

A DARK ERA BEGINS

PRT Anahorn Dempsey (Sith) / Battle Team Dorimad Sol of House Scholae Palatinae (# 14057)

author's note:

this story takes place in 61 ABY, 3 years after the events of 'The Dark Lord rises'. It is basically a continuation of that story. It can be found as the submission for the '(Darth) Names Are Important' competition: <https://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/competitions/8159>

CHAPTER ONE

Silently, the *Rejuvenator*-class StarDestroyer *Pravus* travelled through hyperspace. On the main bridge stood the solemn figure of Dark Jedi Anahorn Dempsey, lost in thought. Thoughts of murder to be exact. Thoughts of claiming that which was rightfully hers. Or die trying. This was going to be her second attempt. Not many people got two attempts to try and take control of the universe. She was sure there wasn't going to be a third.

Dempsey's mind wandered back to her current mission. The simple mission she had been given, which had turned out to be a disaster, nearly getting her killed. And the more she thought about what happened, the more certain she became that this had indeed been the idea. She was not to have survived this mission. Her Master must have really started to think of her as a threat.

INTERLUDE

This Master she was thinking of, was Darth Septimus. Up until a few years ago, he had been a Jedi in the Dark Jedi Brotherhood under Terifan. That all ended of course when Dempsey returned from her quest to find the Sith Holocron of Darth Plagueis, and upon her return to Judecca, had killed the Grand Master and announced herself as Darth Coeus, the new Dark Lord of the Sith. She had unleashed a Great Jedi War unlike any the Brotherhood had ever seen, and it had nearly destroyed everyone, as she had planned. Dempsey was a firm believer in Darth Bane's Rule of Two, and to her, the Brotherhood was everything Bane had fought against. Sometimes she had even compared herself to Bane, and the current Brotherhood to Lord Kaan's Brotherhood of Darkness. Useful only as a tool to ultimate power.

Great had been her surprise when the foreseen future did not happen. The Brotherhood suffered a great many losses, and many great Jedi were killed, but not all. Nor did the Brotherhood perish. At the height of the fighting, one among their rank had claimed the title of Grand Master of the Dark Jedi Brotherhood, and had reunited the warring factions. Dempsey had faced him in the ruins of Teyr, where they had battled. And where she had lost. Where she had not been killed, but taken on as apprentice to the new Dark Lord. And so, she had accepted her faith and served her new Master, knowing very well there was no trust between them. Knowing, that a true Master would have taught her a lot more than this one had. To make a long story short, she had learned only one thing from her Master: the only reason she had lost the fight between them, was age. Experience and skill did not come into play. She was by far the superior when it came to those. But although Plagueis' Sith sorcery may have been able to restore her youthful appearance, it had not fully restored her youth. She was still an old woman of nealy 80 years. And although she resembled more a woman of 30 in her looks, and a woman of 50 in her physical abilities, this had been enough for the young pretender to overcome her. When she fought Terifan, she had had surprise on her side, which allowed her victory. In her fight with this pretender, surprise was not on her side.

CHAPTER TWO

Dempsey pondered her course of action, as she stared out the transparisteel viewport of her starship. Back on Salas V, the fighting had been intense, and somewhere during the fight she had masked her Force presence. As soon as she realized she had fallen into a trap set by her Master, she had thought it wise to let him think she had indeed died. She was convinced he would not be able to pick her up in the Force. Despite his position, his Force abilities were inferior to hers. Youth came with strength, and old age came with something far more valuable: experience.

She picked up a nervous thought behind her. A young cadet who had survived the mayhem on Salas V and had been put onto the bridge of the *Pravus* to serve as her personal assistant. This cadet had not been trained for the job, but then again - neither had anyone else. Almost all the competent personnel had been killed. But what she had would suffice, Dempsey knew. She turned around before the young lieutenant could speak, and raised her eyebrow to indicate she was expecting information. She felt the lieutenant tense up. He was terrified. Good.

"Excuse me sir. Ma'am. Sir.... er.... sorry to disturb you but eh... you wanted to be notified when we were fifteen minutes away from Antei."

Dempsey nodded and turned her back on the lieutenant. One hour. She took a step to her left, and looked at a status console. The *Pravus*' shields had been fully repaired. The dorsal turbolaser batteries were also fully functional. Of course, this was at the expense of the ventral batteries, which had been stripped in favor of the dorsal ones. If things would turn out as she had planned, she wouldn't need those anyway. She pushed a button, and alarms started going off all over the ship. At the start of the alarms, people who had been strolling around started running, people who had been in their cabins made for the exits, and in seconds the galley was empty, steaming hot plates of food left all alone. The *Pravus* was getting ready for the last battle of her life.

CHAPTER THREE

On Antei, Darth Septimus was sitting on the Iron Throne. His mind was in turmoil. Leading the Brotherhood out of a Civil War had been easy, taking over as Grand Master had been a walk through the park. But staying in control had been a lot harder than he had anticipated. He didn't dare admit it to himself for fear others might pick up on it, but inside he contemplated that perhaps, after all, he wasn't ready for this much power. He knew many were not happy with his reign. Especially the choice of Dempsey as his apprentice had set a lot of bad blood. After all, it was she who had thrown the Brotherhood into the disarray of war, and so had been responsible for the loss of so many lives in the Clans and Houses. But he had stood his ground. He was the Dark Lord, she was the apprentice, and while she remained under his reign, he could learn much from her. Of course, it was supposed to be the other way around, but he was too smart to be fooled by his own trickery. He could best her in a fight anyday, they both knew that, but he knew she was his superior when it came to using the Force. He only wondered if she realized this as well.

Actually, he was pretty certain she did know. And so he had sent her and a small task force to Salas V. A renegade band of Dark Jedi, who had once belonged to House Revan, had declared themselves no longer under his rule. They had employed Mandalorians and Trandoshans as their security guards, and allowed that trash to settle on the planet. He had ordered her to destroy the base. The intelligence he had given her had been false - the enemy's numbers were underestimated by at least a factor 10, as had their strength. There had been no chance for Dempsey's task force to survive the battle, and he had indeed felt her disappear from the Force. He had considered a trick, of course, knowing that some Jedi were able to mask their Force presence, but he had convinced himself that this was not the case. He could not feel her presence, because she was no longer present in the Force.

The past few hours, however, an uneasy feeling had started to grow within him. He had recognized it as a sense of danger. But it was faint, and he had a hard time figuring out what was causing it. There was no immediate danger, he knew. He would have been able to tell that much. But, just to be safe, he had ordered the Grand Master's Royal Guard to send their best guardsmen to the palace. They had arrived, and soon anyone inside who might be a threat had been ushered out. It worried him, because instead of feeling more at ease, as he had expected, the feeling of dread had only grown.

He closed his eyes, and concentrated. One last time, he tried to search for his apprentice in the Force, to pick up any trace of her. Could he be wrong, and could she still be alive? He had to know for sure.

CHAPTER FOUR

On the bridge of the *Pravus*, Dempsey sensed the searching sensation of her Master's presence in the Force. She frowned. She had sensed it before, and each time the feeling had subsided. She had become convinced he believed her to be dead. Was he doubting himself now, that he was searching again? It didn't matter much, she knew he would not find her. But if he had started doubting himself, he might do something she hadn't anticipated, which would cause her operation to fail. That was unacceptable. It also made her more determined. A true Dark Lord would never doubt himself, and so his probing convinced her even more that he was unworthy of the title. She looked at the chrono. One more minute. She sat down in her command chair, and waited.

CHAPTER FIVE

On the throne room on Antei, Darth Septimus opened his eyes. There had been no trace of his apprentice. He was convinced now that she was dead.

"My Lord!" came a shout from the corridor. He looked up. "My Lord!" the voice came again. A moment later, two of his Royal Guardsmen came in, holding a man and forcing him to his knees before him. Darth Septimus waved his hand, and they released their grip. The man looked up. "My Lord - the *Pravus* has just come out of hyperspace. It reports heavy casualties, including Darth Coeus!"

The Grand Master smiled. So his plan had worked. However, there was a look in the man's eyes that made his smile wither away. "What is it?" he barked.

Before the man could respond, an explosion rocked the entire throne room, immediately followed by a second explosion. Darth Septimus had trouble staying on his legs, and he saw one of his Guardsmen fall over. "What is this?" he screamed. A third explosion rocked the building, and small pebbles started falling down from the ceiling. The Grand Master looked up, and saw several larger stones come down as well. Instantly, he realized the room's ceiling - and with that probably all the upper stories of the castle - were about to come down on his head. Only a fraction of a second later, he realized the *Pravus* must have opened fire on the castle.

CHAPTER SIX

Aboard the StarDestroyer *Pravus*, Darth Coeus stood looking at the scene before her. It's dorsal side facing planetside, as soon as she had emerged from hyperspace a pre-programmed signal had been sent down to Antei. A small ruse to ease their minds as the *Pravus'* turbo laser batteries had opened fire on the castle where the Grand Master lived and worked. As soon as the batteries opened up, the torpedo launchers also spewed fire as dozens of highly advanced proton torpedoes were slung towards the planet surface. The *Pravus'* crew had programmed the torpedoes for two targets: the castle which housed the Dark Council and the Grand Master, and the adjoining buildings that housed the Grand Master's Royal Guard. Darth Coeus had known these were the main targets: with the Grand Master, the Dark Council and the entire Guard out of the way, the rest of her mission would be so much easier.

In the Force, she sensed the fear from hundreds of minds on the planet surface. She sensed her Master, his thoughts as well overflowing with fear. And anger. Something she had almost never sensed in him - the anger that signified a true Dark Lord. Now, as his life was about to end, it came to him. Finally. But too late, nothing could save him now.

For two hours, the *Pravus* continued firing at the planet surface. Even after the Council Halls had been destroyed, Dempsey had not ordered the cease-fire. She had to be absolutely certain that everyone who could challenge her, everyone who might pose a threat to her, had perished in the attack. Finally, she raised her hand and signalled the cease-fire. She smiled. The attack had been so sudden, no defense at all had been mounted from the planet. The planetary shields, which had been her main concern, had not been raised. Of course they would only have delayed the inevitable, but the surprise attack had been perfect. Not even the warships in orbit of the planet had been able to stop them. Dempsey's control over the Force had grown so strong she had been able to convince even their Jedi Commanders to stay away from the *Pravus*.

Dempsey turned to the young lieutenant. "Prepare a shuttle. It's time to go down there and see who has survived."

CHAPTER SEVEN

The shuttle landed a few miles south of the smoking and burning ruins that had once been the castle that housed the Dark Council. Dempsey stretched out with the Force, but sensed nothing. She wondered if this was only the distance interfering with her abilities, but was certain it wasn't. Either way, she would know soon enough. She stepped onto a speeder, and hit the accelerator controls. The speeder sped away from the shuttle towards the ruins.

Five minutes later, Dempsey stood as close to the ruins as she could get. The rest of the way was barred by smoldering rock, destroyed roads and forests, and burned out remains of all kinds of vehicles. There was no way to get closer. Again, she closed her eyes and stretched out with her senses. She search for any kind of Force disturbances, whether it be Force users alive in there, or their non-Force sensitive workers, but again found nothing. She opened her eyes and smiled. For the second time, she had taken down a Grand Master of the Brotherhood. For the second time, she now claimed the title of Dark Lord of the Sith. And this time, no one would take it away from her....