**A Curious Thing Happened On the Way to the Shadow Academy**

**Antei**

**Shadow Academy**

**37 ABY**

The subterranean cavern was candlelight and shrouded by a deep mist. The new Initiate had been walking downhill for what seemed like hours. No sounds were audible with the exception of the shifting air pressure in the endless tunnel. “How much longer can this madness last?” asked Zagro Fenn .

Hapes was a long way distant now. The path that had taken the young Intelligence Operative of the Hapan Royal Navy from his home-world to Nar Shadda and seemingly every other outpost in Hutt Space had been eventful. His cover ran deep.

Finally the proverbial light began to come into focus. The temperature dipped below scolding hot and humid. Fenn began to jog confidently into the unknown. And, he was greeted by a solitary figure. “Welcome Initiate Fenn. I have been expecting you for some time now” stated the unknown man, coldly.

Unsure of how to proceed and knowing his every action and step was being monitored; Zagro could only continue to utilize the persona he had crafted over the years. “And who the hell are you supposed to be? I somehow agreed to be taken here and all that I have seen so far of this Force magic is tunnels, corridors, and a tiny hanger bay when I got brought in to…wherever and whatever this place is.”

It was now the hooded man’s turn to smirk. “Fenn, this is Antei, our capital if you like. Well, not my capital but that is another story. Perhaps you will see Judecca someday. This is the entrance to the Shadow Academy. In these halls begin the career of all of our kind. More or less.”

“Great. Useful information I am sure. You have not answered my question” demanded Fenn.

The man’s smirk disappeared and agitation could be seen on his brow. “You ask the wrong questions, young one. I am called Krath Priest Koryn Thraagus. What I am is more important. I am the Rollmaster of House Scholae Palatinae. You have been assigned to us, and I to you.”

“Finally, we are getting somewhere. When do we depart for this Judecca?” asked Fenn wistfully.

The Krath Priest smiled at this level of naivety. “We do not depart for Judecca. I will be leaving momentarily once I was able to verify you lived this far and are ready to begin. No, you will be here for as long or as little as you require or desire to be here. Some new initiates stay here for months learning or until they have the aptitude to leave. Some never make it. The choice is yours.”

Initiate Fenn laughed. “Is that supposed to be a challenge?”

The older man smiled yet again. “It is indeed a challenge. Everything you will ever do from this point will be a challenge. You are here to learn our ways surely, but you need to learn what it is you require of yourself and what knowledge you wish to gain. Some only do the minimum in order to join a House and begin their training. Yet, others stay for ages and return regularly for research or even become professors themselves. Power unlimited is available for this willing to take it.”

“Well then…I will see what I come up with…” Fenn trailed off as he glimpsed a class of robed initiates assembling.

“Very well then…until we meet again Zagro. I have a feeling I will be seeing much of you in the future. It isn’t often we take someone of your…background.” With that, Koryn turned and walked away leaving Zagro to ponder the meaning of this place, his future, and his decision.