Nicht Ka Fiction

by 4856 Macron Sadow, CNS

Shadow Academy

Lyspair

Antei System

“Power fluctuations in the plasma stream can exceed ten percent in a natural Adegan crystal,” read the text. “In order to adjust the system safely, you must….” Fluxas Morket closed the Shadow Academy book and put his head on the table. The images and diagrams of lightsaber guts swam in his head. “Feck.” Being an Apprentice was hard. He would be dispatched to Clan Naga Sadow, and was doing his best to get ahead in his studies. One day, he would make his own blade.

“If I don’t detonate myself,” mumbled the Corellian Journeyman as he gazed at the text before him. It all appeared to be mumbo-jumbo. Even back in regular education classes on Corellia, science had never been his forte. The situation was daunting. The young man daydreamed, gazing about at the plethora of odd bric-a-brac around in the Shadow Academy library. Focus, or a lack thereof had always been an issue for him.

Fluxas Morket was a dreamer at heart. He dreamed of starships, space battles, and other great things instead of wanting to work in the family store. That and the fights he got in constantly were the reasons his father had disowned him. He had been expelled from Corellia, and had been contacted by agents of the Brotherhood who had found him working as a cabin boy on a passenger liner out of Corellia. The robed agents had sensed that he could feel the Force and had brought him to the Shadow Academy. It was practically the only thing Fluxas was proud of in his life. He sat back up and smiled. “I’m going to be a Jedi!”

“Dark Jedi you dumbass,” grumbled one of the other more advanced students nearby. The young Zabrak studied the hologram of a droid design schematic that floated in front of him. Jon Jatak was the only friend the Corellian had made in his short time here. The Zabrak Apprentice felt some modicum of pity for the addle-pated young human. “Best to keep your mouth shut man, and read. You know the exam is in two hours. They don’t take slack kindly around here.”

“No shit,” smirked Fluxas. “Did you hear what happened to that Duros kid? He lipped off about calculus errors to one of the instructors. Nobody has seen him since.” The human leaned in conspiratorially across the desk. “I heard the Deputy Grandmaster’s Magistrate took him away himself.”

“Darth’s sake, shut-the-fuck-up!” hissed Jon. The Zabrak looked around hastily to ascertain if they were being listened to. He pretended to drop a book and whispered from under the table. “Goddamn. That shit is poison! Keep it zipped dipstick! Meet me after mess, and we’ll talk. At least look like you’re reading the damn book, okay asshole?” the tattooed near-human rolled his eyes and returned to his hologram, tracing the circuits in a simple ASP labor droid.

Hours later, the two met in the mess hall. The food was surprisingly good for an academy of any kind. The rumor went that they wanted people strong in order to study- and that it could be your last meal if you failed. grades from the technology exam had been posted, and surprisingly Fluxas had passed- barely. Jon had aced it.

The two got their trays of food, and drifted out into the hall towards their shared bunk room. Once the door closed behind them, Fluxas spoke. “I can hardly stand it Jon! Tell me what you know!” The human gnawed at the roasted beast on his plate.

“Well at least you eat like a Zabrak, no-horns,” chuckled Jatak as he dived into his own meal. “Umph. Look man, there’s bad shit going down here. Yeah they feed us, house us. But I hear people go missing all the time, and I’m not just talking about the ones that die in the ritual combat pit.”

“Really?” asked the Corellian naively. “Oh… did you mean like the Duros?” It took him a minute for the synapses to connect.

“Yeah man. Like that. Look, we both getting transferred to some outfit known as Clan Naga Sadow tomorrow. I suggest we both keep our mouths shut and hope things are better there.” The Zabrak slid a small vibroknife up out from his boot and then returned it. “You got anything?”

“Yeah,” murmured the human. Dreamer or not, a lifetime of being bullied had taught him how to fight. He lifted his robe top, and a small holdout blaster shaped like bronzium knuckles was taped to his side. “Only good for two shots, but it serves as a face-cracker after that. Got a homemade shiv in my boot too.”

“Good in a fight eh?” Jon Jatak smiled. “Maybe you’re good for something after all. Listen, I checked out a lot of data on the down low. There have been a lot of disappearances. A lot of the students that questioned things. Or the ones that were hot-shit.”

“Huh. Yeah… I heard something like that. Besides the Duros kid, I saw a human chick get taken away too. She was some shit-hot Nightsister defector. She bought it. Saw her body floating outside the space-lock without a suit when I was in the can.”

“Fuck.” Jon grimaced. “Look dude, we ship out of here tomorrow. I suggest we scope out the new place, and see if we can locate someone with pull who will listen to us over there. It has to be better than here.”

Outside, a tiny insect droid fluttered away from their door towards the quarters used by visiting Magistrates.

Temple of Sorrow

Sepros

Orian System

The shuttle arrived unscathed. Twin HLAF 500 fighters escorted it in, reminding Fluxas of his Corellian origins. Many powerful Force-users had come from Corellia. The Halcyons came to mind quickly, and he had heard of others. In his mind he knew he would be one of the great ones.

Beside him, Jon looked rather less sure. The Zabrak had noted the extremely tight naval security, and the Victory-Class Star Destroyer that loomed high overhead. As the shuttle’s landing walkway descended, he saw clone troopers in a line in front of them. Insect like Verpine engineers buzzed about here and there, each of them wearing Zal Alloy armor and carrying shatterguns. The Zabrak frowned.

“Dude! We’re here!” laughed Fluxas as he stood up exultantly. “We made it!”

“Cool your jets hotshot,” stated the Zabrak. “We may have gone from the hotplate to the fusion fire man. Be cool.”

In front of them an armored figure in solid black armor strode forward. “Fluxas, Jon, I am Black Guardsman Three. Come with me. Now.” The figure turned without ascertaining if they were coming, and it was quickly apparent as to why. Four clone troopers with blaster rifles stood two on each side and gestured at them.

They were escorted to an office deep within the guts of the structure. The more modernized sections of the upper levels gave way to old walls of stone blocks and dripping moss. Neither the faceless Black Guard under his mask of cold plasteel nor the four Clone Troopers said a word.

“I don’t like this,” grumbled Fluxas as the Corellian stumbled over a jutting flagstone. “Where are we going?” The Corellian appeared disconcerted and scratched his side as he surreptitiously armed his holdout blaster.

“Quiet,” growled the Black Guard as he turned to face them briefly. The black-armored figure’s hand drifted to an unlit lightsaber hilt on his belt in a clear show of intent. “You’re going to see the Alchemist. Now get moving scrubs.”

Jon Jatak only grimaced. He had heard rumors… only vague ones, but bad nonetheless. He thought of his vibroblade in his boot. Perhaps they had a chance to escape, and could steal a transport. Fluxas would likely die, but he could be useful in that regard as far as combat went. Jon could hotwire the ship and fly it, of that he had no doubt. No son of his Zabrak Clan would be caught lacking in that area. Jon intended to earn that second set of facial tattoos. He would live.

After many more steps, they came to a mag-sealed door that opened as the Black Guardsman touched a keypad outside it. Both the Black Guardsman and the four Clone Troopers turned and left as the sealed door began to crack wide..

The door opened with a whoosh onto a strange scene. In front of the Apprentices was a dimly red-litten chamber. There was a desk made of durasteel, and beside it stood a menacing skeletal droid with odd designs on it’s chassis. Behind the desk sat a person in complete armor from head to toe. The suit was mostly red, with black accents and blinking lights.An evil looking IT-3 droid drifted up from behind the desk as the door slammed shut behind them both.

“Oh my…” Jon whistled in appreciation as his buddy growled. The Zabrak lifted both his hands high in a show of surrender. “I’m done! All good here!”

“What the hell! I was promised a berth in Clan Naga Sadow! Who the fuck are you?” Fluxas Morket stupidly drew his holdout blaster and pointed it at the armored figure. The figure stood as Fluxas began to fire, and the blasts of his little weapon were absorbed by the outstretched hands of the armored man.

The Sith Adept stood promptly and subdued the Zabrak Apprentice with a brief burst of Force Lightning. Fluxas did not die. He laid on the floor and twitched. From a side alcove strode Kenath, the Sith Warrior who served Darth Pravus as Magistrate. In his hands he cradled a blaster.

“Umm, fellas, I don’t want any trouble,” stated Apprentice Jon Jatak nervously as kept his hands raised high in surrender. “You obviously know of my conversations with him…” the Zabrak nodded his chin towards Fluxas as the IT-3 droid drifted over his downed friend. “We’re cool right?”

“We do,” came the vocabulator response from the armored figure as Kenath kneeled down to touch the fallen Fluxas. “We know of your interests. Conspiracy? Yes…. yes. If you call culling the weak a conspiracy.” An evil chuckle escaped the armored figure. “Your friend will serve us adequately in the Biomass Vats under Gamuslag, and from his flesh we will extract his genetic material and organic chemicals as raw stock. His agonies will be legendary.”

‘Ohhhhh shit…” gasped Jon in horror as he backed away slowly. “Oh shit. Please forgive me.”

“I forgive you.” Macron opened his helm and nodded towards Kenath, who moved forward menacingly. “He will not, however. You will go with Warrior Kenath to serve Lord Pravus’ interrogators. Too bad that you can’t experience the pleasure of slow dissolution in the Vats.” The Adept smirked as he keyed a button on his desk. “There is a conspiracy, yes. And I am fully part of it.”

Jon Jatak was quickly struck down by blaster fire on subdue by the Sith Warrior Kenath. As Jon fell, Magistrate Kenath gestured to hidden waiting medical droids to prepare the hearty Zabrak for transport. “Your ass is going to Antei in a bad way little man. You delivered as promised, Goura.”

The Proconsul frowned. Macron chafed under the deal, but a deal was a deal, per se.

“Our agreement is intact. He will serve Darth Pravus in his machinations, and we will be spared for now. Such is the way of the Sith.” The Proconsul bowed to the envoy of the Grandmaster. “You will spare us for now, as per the agreement.” His hand clenched a lightsaber hilt almost reflexively, and the meaning was clear.

“Keep them coming,” responded the easy-going human Sith Warrior as he backed away. “And we’ll keep it quiet.” The Magistrate spoke into his comlink and quiet operatives from the Dark Council slipped into the chamber to tie the fallen Zabrak to a hoversled and inject him with sedatives.

“As you wish,” Macron stated calmly as the doors opened and the body-laden hoversled went out with Kenath attending it. *“Some deals are abominable…. but needed for the survival of this Clan. The Sith of old understood this. A deal with the Devil you know is better than a deal with one you don’t know. And I will do anything- anything to see us survive,”* came the Elder’s thoughts*. “Anything at all.”*