

*Arête BTL Quarters, Shadow Complex,
Port Ol'Val, Dajorra System, Outer Rim Territories*

The Onderonian glanced up from the tome on Sith Alchemy to make a note on a piece of flimsi. Not three days before, Celevon had received orders to further his experimentations from the Dark Council. While it was full of praise and flowery speech, it all boiled down to one thing: create a monster for the Brotherhood's usage.

The Prelate had wasted no time and immediately leapt into work. The original idea had been to use a humanoid species, though it had been quickly trashed. He was hardly skilled enough with human or near-human anatomy to recreate something that would essentially give the 'owner' complete control over their 'creature'. So, he had chosen an alternate: either a large feline or canine.

Celevon had received odd looks for requesting a freshly killed predator, though it would be done. The members needed something to do whilst they were not on assignment, after all.

What he was working on was the control area. A synthetic crystalline structure made with the blood of the prospective owner, which would replace the heart of the beast. The Obelisk had already crafted several of these large crystals that worked in different manners. All he needed now were the beasts themselves.

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Six Days Later

"Celevon, I don't know what you wanted the animals for. Hell, I don't want to know. They're not exactly what you asked for, but I hope they will do," the Executive Officer of Arête said shortly as he brought in a single cryogenically frozen slab that contained the semi-intact bodies of three dogs.

"Why dogs, Timeros?"

"They were wild and attacked us. I figured these would do."

"They should do nicely, though I wish you would have kept them intact..."

"You never specified. Now, if you will excuse me, I must clean up," the Adept coldly drawled, keeping up his arrogant demeanor. Without another word, one of the Obelisk's former mentors made his way out of Celevon's rooms.

“Wanker. Now, time to get to work,” the Assassin smirked, starting up the sequence to unfreeze the bodies. It would be a simple task to replace the heart with the crystalline structure. It would be another matter entirely to make it functional.

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The Onderonian washed his hands of the animal’s blood after having channeled the Force through the fresh corpse to heal the flesh. It was the first attempt, and he was hardly expecting it to be successful.

His hands clean, Ceevon used a wave of Force energy to activate the beast. The improved dog woke, its legs twitching before it started howling as though in pain. Before his eyes, the dog began to disintegrate, its body turning to ash.

“Hmm. Interesting reaction. Maybe use a more subtle bit of the Force to activate it...”

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The Obelisk stepped away from the second experimental creature. The third was on a nearby table, just awaiting the attempted activation. He hoped one of these would work, as awaiting more bodies would take up entirely too much time.

Drawing upon a tendril of Force energy, Ceevon wound it from the animal’s new ‘heart’ to its brain. With baited breath, the Onderonian waited to see a reaction.

The beast’s eyes popped open, flashing between different colours as it leapt off the table with a snarl. As the experiment began to prowl the room, the Prelate noticed an acrid smell. Moments later, the animal burst into flames.

“*Frak!*” he shouted in annoyance, dropping into a chair to think. It would do no good to have to await more bodies, since he was on a deadline. Ceevon needed a different method. Frowning to himself, the Assassin began to brainstorm.

After an indeterminable amount of time, the Equite raised his head as an idea struck him. Focusing on the currents of the Force, the Assassin released the energy. As he did so, an ethereal wolf leapt from the shadows. It was a Power taught to all of the Shadesworn. It gave them the ability to summon a protector or fighter based upon the image or images dealing with their personality. They were called Force Wraiths.

Eyes widening, Ceevon approached the third experiment and utilised the same energy, calling the power to his hand before placing it upon the ribs of the animal. As the swirling energy sank into the body, he stepped back and hoped for the best.

The dog shakily stood before shuddering as a wave of energy clearly passed through it, shielding its form from view for only a moment.

When that energy cleared, the Obelisk smirked and said one word.

“Success.”

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Unknown Location

Three Days following

“We do not see a point in you being here when you do not have something to show. A message detailing your failure would have certainly sufficed,” one of the cloaked figures pointed out in an icy tone.

“But I have not failed,” Ceevon replied, a small smirk curving his lips beneath the ballistic mask.

“Do not waste our time, Prelate. Clearly you have nothing with you an-”

The Dark Councilor’s jaw snapped shut as the Onderonian snapped his fingers. From within the very shadows themselves leapt what only vaguely resembled a dog, though that was in shape only.

The beast was level with Ceevon’s waist. It snarled at the others in the room, pacing in front of them, clearly awaiting orders from its Master. It was its appearance that had halted the words of the Councilor. Its fur was such a shade of black that it appeared to swallow all surrounding light. With pronounced claws and canine teeth, the beast was a fearsome sight.

But the most terrifying part was its eyes. They were a glowing ruby, an unholy fire alight within the sockets of darkness.

“What is it?”

“He is called Azrael and he is the first of his kind. I replaced the heart with a crystal I forged through the dark currents of the Force, using my own blood as a bonding material. So long as he exists, he is bound

to my will. When I die, he will die with me, returned to the ether,” Ceevon explained as he absently stroked the altered canine’s back. “With just several drops of blood, I can have one bound to the will of anyone who should want one. Unfortunately, there is a drawback to this.”

“And... what would that be?” another unidentified member of the Dark Council asked.

“He has no will of his own, no sentience. I can give him an order and he will follow it until it is successful. But he will not protect you whilst you sleep or anything like that on his own.”

“That hardly sounds like much of a weakness.”

“He is stronger and swifter than any predator of his size, yes. And the terrifying appearance does help things. But it is a weakness that I cannot overcome with my current skill level.”

“Do you have a name for this species? We could hardly use examples without a name.”

The Prelate smirked beneath his mask and mentally commanded the beast to bare his teeth in a snarl.

“I’ve decided to call them... Hellhounds.”

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