

Red Fury: That Which Hides in the Darkness
Anima - 11708



Well, this is just great now isn't it?

Anima almost put his thoughts to words as he pressed tightly against the wall of the corridor. The cloak that normally lay firmly over his cybernetic arm was missing, scraps of torn fabric still clasped at his shoulder. His dark brown hair fell like a curtain over the mismatched gaze of his eyes, his Umbaran legacy allowing the Rollmaster of Naga Sadow to see within the darkness of the corridors as easily as if they were fully lit by the lights that had been disabled. Whether that wonderful addition to the audacity of the current situation was of *friendly* origin or not mattered little in the grand scheme of things.

No, what mattered now for the Sadowan was the impending sense of dread that loomed over him. He hated when that happened. Nothing good comes for those gifted in the Force when they 'get a bad feeling about this', so to speak.

Didn't help matters that he happened to have bumped into a Palatinae he knew absolutely nothing about. Then again, Anima didn't get out much unless it meant to grant a target the gift of death, and for that he didn't need to know more beyond their habits and locations.

A flash of gold from the opposite end of the corridor caught his attention, the slight motion and his heightened eyesight the only reason it didn't go entirely unnoticed. Anima turned his head ever so slightly, signalling with his taloned hand to inform Calindra Hejaran that the way forward was clear. He may know nothing in depth about the Protector that served Scholae - who wasn't even a registered member of either of their Houses for that matter - but what he did know in the short time of their meeting was her knack for stealth.

That was good, it meant he didn't have to kill her on account of sheer idiocy. Honestly now, who thinks stomping around announcing your location was a valid strategy when lost in enemy territory? There was a time and place for frontal assaults, and in the darkness of the Red Fury's base what was needed now was silence.

Especially with that insufferable sense of foreboding hanging over Anima's head. As Hejaran slinked past to move ahead, the next phase of the labyrinthian layout of the damned pirates' home, Anima quickly looked her over. Her muscles were tense as she moved, ready to react in an instant. That was good, it meant she didn't trust him at all.

As well she shouldn't.

In terms of weapons, he could only see the standard training saber that adorned the majority of the journeymen within the Brotherhood, and a blaster. She wouldn't be of much use in a full scale confrontation.

Creeeeeeek-kshaw!

Anima's head snapped around to glare into the darkness behind them. There was no mistaking it, they weren't as alone as he had hoped. The Sadowan had been right to take stock of the sense of dread he had felt.

He hated when he was right.

A glint of metal was revealed to his Umbaran eyes and that was all Anima needed as the hairs along his spine and neck tingled uncomfortably and his skin began the crawl. All of his sense lead to one, simple to follow solution.

Now would be a good time to run.

Anima's right hand stretched out to his side, hand wide open as he tugged on the Force like a rope and summoned *Vestigium of Duriel* from the clasp at his hip. The comfortable weight of his saber slapped against his palm as his fingers closed tightly around the hilt, his thumb toggling the activation switch. Cerulean light cast the corridor in a pale glow, more readily revealing the features of their hunter - and be assured that their pursuer could be nothing else. Anima wasted no time, bringing the deadly blade across in a vicious slash that cleanly severed the lower half of several pipes that adorned the corridor beside him. Twisting his wrist, the Sith redirected the momentum of his strike and brought the blade back across the pipes to complete their separation. Sparks and glowing alloys answered his actions, adding a mixture of yellow and hot orange to the colours painting the world around them.

Calindra had already spun about, reacting to the sudden violence behind her. The Human squinted to help focus her vision but held her ground, not nearly dumb enough to move towards an unknown threat. The ghastly mixture of light washed over the menacing form of what could be none other than the Pirate King they had received no intel on - that is to say, no intel aside from the legends that had made their way to the clans, but who put stock in legends?

Apparently, smart people that are fond of living to old age, that's who.

As the newly formed debris from Anima's attack succumbed to gravity, the Rollmaster tapped into the dark reservoir at his core and lashed out with the Force. His power gripped the debris and launched it forward with vicious speed, forming a strike of energy and physical threats that cascaded down the corridor towards their robotic hunter.

The pair could have sworn that synthetic laughter followed in the wake of the attack, but neither had stuck around to see what the result was of Anima's quick actions. Running, after all, was still the most fortuitous plan when confronted with an enemy without knowledge of both venue and opponent.

Calindra had the advantage of a head start, being further ahead at the onset of their sprint. As the path twisted and split ahead, Anima had little issue keeping pace with the Palatinae but held no desire to take the lead. It was easier to track that which he followed, then that which followed behind him after all. At the very least, she would make for a distraction in the event of conflict before she died - either by the enemy or his own hand.

What he hadn't accounted for - and what he couldn't have without knowing the woman that had become his begrudging companion - was the less than trustworthy self-preservation instincts that went along with Calindra's scoundrel nature. He felt a tremor of warning in the Force almost the same instant that Hegaran took aim with her blaster, a blaster he hadn't seen her pull out earlier during the initial confrontation. Thankfully, she hadn't aimed the barrel in his direction but nonetheless she began squeezing the trigger repeatedly. Streaks of red plasma screeched to life and sparked against the wall of the corridor.

It was far too late when the confusion gave way to realization as a command console exploded under duress. A previously unseen barrier came slamming down between the Sadowan and Palatinae. Anima reacted quickly, slamming on the metaphorical brakes as his momentum carried him into the newly formed wall. He hit it hard, managing to bite his lip in the process and bringing forth a vicious growl as the coppery taste filled his mouth. He didn't need to reach out in the Force to know that Calindra was still at a full sprint, putting more space between them.

So that's the way it is?

Anima scoffed a little, but at the very least he could respect her survival instincts. He turned slowly, feeling the sense of dread once more lurching its way towards him. Of course the Pirate King wasn't chasing them at full speed, he had all the time in the world.

"Don't worry, blondey... When I get out of here I'll kill you just the same. Just know that when I do, the terms of engagement were set by you here and now." Anima stated flatly as his lightsaber hissed to life in his hand. Anima stood resolute, his stance almost lazy as he fixed his gaze on the darkness at the edge of his vision.

Running was never as fun, after all.