***One Zhan-y Night***

They knew he was coming. Everyone knew he was coming. Fias Zhan and his fanatical zealots, the Scions of Cocytus had been busy. In the proceeding year they had staged uprisings and armed revolt on Ptolomea, Caina, and Antenora. Imperial Senators had been killed. Critical holo-net systems had been hacked and the Imperial Scholae Palatinae Fleet had been put on high alert on several occasions. Yet, no one knew when he was coming.

The night before the raid was like any other. No toxin gasses were raining down from the heavens. A large spacecraft had not crashed landed in the Imperial Winter Palace and separated the Emperor from his soldiers. No wide search had been convened yet. Likewise, the Imperial forces were not being massacred in the streets by bloodthirsty citizens and Scions of Cocytus death squads roving the main promenades of the capital. Ohmen City was as vivid and lively as ever.

Zagro Fenn did, however, do two critical actions that would have dire consequences for the ensuing conflict. One aspect seems very nominal and of little importance, while the other could be seen to have strategic significance that could ultimately sway the tide of war. Yet, in some ways, these actions were linked.

The Hapan loathed to wear traditional garb of the Dark Jedi order. He had worn a uniform in some manner most of his adult life. As a boy, from a noble family, he wore the family regalia. Once he was hunted and on the run he enjoyed the freedom of smuggler’s garb and the common clothing. This seclusion in plain sight was another gift to him as an intelligence operative for the Hapes Consortium. Yet, he also wore his Hapan Royal Navy officer uniform with pride before he resigned his commission. This night, Fenn donned his Scholae Palatinae armor. As a Sergeant for Acclivis Draco it was his duty yet again to lead and give an example. It pained him to lay down his Scholar’s robes from the Shadow Academy. As a graduate and as a Professor of that order he felt more inclined to its esoteric nature. The robes were pressed neatly in his wall rack.

More importantly, and related to this ceremonial duty, Fenn had convened with the Battleteam Leader, Lucyeth. Acclivis Draco had a unique organization beholden to the jurisdiction of the Battleteam Leader as the Emperor’s representative on Antenora. The fierce warriors of that planet enrolled in throngs to the legendary and ancient Kraken Regiment. Reconstituted, as a Stormtrooper Corps after the recent wars on Begeren and Nickt Ka the force was truly a modernized mobile infantry unit able to support itself in the field with heavy artillery arms, engineering staff, and embedded medical and administrative forces. The leadership had determined to put the Regiment on high alert and mobilized them at once. They were to be ready to deploy within 48 hours. They worried about the turmoil inherent to Antenora, yet agreed the cost was worth it. The natives were noble to a fault. Sending a mixed tribal force in harms way always had the effect of creating unity instead of sending clans vying for power when the military force was away. Little did anyone know how vital this decision would be.