Competition: I’m a believer!

“The Bladeborn”

By Braecen Kaeth (4520)

Inducted by Head Master Emeritus Spears Tarantae, Braecen Kaeth is one of the last Bladeborn amongst the Dark Brotherhood. The Bladeborn are an offshoot sect from the Final Way, dedicating themselves to mastery of the blade. Their adherence to the blade is not an overtone to solidify their standing as warrior elite, but as disciples of a belief that encompasses the simple elegance of sword art.

Induction into the Bladeborn is done as the discretion of a Masterblade; an individual with a minimum of ten kills with a blade against an opponent whom wields a lightsaber. The Master watches a young warrior practice with a blade, often seeking those with natural affinity for an edged weapon. Should one prove to be able with a sword, they are passed to a Weapon Master for further tutelage. Once they have established themselves as a Master of their discipline, they are brought before the Masterblade. The Masterblade gives the potential candidate a blade and his opponent a lightsaber with one, simple command: “Fight!”

Once the candidate defeats his foe, he is immediately inducted into the order. Over the body of his defeated foe, the Master uses the ebbing life force to bind the newest disciple to his blade, and his blade to the adherent. Once the final strand of the Force is laid over the hand and hilt, the strands sear into the skin of the Force User leaving a permanent mark on their dominant hand. This branding symbolizes the lifelong commitment to the blade and the steps they will take on the path of a Bladeborn.

Highly ritualized, the Bladeborn often follow ceremony prior to and at the completion of their daily training. Incantations laid over the blade, blessing and infusing the weapon with the power of the Dark Side of the Force; to strike swiftly, to aim true, and to be errorless in combat. Some practitioners will light incense, to waft over their blade, or lay runes on the flat of the blade to imbue it with power. It is not the manner, but the act, that gives the wielder power. It hones their belief that the blade and wielder are tied to one another; bound in the uncommon pursuit of letting their enemy’s blood.

While the ceremony holds power, the place where it is held is often rooted in the tradition or beliefs of the wielder. Whether it was atop the Shadow Academy in the pale moonlight, the ancient caverns below the Dark Tower, or the Sacred Grove of Kapsina… the place where the wielder practices becomes his arena. Here, in the midst of his home, he can train with indiscriminate ingenuity and vigor. Simple jabs and thrusts turn into combinations, lethal chain attacks, and elaborate parries. And here, in those moments, is when it moves from practicing with a sword to a spiritual belief that the blade is an extension of the person wielding it.

The highest devotion to this art is when the Bladeborn chooses to ascend toward the rank of Masterblade. It requires ten kills with a blade to reach this level. It exposes the adherent to the most danger in these moments where the opponent is given a distinct advantage; however, Bladeborn will not seek out infant warriors. Each kill must garner them prestige and prove their dedication to the art. Masterblades will distinguish themselves by whom they have killed. And, should their lists be deemed equivalent, they will count the number of strikes it took to fell their most lethal foe. It is at this level they may take on the role of mentor and begin seeking to expand the legacy of the Bladeborn by training a new candidate.