has found us,” Zakath hissed as he unslung his BlasTech E-11 rifle.

Nath didn't bother to reply but merely unclipped her lightsaber, leaving it unignited for now. The two strode through the spaceport and entered the turbolift leading toward their assigned hangar bay. Zakath could feel the itch for blood gathering within him, and his eyes glowed again, this time with the hunger for the feeling of the Inquisitorius agent's flesh being torn open by his talons.

As the doors slid open, the two saw the Inquisitor instantly, a fair-skinned Human male with black hair neatly tied back in a ponytail standing in front of their shuttle with a pair of Iron Legion guards flanking them, blaster rifles pointed right at them.

“Ah, my friends,” The Inquisitor smiled as he unclipped his lightsaber from his belt, igniting its crimson blade. “I must thank you for recovering the datacard for us. My masters will be most pleased with its recovery... and the death of a high-ranking Undesirable, to boot. We expected a low ranking DIA agent, not someone of your stature.”

“Hmm, unfortunate,” Zakath let a vicious serpent's grin touch his lips. “For you, that is. An Inquisitorius agent will be a valuable source of information.”

“Hah, you have a sense of humor at least,” The Human smiled as he raised his blade. “Guards, dispose of the Iridonian. The Barabel... the Barabel, I will handle personally.”

The Barabel's smile widened as he tossed the rifle behind him, retrieving the rancor's tooth that dangled from his belt. “Oh Human... by the time this day is over, you will be begging for death. If you entertain me enough... I might just grant it.”

The Iron Legion troopers began firing, the scarlet bolts of their blaster rifles deadly accurate as they fired at the Iridonian. But as the bolts reached the Iridonian, they merely passed through without stopping, and blew chunks out of the wall behind her. Zakath let out a thunderous bellow

and swept forward, his scarlet blade springing into life as it swung into a hammering blow, crashing into the Inquisitor's lightsaber and staggering the Human backward.

The Inquisitor let out a shout of surprise and whirled away, missing being cleaved in two by Zakath by sheer inches. Recovering quickly, the Inquisitor leapt forward into a combat roll, springing back to his feet just behind Zakath, his blade already poised to sweep through the Barabel's spine.

Zakath reacted instantly, however, whirling around. His thick muscular tail swept into the Inquisitor's legs and knocked him sideways, sending him stumbling. Only a twisting roll saved him from being decapitated by a stroke of Zakath's blade.

Unfortunately for the Inquisitor, he had twisted away only to have his sword arm be deftly sliced away by a stroke of Nath's blade. A quick kick by Zakath and the Inquisitor was on the ground, Zakath's blade pointed squarely at his throat.

"The troopers?" Zakath asked, breathing heavily but recovering quickly.

"Already dead." She sighed out in a bored tone.

As quick as lightning she plucked up the Humans weapon off the ground. She toyed with it almost teasingly as she observed him repress a whimper of pain.

"Ready our shuttle," Zakath growled out. "I will secure this Inquisitor and then drag the troopers' bodies onboard. Then we will return home... after we dispose of them."

She didn't look back, going forth and obeying without questioning, leaving the pair alone to do her Master's bidding.

Zakath smiled down at the Inquisitor, seeing clearly the fear that now lurked within his eyes as he realized the fate that was surely awaiting him.

"Oh, we are going to have a little fun," He hissed out gleefully before suddenly kicking the Inquisitor in the head, rendering him unconscious.

Zakath grunted as he returned his lightsaber to his belt and lifted up the unconscious Inquisitor, slinging him over his shoulder. As soon as they were spaceborne, he would transmit the datacard's contents to Atyiru so that she could then send it on to the Jedi. And then the shuttle's hyperdrive would be dialed back to the lowest possible speed before they made the jump to hyperspace.

The interrogation would likely take some time, and Zakath preferred that the mess be cleaned up before they reached Selen, and the bodies disposed of via ejection from the airlock. After all,

it was easier to simply hide the interrogations from Atyiru than to have to explain why he conducted it in the first place.

The Shadow Lady still confused him at times about her morality when it came to protecting the Clan, but that was okay. Zakath and Nath would do what Atyiru would- could- not.

They were Sith, after all, regardless of what Darth Pravus might think of them.