

# *"Motivators"*

An  
**Elder's Legacy**  
NOVELLETTE

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84

# I

*"Intelligence reports place the Sith known as Darth Silas on the moon of Khar Shian."*

It was during a routine intelligence briefing held by the Taldryan Summit, something that had become incredibly tiresome in the last few months, that I had first heard these words. Even now, the words still rang in my head. Silas had been my goal—my target—ever since I had joined the Brotherhood more than a year ago. This was the first time that the Brotherhood's intelligence network had managed to catch wind of the man's whereabouts, and I wasn't going to let the chance pass me by.

The meeting had taken place on one of the upper levels of the *Khyron*-class Star Destroyer *Resurgent*, the flagship of Clan Taldryan. The leaders, along with the elders of the Clan, had been reviewing the daily intelligence briefs sent by the Voice of the Dark Council. After nearly two years of skirmishing against the One Sith, the Dark Brotherhood armada had finally found itself orbiting the ancient Sith homeworld of Korriban. The final battle loomed just ahead. But I didn't care. My personal vendetta against Silas was all that mattered to me.

I had left the briefing rather abruptly, causing no small amount of disgust amongst the other members, but I paid them no mind. My ship was waiting in one of the hangar bays and there was no time to waste. Unfortunately, I wasn't alone as I walked the once-pristine corridors of the *Resurgent*. Directly behind me walked two men trying to talk me down from any reckless action. The way they argued in tandem was more than a little annoying.

On my right was Keirdagh Cantor, the Proconsul of Taldryan and one of my "superior" officers. He was a large man, as tall as I was, but built like a mountain with broad shoulders and bulging muscles. Despite the grey sweeping into his hair and beard, he was still clearly in the prime of his life. He was also one of the few members of Taldryan I was on speaking terms with, though that was the very extent of our relationship.

The man on the left was Jac Cotelin. My master. He was a man of great authority, especially in Taldryan, and looked regal in his black and gold-trimmed suit. He was also the one I had the closest relationship with. Despite his advanced age, and the illness still plaguing his body, he easily kept pace with us. If nothing else, the overwhelming sense of power exuded by the old Grand Master was enough to counter time's ravaging of his body.

"Dammit, Kincaid. We don't have time for this," Cantor growled. He was getting annoyed.

"Keirdagh's right," Cotelin agreed. "We're making final preparations for the assault on Korriban. Taldryan needs you."

I ignored both of them as I stalked through the halls of the *Resurgent* towards the secondary launch bay. The idea of putting the Clan first was alien to me still, even after Cotelin had asked me to work with the members of Taldryan rather than against them. It was one thing to try not to antagonize the Summit when completing missions, but it was another to faithfully obey their commands. The only true loyalty I held was to myself.

As I stepped through the large, bay-style blast doors leading to the hangar, I felt a meaty hand grab my right arm. Cantor wrenched me around to face him, his face creased with tightly controlled anger.

My muscles tensed up as I stared him down and said, "Let go."

"Make me."

It was the wrong thing for him to say. I wasn't sure if he thought he was calling my bluff, or if he actually believed that I wouldn't dare strike him, but he left himself wide open. I didn't hold back and lashed out with a left hook. The blow caught him on the chin and sent him sprawling backwards, his face flickering from anger to shock and back to anger in the space of a second.

"You stupid son of a—"

I turned my back on him and walked towards my shuttle. I could sense the killing intent he directed at my back, but felt no sense of impending danger. Without looking, I knew that Cotelin was holding him back, preventing him from making the situation any worse. Really, though, he was just trying to prevent bloodshed.

Over the sound of my own footsteps and the general hum of activity in the hangar, I could hear Cotelin talking him down. As I stepped onto the ramp of my ship, I turned back briefly to see him physically holding Cantor. His dark eyes caught mine for just a second and I saw grief and... resignation there. He turned back the way we came, but I still heard his final two words.

"Leave him."

Khar Shian was a small moon shrouded in perpetual darkness, and the only orbit of Khar Delba. The planet itself was the former stronghold of the Sith Lord, Naga Sadow and was also the site of one of the earlier battles between the Brotherhood and One Sith. I had only been given a brief overview of the Crusade when I had joined Taldryan, but I had been led to believe there was not much to be found on Khar Delba. It was still being held by Clan Plagueis and little had happened there since the planet was first captured.

The fact that Silas and the One Sith were interesting in its moon, Khar Shian, told me that the Brotherhood had obviously missed something important. As the war had raged on, they had had little time to investigate the rest of the system—or any of the systems conquered—and other battles had quickly taken precedent. This, of course, worked in my favor. I finally had the chance to confront Silas and put an end to him.

I scanned over the intelligence report I had copied to my datapad, once again looking for clues that could help me locate Silas. There wasn't much there. According to the scant intel, his personal shuttle had appeared on the long-range sensors of the Plagueis base stationed on Khar Delba, but they had lost the signal when the shuttle flew behind the dark moon. Since they could detect no trace of the ship leaving the system, it seemed clear to me that Silas had landed on the moon. Given the lack of manpower, and the focus on the assault of Korriban, the Brotherhood had opted not to waste resources investigating such a small matter.

"Master, we are in the vicinity of Khar Shian. Awaiting your orders."

Beside me, at the ship's controls, was my FEG-series Pilot Droid, which I had nicknamed Phedge. He was rhythmically clutching at the controls with his grip-like hands in a gesture of impatience. He had been designed to be an exceptional, combat-capable pilot, and he didn't like the fact my missions rarely required such skills. I ignored the droid and activated the ship's life sensors. With any luck, I would pick up a trace on Silas and shorten my search. There was supposed to be little of worth on the small moon. The only recorded data had the remains of an Imperial Shipyard, abandoned shortly after the Battle of Endor. Still, there must be something of interest to the Sith there.

The console emitted a long, low beeping sound as it detected something with the long-range scanners. A small cluster of lifeforms appeared to be located on the far side of the moon, near the equator. According to the scanners, the entire area was mountain ranges, but for a small, manufactured structure of some sort nestled amongst the peaks. I doubt the scanners would have picked it up had we not been skimming the upper orbit of the moon, but it was clearly something worth investigating. Silas would be there.

"Phedge, take us down as close as you can," I ordered the droid. "And make sure we're not seen."

"Understood, master. They will never see us coming." It was difficult to tell because of the vocabulator, but it almost sounded like cockiness coming from the droid. Again, I ignored him and leaned forward in my seat.

Phedge dropped the ship into the upper atmosphere on the opposite side of where our query supposedly was. He took us down low, skimming through the mountainous landscape towards our objective. As came within a few kilometers of the signal, he slowed the ship to a crawl and opened the hatch. I was already waiting, trusting the droid to calculate the perfect landing point. Not wanting to risk the ship being discovered, I jumped from the ship in mid-air, slowing my descent with the Force. By the time I hit the ground, the ship was already out of sight. Phedge would find somewhere discreet to put her down and hold there until I was ready to be extracted.

### III

After a few hours trekking across the harsh, unforgiving mountain terrain, I was near enough to Silas' location to make out the remains of a once-formidable citadel built right into the mountains. Even in ruins, the fortress looked massive and intimidating, and the presence of the dark side seemed to surge from deep within it. I had never heard of such a citadel being hidden on the moon but, given its relation to Naga Sadow, it had probably once been occupied by the ancient Sith Lord. It also explained the presence of the One Sith.

I could sense them now. There were nearly a dozen lifeforms moving around outside of the citadel, but only three seemed to carry any hint of power. Silas and his acolytes. The others would be part of the team scavenging for relics or information and weren't anything to be concerned about.

Instinctively, I had begun to dampen my own presence, hoping to keep the element of surprise. As close as we were to dark energy of the citadel, I knew that it would be difficult for anyone to realize I was there without actively searching. Given the fact the One Sith had been there for days, at the least, they were probably confident they were alone. Which worked out well for me.

Moving with practiced ease, I slipped closer to the enemy camp—a small collection of prefabricated barracks arranged in a circle—and tracked the movements of the three Sith. The acolytes were standing on the outskirts of the camp, watching over the scavengers and offering minor assistance with the Force. They were clearing rubble from a section of the citadel that

had collapsed ages ago. I couldn't see Silas, but I felt a strong current of power within one of the barracks. Probably resting comfortably while the work was done.

Taking a deep breath, I centered myself and focused on the acolyte closest to my position. With only the barest hint of power, I gently brushed my thoughts against hers. I saw her jerk around in surprise and look in the direction I was hiding. To her, the thoughts would have sounded like whispers in her ear. I kept the thoughts I projected simple—just a couple of words to entice her to investigate the sound. I held completely still, maintaining my concentration until she began to move cautiously towards me.

The others in the camp had yet to notice her actions. I waited motionlessly until she stepped directly below my position and sent out her own mental probe. Before she realized what was happening, I dropped down behind her and wrapped one arm around her mouth, muffling her startled scream, and placed the other around her chest to hold her tight. Then, with a sharp flick of my wrist, I activated my assassin saber and shoved the blade directly into her heart.

Her body stilled instantly and I lowered it to the ground. One down. By now, the other acolyte had noticed his partner was missing. I felt his probe hit me, stronger than the girl's had been, and cursed under my breath. Sensing an enemy, the Sith shouted in alarm and I abandoned all thought of concealment.

Sprinting out from the darkness, I leapt at the acolyte and activated my lightsaber. His short, crimson blade met mine and he parried the attack. I felt the sharp presence of Silas moving close and realized I had no time to draw this out. I spun to the left of the acolyte and swept my leg at his, scything them from under him. Before he hit the ground, I spun back and shoved my blade deep into his chest. Two down.

The scavengers cried out in alarm and I glared at them with contempt. They had foolishly bunched together after the first shout of alarm, trying to hide their weakness with numbers. It was the wrong choice. I jumped towards them, soaring through the air, and landed in their midst. They had no time to react. I drew deeply upon my connection to the Force and channeled it outwards as an explosive wave of power.

Bodies went flying in all directions and I heard more shouts of pain as bones snapped like twigs at the sheer force of the blast. I felt several die from the impact, their necks or spines breaking, while the others were lucky to escape with just massive wounds. I suppose they weren't all that lucky, though. They would suffer a slow, agonizing death on this frozen mountain now. I shrugged the thought aside and turned, squaring off against their leader. Silas.

The Sith Lord was built much like me—strong and lithe—but a bit shorter. Unlike other Sith I had met, he only had a single black tattoo stretched across his right eye. He was watching me silently, a small, confused frown creasing his lips. Obviously, I had managed to surprise him.

"Well, you've made quite the entrance, haven't you?" He smiled now, though his dark, yellow eyes remained cold and impassive. "

"You know why I'm here," I told him. "It's time to settle things between us." Something was wrong. The image of Silas in my mind was blurry, and it was difficult to match his face with the one in my memory. Strange.

He seemed to be surprised by my words, but his face smoothed so quickly back into that evil little smile that I barely noticed it. He raised a hand to his chin and nodded his head a few times. If he was at all troubled by my sudden appearance, or the death of his men, he was ridiculously good at hiding it.

"I'm sorry, friend. It seems I can't quite recall you." I felt a flash of anger. "Then again, I do seem to make enemies quite regularly," he trailed off. He sounded like he was talking to himself. Then his eyes returned to mine, and his voice was filled with threat. "Though I don't remember leaving any alive."

He ignited a double-bladed lightsaber, but held it loosely in his hand. He reached back with both arms in a yawning stretch, and I launched myself forward with impossible speed. He lowered his arms just as I came within striking distance, and released a violent torrent of bluish-white lightning. The attack took me by surprise. I threw myself to the side, but several bolts struck my left me, searing the flesh of my shoulder.

I snarled at the pain and raised my lightsaber defensively expecting another blast. It didn't come. Silas suddenly appeared next to me and attacked. He weaved a complex pattern of strikes with his staff, forcing me to give ground as I parried and dodged. Then, seemingly bored with the tactic, he switched gears and hit me with a wave of energy. The blast threw me back, clear across to the other side of the camp, and I came up limping slightly. It didn't have the same impact as the force I had unleashed on the scavengers, but he had been able to steadily drive me back dozens of meters.

I felt the first trickle of doubt.

We raced across the camp, striking at each other and constantly spinning and jumping in and out of range. No matter what I tried, I could not get through his defenses, while he quickly managed to score several small wounds on me. I was breathing heavily. Prolonged battles weren't my forte, and he didn't even appear to be winded. I was getting angry, and it was

becoming harder and harder to hold back. The rage wanted to be unleashed, but I knew succumbing to my emotions was exactly what Silas wanted. He was provoking me without even saying a word.

Then I felt it. Somewhere in the back of my mind, there was a foreign presence lurking. I stared at Silas in surprise. Again, he had switched tactics. He managed to get past my mental barriers without me even sensing the intrusion. I was at a serious disadvantage now, and tried to mount a defense.

"Ahh," he said, "this feels so familiar to me. I wonder why?"

He leapt forward and started raining blows down on me again. I continued to fend off his attacks, while desperately struggling to get him out of my head. He didn't seem to be trying to take control; rather, it seemed as if he was merely shifting through my mind as if searching something. I gritted my teeth. Switching my own tactics, I decided to force him to withdraw by pressing the attack. I rained a rapid series of blows down on him, but he easily, almost contemptuously, deflected them with his staff. Recklessly, I jumped high, flipping over his head and slashed downwards with my blade.

He caught my attack with his staff as if he had been expecting it, then, with a deft twist of his wrists, ripped my lightsaber from me and sent it spinning away. I jumped back to avoid his next attack, but it didn't come. He remained where he was, seemingly engrossed in thought.

"I see. So that's how it is," he muttered quietly to himself. "This... this is too good." He raised his head towards the sky and broke out in a fit of hysterical laughter.

I backed up warily, unsure of what had set him off. "Have you finally lost it?" I demanded between gasps of air.

He sent me a pitying look. "You're not even aware of it, are you?"

"Aware of what?"

He merely shook his head, fighting down another bout of wild laughter. "You. Your existence. It's all a lie."

The words made no sense to me, but I still felt a cold chill run down my spine as something deep within sent off a warning flare. I didn't want to hear anymore. Without a word, I drew my second lightsaber and took several slow, shaky steps towards him. His eyes flashed, filled with malevolent glee, as he watched me come, but he didn't bother to wait. In a blink, he was next to me and I couldn't react.



Ice-cold hands grasped the sides of my head, and I was forced to start straight into the depths of his pitiless, yellow eyes. I tried to jerk myself out of his grasp, but his hands tightened around my skull like a vice. It was an ignorable pain. Then I felt his frigid claws digging into my mind. As wounded as I was, I could barely hold my mental barriers in place, and he shredded them with almost no effort.

I screamed then, the pain ripping my mind apart. The entire world went red. Then there was blackness.

## IV

When I opened my eyes, there was no sign of Silas. Actually, there was no sign of anything really. The citadel ruins. The Sith camp. The circle of dead and broken bodies. It was all gone. I found myself in another place entirely. It was vaguely familiar to me—a windswept mountain summit, surrounded on all sides by sheer cliffs—though I was sure I had never been there before. Like Khar Shian, it was a frozen wasteland, but even more mountainous and hostile. Silas' mental attack had nearly disappeared, barely an echo of what it had been, and I no longer felt the excruciating pain.

Before I could clear my head, the world seemed to spin, and all around me scenes were played out, as though I was watching a life-size holovid. Images flickered by quickly... a man with dual lightsabers fighting Silas. The man, mortally wounded, falling to the ground dyeing the pristine snow red. Then there was imprisonment and torture. Mental manipulation. It went on and on for what seemed like years before, at last, the man succumbed and donned the mask of the One Sith.

The jumble of images were confusing and it was difficult to piece together what was happening, but something about them struck a chord deep within me. The scenes changed again, and the masked man was killing members of Taldryan, though how I knew I wasn't quite sure. Bathed in their blood, he appeared before Jac Cotelin. Their battle was intense, brutal... and short. Against Cotelin's overwhelming strength, the man was beaten and destroyed. I remembered this scene. Dromund Kaas. It... It was where I had met up with Cotelin to fight the Sith Lord Vokun. But that wasn't what had happened.

*It's all a lie.*

The visions faded. Those words, and the laughter that followed, continued to reverberate in my mind. I pushed the words back and looked around. Whatever this place was, it wasn't reality. I could feel that now. The entire world was washed of colors, as if they had bled away, leaving only pale shades of grey. At the same time, I realized I was no longer alone here. A dark-robed and hooded man stood before me, face hidden behind shadows.

"Who are you?" I demanded, taking a few steps forward. The figure merely cocked his head to the side not speaking a word. "WHO ARE YOU?" I shouted this time. I was quickly losing grasp of my carefully controlled emotions.

I felt a flash of rage from him followed by killing intent, and then we were both racing towards each other, moving with preternatural speed. Lightsabers ignited as we ran and collided in an eruption of sparks. There was nothing serene or beautiful about this fight. Rather, we clashed violently again and again, striking out for the sole purpose of killing one another.

He was better than I was. I realized that almost instantly. He moved impossibly fast and his strength was crushing. It took all I had to block the savage, unrelenting strikes of his twin crimson blades. Around us, time seemed to slow—though maybe that was just my own perception. Everything had a surreal quality to it, from the towering peaks of the mountains wavering in the distance, to the banks of snow bleeding at my feet. Lost within this mindscape, it was difficult to tell what was real and what was dream.

He flashed towards me, almost faster than I could track, and I instinctively leapt to the side. I slashed high from left to right, deflecting his first swing, then ducked under the second. We both spun apart at the same time, moving in opposite directions, the pristine snow at our feet churning into mush. I flipped backwards to avoid another strike, then returned the assault. My blade moved in a dizzying array of rapid, glancing blows, but did little more than slow him down. His wrists moved in a blur as he countered each attack with one of his two blades, almost effortlessly refuting my advance.

There was a brief lull in the battle as we clashed, our blades and bodies locking together in a far too intimate embrace. He barked a twisted, psychotic laugh, sending a rippling chill down my spine. He was a monster. I gritted my teeth, relying heavily on the Force just to keep from being overwhelmed. My arms shook with the strain of holding back the brute strength of his attack. An icy chill swept across the mountain, throwing back the hood of his cloak.

I recognized the mask he wore—it was the same one worn by the man in my vision. Of Vokun. But Jac and I had killed him. How could he be here now? Then the mask fell forward and clattered against a hard patch of ground. For an instant, my gaze locked with his and I found myself staring straight into a pair of deep, crimson-hued eyes. In my head, I could hear the haunting whispers of his name.

Shadow Taldrya.

"What... What is this?"

"Don't you know?" Vokun asked, laughing again. "I am your past. And your future. How have you not realized it yet? You are nothing more than a mask created by Jac Cotelin to hide the poor, pitiable fall of Shadow Taldrya. To hide ME!"

I froze in place. It was like something inside me had clicked and opened the lock on this terrible, terrible truth. I... was Shadow Taldrya.

"You can call me Vokun," he continued. "Apprentice of Darth Silas and the one who will kill Jac Cotelin. Once I finish with you, of course."

I faltered and he pushed me back a step. My body was acting on autopilot, reflexively trying to hold him back as my mind raced wildly. This was all true. Everything had been a lie to cover Shadow Taldrya's fall. Of course. That's why Silas hadn't recognized me right away. I didn't look the same. I could not even imagine the kind of power and sorcery it took to achieve this. Everything about me... about Aidan Kincaid... had seemed so real. It *had* been real.

"Why continue to fight?" Vokun demanded. "You're not real. Just a cheap figment of that bastard's sorcery. Your master lied to you! Used you! And for what?" Vokun was shouting now, completely overwhelmed by his rage. "He should have killed *us*."

There was nothing I could say to that. Why had Cotelin saved me... him? Why did he create Kincaid? At that moment, I realized the truth of his words, and they were all true. But I could still not access the memories of the past. Without them, how could I deal with any of this?

Vokun pushed forward, putting more strength behind his blades. I couldn't hold him back, and the crisscrossed lightsabers moved perilously close to my chest. It was only a matter of time before this was all over.

"End this pathetic struggle," Vokun shouted. "Embrace *our* destiny as Sith!"

He was right. I could give in and let it all end. Was there any point in continuing the charade of Aidan Kincaid? Shadow Taldrya had been a devoted member of Taldryan for years, and even he had fallen to the power of the One Sith. Why should I be any different? If I fell here, everything would just return to how it was supposed to be. Before Cotelin intervened.

Cotelin...

I suddenly heard the Grand Master's voice, whispering in the back of my mind. "Shadow was strong, but flawed. Though loyal to our Clan, he relied too much on the strength of his friends."

I laughed bitterly at that. "A flaw I obviously don't share, huh?"

"No. You *are* different from him. Despite all that happened, I know he did not willingly fall to them," Cotelin's voice continued. "However, unlike you, he did not have the strength to resist. When I erased Shadow's memories, I left one thing intact to pass on to you. The horrors the One Sith inflicted; the hatred he had for them. Those are within you and what have driven you to hunt down Silas and the rest of his kind. Use those feelings.

"Choose your own path!"

Cotelin's voice faded and power welled up inside me. He must have hidden it deep inside, the raw strength of Shadow's emotions and will. It was all that was left of the man I had once been, but it was enough. Despite what Cotelin had done. Despite who and what I was or what had transpired in the past, I realized that *I* was the one in control. For all my issues with the Dark Brotherhood, I knew the One Sith were worse. I had seen all that Silas had made my past-self endure, how easily they had turned on him, betrayed him. The members of Taldryan weren't exactly choirboys, but they understood loyalty.

And frankly, the idea of falling to that piece of druk Vokun just rubbed me the wrong way. Mentally, I cursed Cotelin... the old man had set me up again. I should have known better than to try to ignore him. It just never seemed to work.

"Our destiny?" I asked Vokun, returning to the situation at hand. "*Your* destiny ended the moment Cotelin struck you down." I gritted my teeth and began shoving his lightsabers back. "As for *my* destiny. I'll be the one who decides, you worthless, kriffing, sithspawn!"

I pressed my left hand against Vokun's chest and unleashed a violent, burst of power. Bones cracked and organs ruptured as I used the Force at point-blank range to bore into his flesh. Cursing, he stepped backwards, red eyes wide in pain as the wound oozed black and red. I dropped my lightsaber and jumped at him, grabbing his collar in both hands and shoving him into the ground. He hit with a hard thud and I lifted his head back up. Then smashed it back down. I did this again. And again. His lightsabers fell from his hands as he became senseless after the repeated blows. Driven by the unsuppressed rage of both myself, and Shadow Taldrya, I summoned my lightsaber back into my hand and slashed it down, severing Vokun's head from his neck.

Breathing hard, I pushed the corpse away and let myself fall backwards into the cold embrace of the snow. I had chosen the Brotherhood... the Dark Jedi over the One Sith. It had been a close thing, but I had driven Vokun back and done what my past self could not. Now, I just needed to somehow survive my battle with Silas and return to Korriban. I wasn't sure if it was a vision, or my own exhaustion-induced belief, but I could sense that Taldryan would need me in the battle to come. Hopefully I wouldn't be too late.

I sat up and looked towards Vokun's body, but it was gone. There was no trace of him, nor of the battle we had just had, and the world was beginning to glow with a brilliant, white light. I could feel myself being pulled out of this mindscape, being dragged back into the real world. It was over.

*"For now."*

## V

Reality returned as I opened my eyes. Silas was still in my face, both hands clasped around my head, but his eyes were closed in concentration. He was muttering softly to himself, still trying to work the Sith magic to resurrect Vokun. It took him a moment to realize the spell had broken, and his yellow eyes opened wide in surprise.

I think it surprised him more when I smashed my forehead into his face. I heard the satisfyingly loud, crunching sound of his nose breaking, and felt the spurt of blood hit me as he reeled backwards. Despite the pain and confusion, his lightsaber was reactivated and held defensively.

Digging deep, I launched as strong a telekinetic attack as I could manage, pushing every last bit of power I could call forth. I saw Silas move to counter, but the sheer force of the shockwave sent him flying backwards into a drift of snow. As much as I wanted to kill him, I knew I wasn't capable... yet. And I had no time to waste. Not waiting around for him to recover and retaliate, I started sprinting in the opposite direction, cutting through the camp towards the nearby edge of the cliff.

Silas was back on his feet a moment later in hot pursuit, only twenty or so yards behind me. While running, I sent a hurried distress message to Phedge, telling the droid to home in on my signal. It was going to be a close call. I could sense the Sith Lord catching up quickly, the overwhelming desire to kill screaming from him like a siren.

As I reached the edge of the cliff, I didn't slow, didn't think. I jumped. I windmilled wildly through the air, the deadly drop of thousands of feet waiting below me. But I had faith. The metallic sheen of the ship appeared from behind the mountains and Phedge rolled to the left presenting me with the ramp fully extended. My feet hit it hard and I crashed into one of the hydraulic legs, barely holding onto it to keep from falling over the edge.

"Move it!" I shouted into my commlink and Phedge immediately turned the ship upwards.

I looked down to see Silas standing on the cliff's edge, lightsaber off. "This hasn't ended," his voice whispered against my thoughts. "You will be mine, *apprentice*."

That wasn't something I wanted to deal with, so I shrugged off his mental barb, and then dragged myself into the ship. Somehow, I managed to make it to the cockpit and collapsed into the co-pilot's chair. Phedge turned to me, his singular photoreceptor blinking at my ravaged appearance.

"Back to the Horuset system," I told him, answering the unspoken question. "Back to Taldryan."

***The End***