

**Outside Sith Academy
Valley of Dark Lords
Korriban
Horusset System
Outer Rim**

The body crumpled to the ground. Its detached head bounced and rolled down the slope to the valley floor. The wind blew the Sith Warrior's battle worn cloak as he loomed over the corpse, examining it through the darkened lenses of his helm. The symbols painted on the armor marked the body as having once been a member of the rebel faction. He knew Cotelin's forces had been pushed back, but they still held a temple and a hand full of tombs.

Maelous disengaged his lightsaber and looked up, surveying the area. Bodies were scattered throughout the valley. He could hear the occasional blaster fire or clash of saber blades, but the Valley of the Dark Lords had grown quiet. He knew from the radio chatter that the fight had moved deeper into the valley.

The Aedile smirked to himself as he stepped over the body at his feet. The knight stepped with preternatural grace as he moved around the bodies; revealed in the carnage as he maneuvered his way to the Academy. He was the Sadowan Horseman of Death, after all, and this was his domain.

A trooper popped up from behind a rock and fired at Maelous. The Force flooded him like a crashing wave as he ignited his saber as he brought it up to deflect the bolt just barely. Then ran at an angle to the troopers left, the Force allowing him to move with blinding speed. While he knew the loyalist forces had taken quick control of the battlefield. The One Sith were still on the ground acting as a harassment force. The former Jensaarai came to a sudden stop and threw his saber at his foe. The crimson circle of light arched out to the right before coming back in on the trooper, removing his left arm. The trooper howled in back as his weapon fell to the ground, and he dropped to his knees.

Maelous stepped forward slowly as he approached the screaming man. His hand shot out to his side catching the hilt. Without a word he drove the point of the blood red blade through the center of the downed man's chest then disengaged the blade. The body toppled to the side, kicking up dirt as it landed. The Sith looked down at his wrist mounted holopad and tapped the screen and opened the communication to Naga Sadow's Proconsul as he walked.

"Alchemist, this is Exile," his voice sounding like rusted steel.

“This is Alchemist,” Macron replied, “Why are you not here with our forces?”

“I stayed behind at the Academy to do ‘clean up’,” Maelous said flatly, “I’m going into the structure now.”

The mad man cackled with joy in his ears, “Good. I just knew you would find many things worth keeping there. Just leave something good for me. Once this is finished here I will join you. Alchemist out.”

The communication went silent as Maelous passed through the archway leading into the Academy. He attached his lightsaber to his belt as he stepped across the threshold. A sense of reverence filled the Dark Jedi as he considered how many great practitioners of the Dark Side had stepped through the same arch over the millennia and how much knowledge and power had gathered here. His eyes passed over the cracked statues that lingered on the walls of the ancient corridor as they watched him enter.

The Aedile could feel the Dark Side energy of this place as he stepped into a large lobby like room. It coursed through the very foundation. He ignited a glow rod and affixed it to his armor and took in his surroundings. This was no ordinary building. The energy here had made it something different, almost like a living thing. He drew the Dark Side into him and it flooded every cell of his being. *Could you drowned in the Force*, he wondered for a moment as his bodied cried out for more.

He released the energy and looked around the room. While it was an ancient structure and there was some damage over the years. The dry climate and Dark Side energies, as well as who or whatever had lived in it, had preserved the building well. He eyed one of the corridors that lead deeper into the pyramid and began to walk toward it. Each step landing with calculated precision to keep his movement as quiet as possible.

He moved from room to room finding very little left behind. In one room he found a broken astromech droid forgotten in a corner. In another he found the skeletal remains of a creature he could not identify. Maelous’ exploration of the ruins went on like this for what seemed like hours.

Eventually he found his way to a room filled with large selves. He walked slowly down between the two center most ones. Looking on each one as he passed for anything that may not have been picked over. He reached, what he assumed was, the center of the room. There was a cleared out area with tables, most of which were broken. He turned to his left and walked down

another aisle of shelves. He was a third of the way down when he came to a sudden stop, his eyes staring at the book laying on the shelf.

The Exile's hands gripped the leather bound tome as gently as possible and he quickly dashed back to the tables. He rummaged around for a moment finding one that would stand on it's own and stood it up on it's legs and put the book down. His hands gripped the sides of his helmet and the locks disengaged with a hiss; he removed it and set down on the table to the right of the seemingly ancient book. His fingers carefully opening the book and turning a few blank pages, until he reached the first one with writing. His yellow eyes scan the page, he turned to the next and frowned. He flipped through several pages and scanned again anger crossing his face.

"A receiving log," he sighed.

He started to laugh grabbing his helmet. Then, with a roar, threw the table with a massive push of the Force. It arched across the room where it smashed into one of the shelves and crashed to the floor. Maelous jerked as he heard the familiar hum of a lightsaber. He spun, dropping his helmet as he drew and activated his own saber. A male blue skinned Twi'lek stood between two of the shelves, his own red bladed saber at the ready. He wore no armor and the hood of his cloak was back exposing his face. There was a familiarness to him, but Maelous could not place it.

"Darth Necritus?" the One Sith asked hesitantly.

"He's been dead for years," Maelous hissed, "I killed him."

"Do you not remember? I worked with you and your Master quite a bit before you cut her down. We've been looking for you for a long time."

Memories flooded Maelous' mind. They contradicted everything he believed was real. He began to hear a familiar laugh echo through the chamber. The Sith Warrior looked up causing the Twi'lek to jump.

"I killed him long ago," Maelous whispered, "This cannot be."

He reached out with Force and flung the Twi'lek back into the wall, the unsuspecting being's saber clattering to ground. Maelous stepped forward slowly continually sending hammer like blows of Force at the pinned Twi'lek.

“I killed him, he died by my hand!” he yelled. A surge of Force energy bursting forth and crushing the already beaten humanoid. The Aedile stopped pushing and the carcass fell to the floor. Maelous turned and retrieved his helmet and placed it on his head. As the locks whirled, he heard a familiar voice.

“Good,” it said, “very good.”

Maelous spun in a circle. “I killed you,” he screamed. The voice began to laugh again, a deep sinister laugh this time. Maelous stopped and looked around the empty room realizing the voice was in his head.