

Chapter VI:

PFC Dane Biss ignored the nudging he was annoyingly but accidentally getting from the human child beside him. The transport was overcrowded, but complaining did nothing, so Biss was glad nobody was. There were two rows of people sitting, with the seats up against the transport's walls and facing each other. Sitting directly across from Biss was Vein Sho, the man from the mysterious Order of Seta. Together, they all had spent the past standard hour aboard the starship, and Biss' body was cramping like crazy.

He watched as Sho's comlink chimed, and he rose to receive the message privately in the refresher in the rear of the transport. It was then Biss began to doubt Sho, and Biss' trust in the so-called Knight Brother of this "Order of Seta," *whatever* it was. Still, according to him, Dunkin was still alive, as was Staff Sergeant Vedu and his captain. Sho was Biss' only hope - his only way - to find and locate his old comrades. But the real question was still unanswered: could Biss actually *trust* Sho. Could he trust someone who insisted they were all so powerful and better. Someone that just *had* to have a say in everything. The answer - at least for right now - was simple:

No.

He couldn't trust him at all. For all he knew, Sho was working for the Ladin West Company or for Judeui. It simply wasn't worth the risk-

His line of thoughts was interrupted by Sho's return, who grabbed Biss' arm and led him to the back of the transport.

Sho spoke quietly. "Listen up, we've got ourselves a bit of a situation here. President Vidon has just declared war on the Confederation of Judeui and the Ladin West Company-"

"It's about time," Biss interrupted. "I'm looking forward to kicking some-"

"Will you be silent and allow me to continue?" Sho snapped back.

Biss simply nodded.

"Thank you. Now, we were originally going to go to Petir," Sho continued, "but we're being re-routed someplace else."

"Where?"

"Vario Station 9, a secret facility located towards the edge of the Vario system. From there, the civilians will be chartered back to Petir safely," Sho informed him.

“Why the unnecessary stop?” Biss asked. “If we’re going back to Petir anyways, why not just save time and go straight there?”

“Because you and me are on this transport, that’s why. We’re the only non-civilians here, and we *need* to be on Station 9.”

Biss considered his words for a moment, searching his mind trying to remember where he’d heard of “Station 9” before. Then he remembered: on Petir, just graduating from the VUM training academy. He’d heard High General Teali and a man he didn’t recognize talking about it, but Biss had heard mention of the name, nothing more.

“I’ve never even heard of this ‘Station 9’ place,” Biss lied. “Who and what’s there?”

“For one,” Sho started, “Private Dunkin, Staff Sergeant Vedu, and majority of the other members of your platoon.”

Biss let out a much-needed sigh of relief. Even since he’d woken up from underneath the guard tower’s debris, he’d worried about his fellow comrades’ safety. The news, *if* it could be trusted, was good news to say the least.

“Okay, but what *is* Station 9?”

“To tell you the truth, I don’t quite know. I haven’t been sent any Intel on what exactly it is. All I know is that former President Poe had it constructed a few years back, and that was just completed a couple of weeks ago. Supposedly, it’s a brand-spanking-new, state-of-the-art, secret space station used by members of the Vario United Military’s special forces and the VIA.”

The VIA was the Vario Intelligence Agency, which was responsible for providing information to the Vario United Military, and monitoring things from comlink signals to bomb frequencies. Most of its operations were kept secret, and its doings classified. Recently, however, the VIA was making it publicly known they were investigating the functions and associates of the Ladin West Company. Biss assumed it was a simple show of force.

“So what are we going to do when we get there?” Biss asked.

“If my sources are correct,” Sho stated, “we’ll be back on Dadde within a week.”

Biss looked at him, wondering just how truthful Sho was actually being. He was, of course, lying about some part of it. Promising the reunion of his comrades, the chance for revenge on Dadde, playing innocent in the whole deal: it was all too suspicious for its own good.

Still, Biss didn’t object, and said nothing. He merely nodded his head, before returning back to

his seat with the other passengers. His pocket-chrono made him realize time was seemingly passing slower than he desired. He looked to his left, smiled at the child next to him, then closed his eyes, trying to catch some sleep...

The armored limousine speeder came to a dead stop before landing softly on the ground in front of the Vario Intelligence Agency's headquarters: the Von-Vin Building, named after the founder of the agency. With three police speeders in both front and back of the limousine, along with a transport ready to deploy an entire platoon of special forces troops, the motorcade looked impressive. As President Vidon exited the limousine after receiving the "all-clear" from Crowl Ley, he looked around to see dozens of civilians and members of the media shouting out questions. The platoon of VUM special forces troops deployed out from their transport, forming ranks up the steps towards the main entrance of the Von-Vin Building, keeping the crowd at bay. As Crowl and Anas ascended up the steps, walking ever-so closer and closer to the building, the massive front doors of the building slid open, revealing the large, pyramid-like, glass-themed lobby of the building.

Usually, civilians were permitted to access this level, the museum, which was one of the hottest tourist attractions on Petir. Today, however, the entire building was sealed off, and no unauthorized personal were permitted in the building, not even maintenance or custodian workers, just officials and officers of the VIA were allowed inside today.

And this unusual policy is what caused the mob of onlookers and media personal outside of the building's gated perimeter. They all wanted to know why the VIA building was closed to the public, and why the President of the Vario United Systems along with a platoon of VUM special forces troops were showing up.

For Anas, the answer was simple. He'd overheard his High General, Teali, discussing something called "Station 9" with a colonel of the VUM. When Anas had asked him about Station 9, Teali immediately got defensive and protective, stuttering and accusing Anas of worrying about things that didn't concern him. Obviously, Teali had been keeping this "Station 9" a secret from Anas, but Anas was more concerned about the reason for Teali doing so. Why would his own High General hide something? He *was* the President, after all, and therefore the highest, most-powerful man in the Vario system, and yet Teali had *lied* to him.

The very thought caused hurt to Anas. Teali wasn't just his High General and most trusted officer, but also one of his best friends. The thought that Teali would lie to him to his face was like a kick to the groin.

Still, even after getting caught, Teali had kept his mouth shut about Station 9, saying he was sworn to secrecy. He wouldn't even answer anything else, and Anas could tell Teali was fearing his own safety from whoever he'd sworn to. So, for Teali's safety, Anas ordered him to be restrained and placed into protective custody, and held within a secluded, secret cell deep within the Hail Hatengton House, with Crowl Ley's best men guarding him around the clock.

As Anas and Crowl passed into the empty lobby, they turbolift doors slid open, and the two stepped inside, riding it to the top floor. When they exited, a polite Twi'lek woman escorted them inside a large, circular office. The office's walls were adorned with decorations and various shelves featuring unique items, including a couple lightsabers and a tunic of a Sith apprentice. The burgundy-colored carpet looked almost red against light shining in through the tinted, long, thin window, which covered the entire far wall, offering a breathtaking panoramic view of the city's skyline.

But Anas had no intention of admiring scenery. He could do that anytime. Now, he was focused on meeting with the middle-aged male Bothan that was extending his hand to Anas. Anas politely shook the Bothan's hand, before accepting his offer of taking a seat.

"President Vidon, I must admit I was rather surprised when your assistant contacted me requesting an emergency meeting earlier this morning," the Bothan said.

"Why? As the Director of the Vario Intelligence Agency, you should be use to meeting with the President. Please explain your nervousness, Neegston," Anas demanded.

Neegston smiled through gritted teeth. "Of course," he said casually. "Although, in the past, it *has* been common for VIA's director and the President to meet, we, meaning you and I, haven't done so yet."

As Anas considered his words, he found them to conjure up one, lousy excuse.

"In addition," Neegston added with a raised index finger, "your assistant seemed rather anxious and concerned. As the director of the VIA, it is my job to sort out the meaning of people's expressions and to see through them truthfully."

"It is your job to report to *me*," Anas added stiffly. "And, thus far, you haven't sent a single progress report."

“Progress report on what?” the Bothan asked.

“Station 9.”

That was all Anas had to say. The Bothan’s eyes filled with shock, and his lips began to tremble lightly. Neegston turned to his assistant.

“Leave us, please.”

Without question, the Twi’lek assistant bowed her head slightly before turning and exiting the room, the office doors sliding close behind her.

Anas leaned back in his seat, putting on a cool, relaxed expression.

“I’m waiting,” he added smoothly.

“How did you find out?” Neegston asked him bluntly.

“That’s irrelevant,” Anas responded. “I want to know why you kept this a secret from your President.”

Anas was trying to leave the impression that he knew more than he actually did, and, as far as he could tell, it was working. Neegston simply, and rather noticeably, shifted uncomfortably back and forth in his seat. During this, Crowl Ley motioned with his hand, and a squad of VUM troopers entered the office. Crowl removed a pair of handcuff restraints from his belt-hook and approached Neegston.

“Director Neegston, by order of President Anas Vidon, I hereby place you under arrest for treason against the Vario United Systems. You will be subject to interrogation by President Vidon himself, during which time if you do not fully cooperate you will be charged with three more counts of felony treason.”

As Crowl read the warrant, Neegston sat blankly in his seat, too stunned to respond. He gave no resist as Crowl slapped the restraints on his wrist or when the squad of VUM troopers escorted him out of the building with Anas and Crowl following closely behind. Anas and Crowl reentered the limousine speeder, and the entire motorcade returned back to the Hail Hatengton House.

Chapter VII:

Biss unfastened his seat-belt as the transport’s passenger hatchway opened. The other passengers, as instructed, remained seated. Biss, Sho, and another VUM soldier Biss didn’t recognize

stood and exited the transport.

Immediately, Biss' nostrils filled with the smell of durasteel and industrialization. The hangar bay was filled with starships and metallic crates loaded with supplies. The entire hangar, from the floors to the walls to the rafters and ceiling was made out of durasteel. Dozens of workers moved in organized patterns, completing their duties and completely ignoring the transport's arrival. Majority - in fact all off the workers were humans, most of them males. They looked overworked and even exhausted, like butter spread over too much bread. Until he came to a complete stop, Biss hadn't even realized the slight, faint, soft vibration underneath his feet.

As if he had read his thoughts, Sho turned and looked at Biss. "I know there weren't any viewports on the transport so you couldn't see it, but this station is massive. It takes a lot of engines, stabilizers, and artificial gravity projectors to keep this baby moving. You can, as you noticed, feel these machines at work."

A little realization thought popped into Biss' head. "I thought you said you knew nothing about this place. You're contradicting what you told me earlier."

Sho didn't acknowledge Biss' challenge in any way. He simply continued to walk towards the far side of the hangar, and Biss, having nothing else to do, followed him. They eventually came to the end of the hangar, where Sho pushed the turbolift's call button and the lift's large, durasteel doors slid open. The turbolift itself was large enough for three or four starfighters to fit in, indicating there was more than one levels hangar bays. The two of them rode the lift up nineteen levels, to Deck 132, before getting off and getting on another, smaller passenger turbolift where that rode it to Deck 12. Here, the station had a more office or residential feel, and felt less like a warehouse or hangar. Up here, people, still predominantly male humans, began to stare and question Sho and Biss' reason for being on this level. Biss was smart enough to realize that that meant they were closer to something or someone more valuable than their hangars.

Just as they were about to pass through an open set of doors, two guards, one on either side, stepped in front of their path, the doors closing behind them.

"This area is restricted to authorized personal only. Please vacate the area immediately." But Sho stood his ground, raising his head high-up confidently. After a moment, the two guards both upholstered their sidearm and aimed directly at Sho's face.

"Guards, stand down at once and allow the visitors access to the control center."

The voice was that of male speaking over the intercom. The two guards instantly holstered their blaster pistols and stepped aside, allowing Sho and Biss to pass freely. The doors slid open and Sho and Biss entered the tactical control saloon. The room was circular and was a dozen levels tall, with different walkways and balconies holding desks and chairs for different officers. Large viewscreens lined the walls on every level throughout the entire saloon, offering maps and surveillance camera feeds from different parts all around the entire galaxy.

Biss was honestly impressed. The amount of credits that would've had to go into making a station like this was insane. The crew members were completely focused on whatever tasks they were doing, and Biss noticed that they were wearing VIA uniforms.

He continued to follow Sho up several walkways and flights of steps up a couple levels. They then passed through a guarded doorway, with the door sliding close behind them. The office was rather small and dark, yet somehow Biss felt comfortable. The walls were bare, and the only furniture was a desk and some chairs on the far side of the room, which Sho and Biss approached.

Sitting behind the desk was a tall, male Falleen with greenish skin. He wore a VIA officer's suit, with multiple awards, medals, and stars upon it, along with an insignia signifying his rank.

"I'm Colonel Raken of the VIA. I take it you two are Private First Class Dane Biss and Mister Vein Sho," the Falleen said as he extended his hand.

Both Biss and Sho politely shook the colonel's hand, then took their seats on the opposite side of his desk.

"So," Raken said as he took his seat, "what service can I be to the Order of Seta, Mister Sho?"

"We indeed are in need of your services, colonel. In fact, I'll call it a necessity."

The colonel leaned back in his chair, smiled, and nodded as if hearing that was some sort of honor. "Well then what can I do for you?"

"To start," Sho began, "I need bugs inside Hei DiVon's house - in his bedroom to be specific."

"Has the High General approved that?" Raken asked.

"Wait a minute," Biss interrupted. He turned to Sho. "You know High General Teali?"

But Sho simply waved a hand at him, signaling for him to be silent, before turning back to Raken.

"This is war, colonel," he continued. "We must do whatever is necessary. You know that is the Order's true reason and belief for peace."

"And spying on the chairman of the Company is going to help us?" Raken demanded.

“President Vidon listed Hei DiVon just as much a traitor as the members of the Judeui Council themselves,” Sho responded.

Raken sighed and considered this, then nodded his head in agreement.

“Consider it done,” he said. “What else can I do?”

“Sometime today, if not already, President Vidon will learn of this station’s existence. He will imprison both High General Teali and Director Neegston before coming *here* personally. He will demand an audience with you, during which time he will have you secretly arrested and charge you with treason.”

Sho’s words stunned both Biss and Raken. At first, Biss doubted Sho’s statement. But as seconds passed, he realized more and more than Sho was not an ordinary man aligned with an ordinary faction of people. There was something odd about him, and that’s the only reason Biss believed what he had just said.

After what seemed like forever, Raken cleared his throat and spoke. “So what would you have me do?”

“Flee Station 9 immediately. Order all crew members that they are temporarily under my command. I’ll redirect the President here, speak to him myself, and have your name cleared. Give me a week at most.”

Very hesitantly, Raken nodded his head. “Okay,” he said softly.

Sho nodded as well. “Good to hear, colonel.” He stood, and Biss did the same. “I’ll give you an hour to pack and make the announcement.”

Without saying another word, and with Biss following him, Sho turned and exited the office, the doors sliding close behind them.

Anas felt a faint jerk as his starship exited hyperspace. His pilot, a female Fondorian named Macrise, turned and looked at Anas.

“Arrived at the coordinates, sir,” she reported. “We have visual on Station 9.”

“Good, continue approach and demand permission to dock.”

“Aye, sir,” Macrise said, turning her attention back to the controls.

Anas watched as she, along with the co-pilot, conversed with the docking officer of Station 9 over the

radio. Eventually, the docking officer's superior gave them permission, and Macrise piloted the multi-million credit luxurious yacht towards the Station 9.

From what Anas could see through the cockpit's viewport, the space station was massive, resembling holo-videos of the long-destroyed ancient Star Forge which had been constructed tens of thousands of years earlier. Still, Anas was no expert or Jedi historian, therefore he wasn't sure if the two space station were related in any way.

Station 9's exterior was covered with steam exhaust ports, vents, viewports, and exposed electrical wires and other maintenance hatches. It also housed what appeared to be hundreds of heavy turbolasers. To Anas, the entire station looked like a prototype that wasn't even finished. Still, if Neegston had been just as truthful with its location as its details, then Station 9 was fully operational and completed.

As Macrise piloted the ship closer and closer, Anas felt more and more nervous. This station, whatever it was, whatever it did, was authorized behind his back. He knew virtually nothing regarding it, except what Neegston had admitted to him, which wasn't a whole lot to begin with. All he knew was that Station 9 was mainly operated by the VIA and a secret cult called the Order of Seta, and that Station 9 was designed for multiple things, mainly for gathering intelligence for throughout the entire galaxy.

Finally, Macrise landed in one of the station's hangar bays, and after a couple minutes Crowl Ley came and informed Anas it was safe to exit the yacht. As Anas descended down his ship's ramp, then crossed the hangar bay and entered a large turbolift, he took mental notes of the interior of the station.

Workers seemed to not mind his presence, obviously confident that if Anas' crew was authorized to be on the station in the first place, they were authorized to walk around it. Anas followed Crowl silently as his bodyguard led him into a bare, almost empty office on Deck 12. The only furniture in the dull, boring office was a desk, a couple viewscreens, and a few chairs.

Sitting in one of those chairs on the opposite side of the desk was a human male, dressed in a rather unique outfit that was unlike those of the other crew members. Anas instantly knew that the man wasn't with the VIA, and wasn't Colonel Raken, the man he was *supposed* to have met with. Still, the man politely rose and extended his hand to Anas as the President approached the desk.

"President Vidon, welcome to our facility," the man said.

Rather than shaking his hand, Anas gave the man a cold, hard, piercing stare before taking his seat.

“I don’t like being stood up,” Anas said simply.

The man sighed and then, oddly enough, smiled. He lowered his hand than took a seat opposite side of the desk as Anas. Crowl gently rested his hand on his own holstered blaster pistol, but Anas waved him off. His bodyguard loyally took a seat, obeying Anas’ command.

“I take it you are aware that I am not Colonel Raken,” the man stated.

“For one, you’re not a Falleen. So, now that we got that out of the way, if you’d please be so kind as to tell me just who the hell you are.”

“My name is Vein Sho, I’m a Knight Brother in the Order of Seta. I temporarily relieved Colonel Raken of duty prior to your arrival for his own well-being,” the man answered casually.

“On whose authority, Brother Sho?”

The man chuckled. “Please call me *Mister* Sho, not Brother Sho. That title hasn’t been used by Order members for generations.”

Anas leaned forward onto the desk. “I’m interested to the fact as to why you think you can talk to the President of Vario as if I’m some low-life scum. You’re relieving officers of the VIA without proper authorization and are proclaiming to be this illegal station’s commander. I could charge you with treason, Mister Sho!”

“No, you can’t because I’m not a licensed citizen of the Vario system. In fact, I was born on Corellia, and I don’t even live here,” Sho protested.

“Then I’ll charge you with creating a space station without the president’s approval,” Anas countered.

“Is that even a law?” Sho pondered sarcastically.

Anas slammed his fists down on the desk and stood aggressively. Sho, however, simply looked at him impassively.

“Oh, are you going to hit me?” Sho asked him, feigning his fear.

“I would certainly like to,” Anas said through gritted teeth.

“But you won’t,” Sho said, wagging a finger at him. He stood and smiled at Anas, mocking him. “Because you know, deep down, that I *am not* someone you want to cross, despite the fact you don’t even know who I am or what the Order of Seta is. You know that if I had the power to relieve a colonel of your military, then I have a considerable amount of power against you.”

Sho walked out from behind the desk and began to pace around the office. “In a way, you, the president of one of the largest governments in the entire galaxy, fear me,” he said. “You dread my abilities, simply because you do not know them.”

Anas stared at him with much malice and hate for the man he’d just met. However, this Sho was correct: he did worry about his abilities. Not even the president, Anas himself, could just relieve a VUM colonel from his post. Sho was obviously a man with connections, and that made him somewhat dangerous. Still, Anas couldn’t just lay down and allow this man to speak to him in such a way.

“Crowl, please arrest Mister Sho,” Anas ordered.

His bodyguard’s eyes widened. “On what charges, sir?”

“We’ll decide that later. Until then, since the Vario United Systems *is* in a state of war, I have the right to make an arrest and detain any individual I see fit for up to one standard week.”

Sho grinned and raised his wrist. “Fair enough,” he said.

Crowl stepped forth and placed a pair of handcuff restraints on Sho before leading him out of the room. Not a minute later, Anas’ assistant, Stoe Whi, entered, his datapad in hand. Anas took a seat behind the desk, and Stoe sat opposite of him.

“Mister President, I have something to-”

“Put out an arrest warrant for Colonel Raken, and void all his military rights and security clearances,” Anas interrupted.

“I was just going to refer to that, sir. Coruscant Security Force officers found Colonel Raken’s corpse near the Temple district earlier this morning. It appears he was shot with a blaster, execution-style in the back of the head.”

Anas sighed and cursed under his breath. “How many squads of troopers did we bring with us here?”

“Four squads, eight troops per squad,” Stoe answered.

“Send a squad back in my yacht along with that Sho guy back to Petir. I want them to go back to the Hail Hatengton House immediately, and detain him there under constant surveillance in high-security. I want him secluded from Neegston and Teali,” Anas commanded. “Do I make myself clear?”

“Of course, Mister President,” Stoe said sharply. The assistant pressed several buttons and notes on his datapad, and a half a minute later looked back up at Anas patiently. “Done. Anything else, sir?”

“Yes,” Anas continued. “I want an entire VUM fleet here orbiting and surrounding the station

immediately, and I want a Galactic Alliance investigator here as soon as possible.”

Stoe nodded, turned his attention back to his datapad, and started to spread the order. Anas leaned back in his chair, rubbing his fingertips over the closed balls of his eyes...

Biss watched silently in the crowd of Station 9 crew members as Sho was escorted into a luxurious yacht which departed the station in a hurry mere minutes after. Half an hour ago, he'd seen President Vidon himself exit from the yacht, but now he hadn't seen him re-board it, which meant one thing: the president was still on Station 9.

Not but half a minute after the yacht left, the crowd of workers disbanded, and continued their duties. Biss, however, had no duties. He didn't even know what this station was. Sho had guaranteed him safety and security, but that was impossible now that Sho was off the station and incarcerated. Biss began to seriously doubt his decisions, wishing he would've just stayed on the transport, ignored Sho, and enjoyed a return to Petir peacefully. Instead, he was now stuck on some top-secret space station, and the man that had brought him there had just been arrested by the President of Vario.

Still, he couldn't let his mind falter. He had to stay focused on his new task: to escape Station 9 unnoticed. Sure, he probably could hijack a starcruiser and escape, but the President himself had just arrested someone moments ago for simply knowing about Station 9, so it was a good bet that if they found out Biss knew about it as well, he'd be done for. And Biss didn't even want to think about what *done* meant.

So he casually acted like an uninformed worker, following the crowd of people, his mind racing to find a new idea and means of escape.

“*Dane?*”

The sudden call from a familiar voice made Biss stop dead in his tracks. Relief washed over him like a wave of ice cold water after spending weeks in a hot, barren wasteland. Biss spun around slowly to see his old companion and his squad commander standing behind him.

“Where the hell have you been?” Private Ale Dunkin asked him.

He came forth and hugged his best friend and dearest comrade. Biss then received a one-armed hug from Staff Sergeant Vedu.

“How in the kriff did you two get here?” Biss stuttered, still overcome with surprise.

“A couple of guys from something called the ‘Order of Seta’ brought us here. They said you’d be here, and here you are,” Vedu answered.

“Same thing happened to me,” Biss explained, “but the guy I came with was just arrested by President Vidon.”

Dunkin and Vedu exchanged glances, and Biss could feel their uneasiness.

“What? Come on, what? What’s going on,” Biss pressed on.”

“Well,” Dunkin started, “the guy that brought us here predicted that the president would be here, but we never believed him.”

Biss sighed. “Well he *is* here, and my only way off of here isn’t.”

“Then we’ll take you to the people that brought us here. They’ve set up a little makeshift command center in an empty storage room. This way.”

Chapter VIII:

Hei DiVon, founder and CEO of the Ladin West Company, entered his office on the top floor of the Stelin Building, located on the world of Debuk, Judeui’s capital planet.

The office’s dark orange and black theme suited DiVon well, as they were two of his favorite colors. A large Ladin West Company emblem lay engraved on the black marble floor. Walking up a few stairs, the large platform area contained a seating area on either side, and a large, black, marble, oval-shaped desk with a viewscreen embedded in it as well as multiple touch screen command consoles for easy command of DiVon’s many responsibilities as CEO. Behind the desk, a comfortable, expensive, black and dark orange armed chair rested three meters from the large, long transparisteel window that circled the entire room. Altogether, the floor rested atop of the Stelin Building, named after DiVon’s late father, Stalin DiVon, on the eighth hundredth floor, over seven hundred meters above Debuk’s surface.

So now, DiVon sat in the chair, and pressed the call button, a beep echoing throughout the room.

“Yes, Mister DiVon?” his secretary, Delij, asked over the speaker.

“Delij, can you please send me last quarters stock finals. I’m trying to make some decisions here.”

After a moment, the Twi'lek woman replied "I already have, sir. Check your unread messages."

DiVon activated the flat touch screen console on his desk and, sure enough, the reports were indeed already there.

"Must've missed it when you were looking for it earlier," she said, a slight hint of insult staining her voice.

"*Obviously*," DiVon commented, stretching out the word in irritation with her. Without anytime of warning or farewell, he ended the call.

Just as soon as he started to observe the reports, another call chimed in. Sighing in annoyance, he answered it.

"What?" he snapped, still unsure of the caller.

"I just wanted to remind you that I'm on my way as you requested yesterday evening," the male voice said. The speaker was Lewo Dijo, DiVon's personal assistant and adviser.

Not an actual employee of the Company, Lewo was paid by DiVon himself, and was one of the most important people in DiVon's life. He was the man who typed all of DiVon's speeches, told him what to say during interviews, and, for the most part, advised DiVon on anything that could be advised about. DiVon admitted he could not have become so successful and amounted to so much without Lewo, and so he paid Lewo very much for his work.

"Of course I haven't forgotten," DiVon lied. "I'll see you soon."

The call ended, and DiVon refocused on his work: preparing for a counter-strike against the Vario United Systems. And his plans didn't include an attack or ambush. No, he had better ideas. He didn't want to destroy Vario through brute force, but rather deception and secrecy. Vario President, Anas Vidon, now knew about Station 9, just as DiVon himself did, and the Judeui Council did not.

And that reminded DiVon of his meeting with the Judeui Council tomorrow morning, where they would come to his office and ask him for help and to act against Vario, and where he would refuse their requests as he'd done countless times before. For some reason, he couldn't make those foolish politicians understand that victory simply *wouldn't* come through brute force. The goal wasn't to start a galactic-wide war that would get the Galactic Alliance involved, but instead replace the Vario United Systems altogether with themselves. *That* was how true victory would come.

After continuing to study the stock reports for several minutes, DiVon heard the door to his office slide open. He switched off his viewscreen, and looked up to see Lewo walking towards him.

The male human wore only the finest of robes, his attire matching the color of his hazel eyes. The man had tan skin, with pearly white teeth and long, dark brown hair pulled back neatly in a ponytail.

Lewo came and sat in the chair on the opposite side of DiVon's desk. He leaned forward, and inserted a datachip into one of the consoles on DiVon's desk. Instantly, a map of Dadde, Soni City to be specific, appeared.

“As you know, we took Soni City yesterday. I must admit, it went quicker than expected.”

DiVon nodded. “Because it was an ambush, and *unauthorized* by me!” The reply came in the form of a furious shout.

“I told you not to do a damn thing, Lewo, and you betrayed my trust in you. I thought you were capable of handling things to my satisfaction for the couple days I was in custody. If I would've known that's what you were going to do, I never even would've went to Petir to be arrested in the first place.”

Lewo sighed. “I did what I felt was best at the time?”

“That is bullshit, and you know it! Betraying my command is not in your best interest!” DiVon bellowed.

“Are you threatening me, Mister DiVon?” Lewo asked him, completely insincere.

It was one of the things DiVon admired most about the man. Like DiVon himself, Lewo was capable of holding his temper when necessary. They each could take a beating or yelling without even getting upset. Just common sense for good business, DiVon figured.

“Whilst I admire your courage, Lewo, take me seriously when I say this: do not *ever* cross a direct order again? Understand?”

After a moment, he nodded in agreement. There was no point in arguing with an angry DiVon, and both Lewo and DiVon himself knew it.

“So, moving on: we have a speech to give tomorrow morning to give to the Judeui Council when they come in acting all polite, but really just want to continue to use me. Any advice?” the CEO asked.

“Let them,” Lewo replied. “What do we care what they think of you?”

DiVon actually scowled.

“It matters everything,” he said. “My image is what got me this far against Vario in the first place. You know my goal good and well, and it's different from that of the idiotic members of the

Judeui Council.”

“Any Bantha drugged up on Spice with a fusion cutter can see you share no love with the Judeui Council,” Lewo said.

DiVon chuckled. “Nice figure of speech.”

Lewo reached back and pulled the band out from his hair, allowing his long, wavy hair to drop down past his shoulders. He closed his eyes and began to rub his fingertips gently over his eyelids.

“Okay we don’t really know that much at this point, but the Judeui Council obviously cannot learn this,” Lewo said, his eyes still close. “If they find out, our ‘partnership’ with them will end as we know it. We need to keep assuring them well be acting against President Vidon soon - very soon.”

“Then we won’t really have to lie all that much,” DiVon responded. “Because I intend to ‘act’ very soon indeed.”

FOUR STANDARD DAYS LATER

PFC Dane Biss stood in the apartment building, on its 201st floor, on the Vario system’s capital planet, Petir. In front of him was a door marked “*Biss Residence*” where his parents lived.

After spending three days aboard Station 9, the Order of Seta members who had brought Staff Sergeant Vedu and Dunkin to the station had just recently gotten them off of it and transported to Petir, as promised, through stowing them aboard cargo crates in a smuggling compartment. Now, both Dunkin and Vedu would be visiting their families just as Biss was about to do.

However, deep down, Biss was anxious and, in a way, nervous. He hadn’t seen or even contacted his parents since he joined the VUM three years ago, much to the disliking of his parents. His father was an ex-military man, but for some reason did not approve when Biss himself joined the military. His mother was a pacifist, and anti-war activist. Ever since joining the military, neither Biss’ father nor mother approved of him.

So with shaky hands and a trembling heart, he pressed the call button the door’s controls. After several moments, they slid open. The man on the other side was the spitting image of Biss himself.

Ceig Biss was a man in his late forties, with black hair that was becoming grayer and grayer everyday. He had a little goatee on his chin that was equally becoming gray, and black eyes, just like

Biss himself. The man wore common citizen's attire, in comfortable relaxation clothing suited for a day around the house.

"Poppa."

It was all Biss could manage to say to his father, whom offered no reply but simply stepped aside and allowed Biss to pass silently. Biss did so, and stepping into the apartment, which was decorated beautifully in a fashion similar to the style on Coruscant. Large, glass windows lined the walls, with luxurious red furniture adorning the floor space.

And then he saw his mother, a woman rather beautiful for a woman that was forty-six standard years-old. Like her father and Biss himself, she had dark hair and black-colored eyes, with tan, flawless skin. No wrinkles were present at any level. Biss mentally noted he got his good looks from her.

"Look who's here, Shiva," Ceig Biss said.

Biss' mother, who was watching a holodrama on the living room's viewscreen, turned and gasped in surprise. She immediately leaped up to her feet, running and embracing her only child, tears streaming from her eyes. When Biss realized that at least his mother had missed him, it brought a slight relief and some comfort. His father, he knew, would be more stubborn, but eventually would give back his love as well.

So Biss cherished the smell of his mother's scent, the same scent he'd remembered as a child. The same scent he remembered since he'd left home the minute he reached eighteen standard years old, adulthood, and enlisted in the Vario United Military.

"Why did you come back, boy?"

His father's words ruined the very moment, he knew this was the time to defend himself.

"This is *my* home," Biss said to his father.

His mother, Shiva, nodded her head sharply in an approval.

"And that's perfectly alright with me," she said, defending her son whom she hadn't heard from in years.

Without warning or any indication, Ceig separated Biss from his mother, grabbing Biss and placing him in a front-faced arm-headlock. Biss made no attempt to resist.

"I did what I felt was best at the time. I'm not stupid, Poppa! I knew they were going to be starting the draft up against soon. I wanted to serve my two years before it got rough."

"You served your one term of two years, but why'd you enlist into a second term?" his father

demanded, his hold beginning to loosen.

“You served for ten terms,” Shiva countered.

“You’re damn right I did,” Ceig said, releasing Biss in a jerk that caused his son to stumble backwards. “And I *know* what it takes to make a career out of the military. Son, I love you with all my heart, but you *do not* have what it takes.”

“Don’t give me that bullshit!” Biss shouted. “You just wanted to play hero. You were never a father to me! You were always out playing soldier. You hardly know me!” Biss managed a chuckle. “I bet you don’t even know when my birthday is do you, you old bastard? So don’t - *just don’t* - tell me about myself! You have no idea.”

Silence covered the room. At the urging and tugging of his mother, Biss sat down next to her on the couch. Ceig sat on the opposite side of the living room in a lounge red and silver-colored chair. It was completely obvious to Biss that his father held no compassion for him at the current time. It was almost as if his father still loved him, but didn't like him, if that made sense at all. It seemed to for Biss. His father, deep down, cared for his son, but his stubbornness and anger was clouding his actions...and his speech.

So Biss sat in silently, allowing some of the tension to slightly die down. After a moment, his mother, Shiva, spoke.

“Honey,” she started, her words directed towards her husband, “we've got to forgive him. I already have, in fact. He's our *son*.”

“If that's the only reason you'll forgive me then save your forgiveness, I won't want it,” Biss said hastily.

“Hey, help me out here, will you?” his mother said, shooting Biss a dirty look.

“I shouldn't need help getting my own parents' love. It should come automatically, along with your support and friendship,” Biss commented.

“You didn't exactly obey our wishes,” Shiva countered.

Biss stood.

“I did what I felt was right, dammit!” he shouted. “I enlisted in the VUM to serve and protect our government, just like *you* did, father, for twenty years. So do not give me the whole 'the military's a bad thing' argument. I deserve better.”

His mother looked up at him, gazing upon her son's anger and apparent fury. In reality, Biss was

over-exaggerating, and being a little dramatic for the sake of his father's forgiveness. Despite not displaying it, Biss *needed* his father's forgiveness, and needed it with a passion.

“Okay, okay, Dane,” his father said softly. “But you must understand: we were worried about you. We feared you were dead. When he heard about the attack on Dadde, we wondered if-”

Ceig allowed his sentence to trail off, his voice trembling. Without another second's hesitation, Biss jumped forward and embraced his father in a hard, long-overdue hug. The relief washed over Biss like a wave, crashing against his heart, making him receive the cure for the emotional disease he'd carried for so many years.

But it was all interrupted soon enough. The main entrance door's control panel chimed, signifying a person was requesting entrance outside of the door. Biss and his father released each other, but when Biss started towards the door, Ceig waved a hand, indicating that he himself would respond to the visitor. But before he Ceig could even take five steps, a grinding sound started from the door, like a saw cutting through metal.

“They're cutting the lock,” Ceig whispered.

Motioning for his family to stay put, Ceig moved quickly but silently, rather agile for a man of his age, into the master bedroom. After a few moments, he returned with a blaster shotgun in one hand, a blaster pistol in another. He tossed the pistol to Biss, who made sure the power-pack was fully charged before loading it. Ceig cocked his weapon, and aimed from his hip towards the direction of the door.

Shiva, Biss' mother, got down onto the floor to lay prone, hoping and shots would pass over her. After several more moments, the sawing sound ceased, and the front door slid open. Immediately, a flash-bang stun grenade detonated, tossed from someone outside of the door. The light temporarily blinded Biss, while the shock of it all caused him to stumble. He dropped down onto one knee and fired a shot through the doorway, and saw the red, blaster shot beam of energy strike someone. Instantly, dozens of blaster shots flew from the doorway, causing Biss and Ceig to take cover behind their expensive furniture.

Ceig responded by unloading over two dozen shots rapidly, the shotgun blaster booming throughout the entire apartment. It was then when Biss first actually saw their targets: troopers in full-body armor of the Divido, the armored special forces division of the Ladin West Company's security. There were at least seven of them that Biss could spot out, and surely more outside the apartment. Ceig

continued to fire his weapon, but the Divido were already converging on his cover-place.

Happening next, a middle-aged Human male dressed in golden armor adorned with a black outline and violet cloth charged in, completely and utterly weaponless. Biss instantly recognized the man as Vein Sho, a Knight Brother from the Order of Seta. Sho fought gallantly, using his bare hands and martial arts skills to take down multiple troopers from the Divido. With the aid of Biss, the two of them quickly defeated their attackers.

The firing stopped, and the bodies of the Divido lay still, the stench of burnt flesh swarming over the apartment. As the smoke cleared, Biss saw Sho help his mother, Shiva, to her feet. But as Biss drew near where his father had taken cover, a horrific sight covered his eyes: his father laying face-down on the floor, a two cauterized holes in his back.

Kneeling down beside him, Biss' shaky hands overturned his father's body, revealing his face. Ceig was mortally wounded, no doubt, but still alive for the moment, but only for a moment more. As he smiled, the sadness that overcame Biss was unbearable. His father's body slumped down, twitched once, then moved no more...

Chapter IX:

President Anas Vidon studied the reports on the viewscreen in front of him closely, making sure there was no possible way things could go wrong. The viewscreen displayed a map of Kisik, a world located towards the center within of the Vario system, which was currently being surrounded by warships from both the Company's Divido and the Judeui Military. Within a standard day, Anas knew, the ships would invade Kisik, and the word would be overrun.

Without Teali, his High General of the military, Anas knew the Council of Staff wouldn't be able to create a defense strong enough to withhold the oncoming invasion. So now, Kisik was undergoing a major mandatory evacuation, and within the next twenty-four hours, hopefully, the world would be deserted. Anas had ordered an entire field army, composed of over eight thousands soldiers, to Kisik for defense. He now hoped that the order wasn't in vain, and that the soldiers would be able to evacuate the civilians whilst still retreating safely.

“It's not impossible,” a general had told Anas confidently. “I'm confident they'll be completely safe and secure.”

The same general was now sitting at a round table in one of the tactical command saloons of Station 9. He no longer held the confident, victory-assured expression, but now rather one of defeat and sorrow, all but another sign to Anas the conflict against Judeui on Kisik would be devastating. The poor soldiers on the world, innocent, loyal fighters, would be wiped out because of Anas' one, single command.

But Anas' thoughts and fears were interrupted by the approach of Stoe Whi, Anas' personal assistant.

“Yes?” Anas asked him.

“Sir, we've got news regarding the arrest of a Mister Vein Sho,” Stoe offered politely.

“What about it?” Anas asked hastily.

“Well,” Stoe started, “it appears Mister Sho...*escaped*.”

“Explain. Now.”

“As your yacht was en route to Petir, during one of its hyperspace jump switches, it was rammed by a heavy frigate. Your yacht was destroyed, all crew killed, Mister Sho missing.”

Anas considered his assistant's words carefully, trying to think of a best possible response for new of this caliber.

“How can you be sure these attackers are related with Mister Sho? How do you not know they kidnapped him and murdered him shortly after the attack?” Anas questioned.

“Is that *really* likely?” Stoe protested. “He claimed to be connected, and apparently he was.” Anas knew these words to be true. The odds of the situation being otherwise was high unlikely. It was almost certain that this Vein Sho and his 'Order of Seta' were rather more powerful and capable than Anas had initially thought. But still, something didn't add up. The matter that the Order of Seta's frigate just so happened to be at one of the hyperspace jump coordinates when Anas' yacht was there were near impossible. It was obviously a setup, and by someone Anas knew and trusted closely.

And it was now that Anas realized that he couldn't trust anybody. Teali had betrayed him, as had Director Neegston and Colonel Raken. He had no *actual* friends, no parents, no family. He was alone. He had nobody.

Nobody.

The revelation brought him to his knees, causing Stoe to reach forth and prevent him from falling. Anas pushed his assistant away, and began to shout.

“This man is a traitor to our nation! Seize him immediately!”

At first, the crew members and Anas' bodyguards looked stunned, but then stepped into action, restraining Stoe in handcuffs, and bounding his feet and hands before hauling him away for incarceration, the assistant yelling and screaming that Anas had become a madman.

“You there,” Anas declared, pointing a finger at one of his bodyguards. “What is your name?”

“Triprs, sir. Sergeant Triprs”

“Well congratulations, *Captain* Triprs, you just made my friends list. Please inform the chief engine operator that I want the sublight engines maxed out at full throttle, and I want us in Petir orbit within a standard week. Are you capable of doing this, captain?” Anas questioned.

“Yes, Mister President. Right away, sir,” Triprs replied. Without another word, the newly-promoted captain scurried away to do Anas' bidding.

It was time for Anas to prove he was worthy of being President of the Vario United Systems. Time for him to show he could bring peace to the Vario system, even if it meant going through extreme lengths. He would, if need be, arrest every person that he once thought of as an ally, every person he'd once trusted. It was what had to be done. Vario government was corrupt, and he was going to purge the bad blood out, and refill it with what it *needed*: good people who wanted *peace*, not just control. That meant going against the public's – and maybe even Vario Senate's – desires, but it was what *had* to be done, so he would do it dutifully without hesitation or mercy. He would do the same to the Vario United Systems as Palpatine had done to the Jedi Order: purge it completely, and rebuild perfection from the ashes.

Of course, he would have to do so discretely, and without obviousness, for if he was eliminated from the picture - wither by death or arrest – then it was game over, and Judeui and Hei DiVon would've won. And that was something he *would not* stand for...

Biss sat in silence, stunned by the death of his own father. Vein Sho stood over his shoulder, holding his mother, Shiva, within his arms, comforting her.

It wasn't right. Not right. Not at all. Things had been so well. They'd come to terms, overlooked

their arguments. Yet within a matter of a minute, it was all dumped. All washed away, destroyed completely by two fatal shots fired from a Divido trooper that would forever change Biss' life. He was now fatherless, no figure in his life to fill that very essential position.

But now wasn't the time to mourn. Biss painfully managed to drag himself up onto his feet, standing tall as he once did.

“We've got to leave,” Sho said. “Undercover Divido agents are all over the place. They're swarming the building.”

“That doorway is the only way out,” Biss started. “We need to-”

He was once again cut off, this time by blaster fire, with shots barely missing the three of them. Acting on instinct, Sho rushed across the room, grabbed a lounge chair, and heaved it at the large, wall-covering window. After three hits and a powerful toss, the window gave away, and air began rush throughout the apartment due to its high elevation. Biss and his mother, Shiva, rushed over to Sho, who made a motion with his hand.

The signal alerted *somebody* to fire a zip-line cable at the window's edge, piercing through the metal in a secure manner. Sho then strapped a harness from his utility belt he was wearing onto Shiva, then edged her out the window to zip-line down and out of the building. Sho himself repeated this process, and then Biss.

After the three of them had zip-lined safely onto the roof of the building on the opposite of the apartment skyscraper, they cut the cable, ensuring the Divido's inability to follow them. The person that had fired the zip-line cable, a youngish-looking male Human dressed in citizen's attire.

“Where to?” Biss asked.

“Kisik,” Sho said simply.

Biss' curiosity senses in his head went tingling. Mere hours ago, he'd heard that Kisik was under mandatory evacuation due to a pending attack from Judeui and the Divido. Now, they were going to actually *go* there?

“You're joking right?”

When Sho didn't reply Biss added “Please tell me you're joking. Please.”

Sho shook his head in negativity. “Nope. I already have a transport lined up and ready for flight. This Enforcer here will be our pilot.”

“Enforcer?” Shiva asked.

“It's a rank in the Order of Seta. First comes Initiate, then Enforcer, then Knight Brother, followed by Master. Eventually, Masters may join the High Council, and be known as a Councilor. The leader of our order is referred to as the Master of the Order, or High Master or just the Master,” Sho explained to her.

Shiva's expression remained confused, despite the explanation. Sho turned and entered the building they were standing atop of. The four of them then began to descend down the many stairs.

“Since the formation of the old Galactic Republic, the Order of Seta had taken place in numerous events. We've started wars, assassinated leaders, and ended wars all alike. We've destroyed worlds using weapons, and we've destroyed worlds using politics. We've done whatever is necessary to ensure the overall peace and control throughout the galaxy, even if that means starting a little war of our own.”

The Human male Enforcer nodded in agreement.

“We're better than both the Jedi and Sith. The Republic and the Empire. The Alliance and any other government, for that matter. No matter what, we've survived for thousands of years to control peace. How do you think Palpatine won the elections? We thought it would be best at the time. However, we encouraged the Rebels to defend themselves when we realized we were wrong about the Empire's desire for peace. They wanted power, and only power.”

“So what's your involvement in *this* war?” Biss asked.

Sho smiled, which made both Biss and Shiva uneasy.

“Oh I can't tell you that,” he said. “Not yet.”

He continued down the stairwell, going down dozens of stories down to the first floor, exiting there. Leaving the building, a perfectly timed departure of a public inter-city transport allowed them to escape aboard it without the attention of the swarming Divido.

It was then Biss realized it wasn't just them they were after, but Petir itself. Warships of various classes and sizes orbited the world, transports delivering thousands of Judeui soldiers and Divido troopers pouring into the streets and different levels of the city. Biss saw virtually no resistance to the invaders.

“What is hell is going on?” Biss demanded.

“What will become known as the sacking of Petir,” Sho said coolly. “There is nothing that can be done. Majority of the Vario United Military's strength is either at Kisik or some other world on the

other side of the star system. Petir will be under Judeui control in a matter of hours.”

Stunned by the calmness in Sho's voice, Biss couldn't help feel but betrayed, despite the fact that he knew Sho had nothing to do with the invasion. He would just have to accept the fact that Petir, the capital world of the Vario United Systems, would be under Judeui control.

And there was nothing he could do about it...

Chapter X:

Anas sat in the chair at the round table in the tactical saloon at Station 9. Several of his best generals and advisers sat around the table with him, along with representatives from the Vario Intelligence Agency.

“Sir, just a quick sidetrack note: Director Neegston has been found guilty on two counts of treason. He is awaiting immediate execution, sir,” one of the generals said.

“Good,” Anas replied simply. “It is always good to see true justice served. What about Stoe Whi?”

“He is still on trial, along with High General Teali.”

“*Former* High General,” Anas corrected fiercely. “I removed him from his position days ago.”

“Yes, sir. *Former*,” the general repeated.

Anas viewed the report that was laying in front of him.

“Alright so give me the details. How did Petir, our own capital, get sacked so easily?” he asked.

“It was because you moved most of our forces to Kisik and its nearby words, Mister President. We didn't have enough forces to defend ourselves. Over ten thousand soldiers and three thousand citizens and counting have been killed in the attack, sir. It was short, but brutal.

“Just like Dadde,” one of the other generals added.

There was a murmur of agreement from the seated members from around the table.

“Would you rather me forfeit the command-in-chief of military forces section of my presidency over to you all?”

Another murmur of agreement.

“Then let the record state the I, President Anas Vidon of the Vario United Systems, am no longer

the commander-in-chief of the Vario United Military, whilst still maintaining my presidency.”

“Is that possible, Mister President?” one of the generals asked.

“I dearly hope so, because I just did, nonetheless,” Anas replied rhetorically.

This drew a small chorus of laughter from the individuals in the room, and Anas knew his position of President of the Vario United Systems was now secure with these people...

Hei DiVon stood behind his desk's chair, looking out the large, square window of his office. His mind was racing with thoughts. With happiness, with power, with anger, and yet fulfillment all at the same time.

He had successfully sacked Petir, one of his ultimate goals to control Vario. To make matters even better, they'd suffered minimal casualties, meaning that the invasion would look good in the public eye for the citizens of Judeui. So for all intensive purposes, they were halfway there; closer and closer to defeating Vario and its president.

So DiVon stood confidently looking out his window into the night, which was illuminated heavily by the many lights of the city. DiVon heard the door to his office slid open, but he didn't turn around to see who it was. He could see in the reflection in the window, and already knew the person's identity.

“I thought I'd ordered you to oversee the invasion of Petir. Why are you here?” DiVon asked.

“Because I *need* to be. Because *you* are my next objective,” said Lewo Dijo, DiVon's personal adviser and assistant.

“Care to explain at all?” DiVon asked.

Lewo didn't answer, but continued to walk closer and closer to DiVon, coming up to the opposite side of his desk a mere two meters away.

“Are you working for Vario?”

“No.”

“The Order of Seta?”

“No.”

DiVon silently confessed himself confused. He didn't understand anything, yet had to maintain his cool and collective expression.

“Then who are you with?” DiVon asked.

“*The Sith.*”

Lewo spat the words out like poison, but a poison he lusted for and was loyal to. Finally, DiVon understood.

Without warning, cracking streams of blue-violet, pure dark side Force lightning poured from Lewo's fingertips, hitting DiVon square in the back and launching him forward up against the glass, which shattered upon the impact. DiVon's body was ejected through the window, and began the plummet over seven hundred meters down to Debuk's surface..

Satisfied, Lewo turned to exit the office.

The first step in the new return of the Sith had just been taken. Soon enough, through manipulation and sheer brute force, the Sith would return, with him, Darth Awoi, the the Dark Lord, and leader of the new Sith Empire...

As Biss watched as their starship, an old freighter, escape Petir without the attention of any of the Judeui or Divido attackers, he couldn't help but fear for the safety of his two comrades, Ale Dunkin and Tibio Vedu. They had, just as Biss, been visiting their families. He hoped that they would've been able to escape just as he was right now.

But as he looked at the viewscreen showing the HoloNet, he couldn't help but doubt it. Entire skyscrapers were set ablaze in explosions and fire, the Presidential State Park's trees and other famous attractions were burning, the trees dead and the statues demolished. The Hail Hatengton House, the home and office of the President, was being swarmed by Divido troopers, its massive perimeter walls had breaches in it. The Vario Capitol was completely destroyed, and was now just a pile of durasteel, glass, and rubble.

In short, Petir was gone, nothing of the Vario United Systems left. And the most sickening part: Judeui and the Divido had done it all within two standard hours, with virtually no forces opposing them.

The sight of it all made Biss sick, and he just held his mother, whom was leaning up against him crying in silence, even closer. Their home was destroyed, as was their homeworld.

An now, they were on their way to another world: Kisik, which most likely would be the same

result come tomorrow...

Anas watched the viewscreen, which was displaying the HoloNet, as his *home*, the Hail Hatengton House, was being swarmed by Divido troopers. A gigantic Confederation of Judeui banner hung from the roof, covering many of the building's windows, including those that marked Anas' bedroom.

So now, the President simply sat and watched, helpless against the forces that had sacked Petir in a matter of a few standard hours. Still, he was confident that Vario would pull through, and that they would be victorious. As he sat at the round table in one of Station 9's tactical command saloons, he knew the blunt of his forces was massing at Kisik, where, most definitely, an epic battle was soon to take place.

This was no longer about politics now, Anas knew, but actual bloodshed and death. Dadde had been the first example, and now Petir. He was determined to use the forthcoming battle at Kisik to his advantage, and knew that of Vario could pull off a victory there, then they *could* win this war.

And they would win. Anas was sure of it. The doors to the saloon slid open, revealing the newly-promoted Captain Triprs, Anas' new "best friend," and another male Human.

The person that accompanied Triprs, the male Human, wore a formal suit and robes with a Galactic Alliance lapel on the left breast area. Immediately, Anas knew this person was someone that was going to bring bad news, or at least create it. The man's long, black hair was slicked back, his eyes just as black as his hair, his skin tan. He was a handsome man, who looked serious altogether at the same time.

"Mister President, this is Whin Stain of the Galactic Alliance," Triprs announced gloomily.

"*Admiral* Whin Stain," the man corrected politely. "Pleasure to meet you, President Vidon. I assume you want to know why a military admiral of the Alliance is aboard your top-secret space station."

"It has crossed my mind," Anas claimed sarcastically.

"Your *former* High General, Teali, ratted your government out," Stain said, the politeness now absent from him. "When the Senate learned this station's existence, it was an obvious violation of the treaty the Vario United Systems made with the Alliance years ago."

“Believe me, I *know* it's treason. I was unaware of its existence up until recently myself,” Anas informed him.

“Well you failed to inform the Alliance, so now you're being charged with treason from *us*. The Galactic Alliance Senate had invoked emergency powers to me personally to see that you're removed from office. So henceforth, Mister Vidon, you are no longer *President* Vidon.”

It was then Anas noticed the squad of Galactic Alliance Guard (or GAG) troopers, all dressed in black armor, massing in the room.

“Station 9 is now under Alliance control, and you will be escorted to Coruscant immediately,” Stain said, a smirk on his face. “*We* will settle this nonsense with the Confederation of Judeui, and *will* put an end to it at once. They won't war *us*.”

Without a single command, a GAG trooper bounded Anas' hands in handcuff restraints, and escorted him out of the room.

“It is time for us to end this. See to it that all Vario crew members are evacuated from this station, and shut it down immediately,” Stain ordered to the GAG lieutenant standing by his side.

It was time for the Alliance to take charge, and Stain was going to be the new face of the government. Soon enough, perhaps, he would be nominated for election as Chief of State.

And when that happened, he would take his place as Dark Lord of the Sith...