**Arena Training Grounds,**

**Myrmidon,**

**Aeotheran,**

**39 ABY**

Sith Warrior Lexiconus stood in the eye of the stadium as he channelled his concentration to prepare for the coming battle. Centering himself on the blood and sand, the Quarren’s cyan eyes locked onto a blast door ahead. As the shadows hovered and slithered on the ceiling, Lexic’s robes whipped in the cool wind. Nestled into the charcoal waistcloth of his restricting robes, the Quarren lifted his hands to chest level and called the lightsaber hilt up into his open hands whilst remaining calm. Then the cold steel door dashed into the walls and hid from the Soldier that marched inside. Donned in the infamous Blackguard armour he treasured throughout his career, the Sith Knight Daedric walked closer to his opponent and stood at arm’s length hesitantly. In a synchronous and mirrored fashion, the duo slowly bowed low in a sign of deep respect familiar with the duels of old. Like a flash of lightning, Daedric commanded his lightsaber from the armour’s belt and intractably charged forward. Lexic countered the aggressive strike with impeccable speed as if the blade was always there, and hammered down continuous strikes upon the weak cross guard from the Sith Knight.

*Peace is a lie, there is only passion.*

The pair spoke the first line of the mantra as the battle was consumed in a storm of orange cinders and flashes of light. In a great acrobatic show of quick counters, vicious slams of blade against blade and growls from both duelists as the pair seemed locked into the ongoing struggle. However while Daedric’s expression was that of an angered rancor, tough lines forming at the edges of his eyes and his teeth bared in a fierce snarl, Lexic represented the symbolism of peace in this battle.

The Quarren’s weaker hand was barely on the hilt, as if to demonstrate how the grip was done. His eyes darted as he studied figure of Daedric, observing his form and testing his strength with each successive counter. Keeping on the sandy line they had formed, the duo simultaneously countered one another, switching places as Daedric rolled beneath Lexic’s backflip.

*Through passion, I gain strength.*

The combatants spoke the second line in concert this time their voices harmonizing as one as the Dark Side of the Force ebbed and flowed from their bodies and connected in the anger-fuelled battle. Swift and sturdy on his feet, Daedric dug the metal of his boots into the sand and began to pound the Quarren’s stalwart defenses with powerful strikes. The Sith Knight began to notice the flaws and openings in Lexic’s defense and was determined to seize advantage of them. Daedric’s form was now becoming more akin to a dance, his lightsaber held strongly in one hand while his anger amplified his swing strength. The Dark Side ignited a hidden passion in the spirit of the Sergeant as he flowed with strikes and counters against Lexic’s rigid defense, the Quarren only managing to hold back, rather than meet the attack in kind.

Then Daedric did something the Quarren found very foolish. As he brought another strike down upon his opponent. He swept his leg around and weakly kicked at the Equite’s thigh. Instinctively Lexic responded by kneeling to lock Daedric’s leg in place, before slamming into his opponent’s frail kneecap with a well placed punch. As the Sith knight let out a wail, Lexic quickly swapped his lightsaber to his weaker hand and drove his fist hard into the kidney of the Journeyman.

*Through strength, I gain power.*

The next line echoed against the walls, Daedric had a wheezy accent as he recovered from the Echani assault. Lexic walked backwards and awaited for the assault to continue, keeping his stance calm and centred. By comparison the Sergeant was impatient, rushing back into the fight by thrashing his lightsaber against Lexic’s relentlessly. Instead of countering the attacks from Daedric, the Quarren parried the ruby blade away and slid his leathery fist into the ex-Blackguard’s face. Each strike to the face just served to anger the Soldier more, his blade flaying and hammering wildly at Lexic’s rigid parries, the heavy cross punches increasing with speed. The Quarren quickly slammed his fist into the solar plexus of Daedric, windinghim and causing him to keel over slightly, Lexic used this opportunity to roll over the Knight’s back and behind him.

*Through power, I gain victory.*

Without breaking combat, the Sith intoned the next line together, as their hatred, anger and betrayal fueled the fight. It was almost as the spirits of ancient Sith were raised from extinction to power the combatants.The Sith Knight roared out in anger as he swung his ruby blade in an unalterable arc at Lexic, who managed to dodge the incoming blow. With wide and violent arcs of circular crossing and slashing towards the Quarren, he had to pick up his patterns and defend himself properly now.

By catching Daedric’s blade against his own and pushing it effortlessly aside, Lexic began to dominate and twist the strengths to work in his favour. With each strike from the Quarren’s lightsaber, the Sith Knight weakened. His knees buckled and found it more difficult to continue to defend much longer as he slumped onto his knees in the sand. The sweat dripping and moistening the honey dust below him as he gasped for breath, his vibrantly golden eyes pulsating slowly.

*Through victory, my chains are broken.*

The chants were now in a quietly muttered tone, whispers of their former self as if into the ear of a lover. Lexic was turned facing away from his opponent who was fixed kneeling in the sand, as he tightly gripped the lightsaber hilt across his lap. His eyes slowly glanced up and pierced the back of Lexic’s neck, a venom of hatred and fury flowing through him like a bantha on stampede. It needed to flow freely, unchained by the shackles of this ‘master against the apprentice’ pretensethey had beenusing in this scenario. Without a second thought Daedric leapt and bound across the sand, pulling the scarlet blade high, ready to cleave the Equite in two. Lexic heard the whirring of his opponent’s blade from behind, forcing him to turn quickly on his heels and meet the attempted blow with his own weapon.

*The Force shall set me free!*

As though lightning had striken the clash between both Sith blades, cinders and splinters of superheated sand exploded from the crossing centre. Daedric’s hands were torn from the hilt as his strength was usurped, the blade spinning uncontrollably and crashing against the wall of the sparring room. Their voices even boomed after this explosion and echoed across the four walls.

Lexic deactivated his weapon and tucked it back into his waistcloth before extending his arm out to call Daedric’s weapon to his open palm. The Quarren slowly ran his hands over the weapon, studying its design and admiring the craftsmanship involved in the minor details. He had to admit that he was quite impressed. Lexic flicked the hilt back at Daedric who almost caught it mid-air before it bouncing from his gauntlet and slid across the sands.

“Your patterns are improving, you have so much anger and emotion to tap into. But you lack the strength needed for this form. You need to improve your body, to build on your muscular nature as a soldier and in time you will become an unstoppable Sith. Do you really need the blaster when your form is so precise?” Lexic said as he beckoned the lightsaber back to his hand and planted it in Daedric’s palm firmly.

“Using a lightsaber at range is difficult, if at first you cannot deflect the blaster fire you’re stuck with dodging the bolts and that’s not Djem So. I need to practice this far more and master it, in order to give up my blaster. It’s also a backup for when I lose my lightsaber.” Daedric replied with a hint of salt in his attitude. The mature Knight was quite fed up of learning from a younger member, but it was necessary in order to advance and become the Commander he craved to be.

“The duelling has concluded for now. I have some research to attend to, so i’ll be back another day to continue this.” The Quarren walked out of the arena set for them and disappeared into the alleys of the big city.

**A few hours later…**

The cantina within the headquartered citadel of House Shar Dakhan bustled with hungry members and tired eaters, all familiar faces for the Quarren who was not exactly gleeful in joining the crowd. Despite his distaste for the sentient life, Lexic admired order and a schedule so he continued to eat here as a way of being noticed and professional. The Quarren strode towards a set of double doors that led into the kitchen and pushed inside, his tentacles retracting as he met the icy air inside. Passing the busy staff of chefs and assistants who drolled away as washers, cleaners and general tenders Lexic came to the giant fridge at the centre of the back wall. It was earlier that day he decided to set aside something special to devour, and since he had a sweet tooth he chose the best dish served cool. With foundations of a crumbly and chocolate cookie dough, sat a rounded and thick mixture of cheesecake that was lightly hinted with lemon, strawberry and vanilla. The top was flamboyantly dressed with iced gems of cream, sprinkled with chiselled dark chocolate sprinkles and dressed with strawberry slices. A dish so perfect, it forced Lexic to salivate from the thought of it while his stomach grumbled and growled in demand to be fed. Then Lexic quickly opened the fridge door, looked up to the top shelf where he kept the slice, pushed the jars of jam aside that hid his piece so perfectly and found...nothing?

Lexic frowned and pushed more jars around, concerned about where his heaven for tastebuds had disappeared. He checked the shelf below the top and the ones underneath it, pushing and removing the items that were cooled in here in search of just a small plate with a cake sitting on top. Nothing even similar was found, apart from a plate with cookies under a cover. Perplexed as to where his dish had ran off to, and who might have aided said dish in their escape, the Quarren approached the head chef of the kitchen and tugged him to face the Sith.

“You! Who took the cake from the fridge!?” The Quarren demanded, his prehensile tentacles cocked back as if they’re ready to strike. The chef mumbled and stumbled against the grip of his customer, unsure whether to answer or run but he eventually gathered himself a voice.

“I don’t know, that wasn’t here when I started my shift!” Lexic was pleased by this reply and threw the chef to the ground in disgust of the Human, as he stormed from the kitchen in search of his prized meal. He slammed his hands against the kitchen doors and they buckled against the walls as he entered the cantina, doing his best to gather the attention of the culprit who stole his private creation. Then a familiar face appeared next to him, the blue Twi’lek jumped a little as she was exiting the cantina. She turned to face the Quarren and tilted her head slightly to allow her Lekku instantly droop, whilst she spoke.

“We’ve been getting reports of some,” Tasha paused, “very angry behaviour on your part.”

Concerned, Lexic replied, “what?”

“Threatening letters, refusal to meet deadlines. Apparently people now call you *mental*.” She chuckled at the remark.

Lexic also chuckled, proudly. “Yeah!”

“We want you to speak to a psychiatrist.” Tasha looked into his eyes with a concerned expression, nodding softly. The Quarren rubbed his forehead as he realised the issue here.

“Oh no. You don’t understand, ugh. This is so silly,” Lexic paused for a second and composed himself. “This is all just because of a cheesecake.” Tasha giggled in confusion.

“A cheesecake?”

“Yeah, yeah. You see, I made this amazing Strawberry cheesecake. My secret is that I... add a cookie dough base at the base; I call it the *cookie plateau.*” The duo chuckle and Lexic guides Tasha into the kitchen to show her the crimescene.

“Anyway, I put my cheesecake in here, and…” Tasha laughs dismissively.

“Oh, oh you know what?” The Quarren frowned and looked at her giggle.

“What?”

“I believe I ate that, I’m sorry.” She smiled innocently.

“You ate my cheesecake?” Tasha began to tense up.

“It was a simple mistake. It could happen to anyone.”

“Oh really? You confused it with your *own* strawberry cheesecake with a *cookie plateau?*” Lexic’s hand instinctively cusped the hilt of his lightsaber.

“No, I…” The Quarren interrupted. “Did you perhaps see a note on top of it?” Tasha saw his hand on the lightsaber and froze.

“There may have been some sugar paper...or a limerick of some kind…” Lexic’s gills flared as she felt the Dark Side fuel his anger.

“That was **my** cheesecake?”

“Now calm down, um...come look in Sang’s office, some of it may still be in the trash.” Tasha stuttered as she fiddled with her own lightsaber. Lexic in shocked staggered back and tried to grip the wall in an attempt to support his weakening body.

“What?” The Sith Warrior also stuttered.

“Well, it was quite large. I had to throw most of it away.” The Twi’lek slowly began to back away, as onlookers watched in a tense silence, also beginning to slowly stand and leave.

“You…” Lexic rubbed his face and gills in an impatient mixture of sadness and anger, “...you threw my cheesecake away?” Tasha nodded slowly and gulped.

“**My** cheesecake?” The Quarren began to raise his voice, which caused the patrons of the cantina to scatter, as the kitchen staff disappeared from their work.

“**My cheescake!?**” With the lightsaber firmly in hand, Lexic slowly walked towards Tasha as she lifted her own lightsaber and ignited it ready for the wrath of the *squid head*. There was no warning as the currant blade delivered wide angles of fearsome thrashes. His advancing blade relentlessly smashed into Tasha’s weak parries in comparison to the Sith Warrior’s. The Twi’lek tried her best to hold her own as the Quarren forced her to continue stepping backwards and towards the tables in the middle of the cantina. Whilst Tasha reversed the demanding attacks of Lexic, he lunged cross-punches into her gut and kidneys not unfamiliar in the Echani art. Tasha used the Force to send her own strong punch into the stomach of the Quarren, then barrelled backwards over the table behind her. As he shrugged the weak blow off, Lexic leapt and glides over the table as his blade descended in a chopping maneuver that crushed Tasha’s arms. She held on this long and that commendable to her, but she was panting heavily and sweating profusely, the young Knight needed an escape plan and fast.

Her attention was distracted as Lexic extended his arm and lifted the Twi’lek into the air by the neck, the Dark Side crushing and strangling the chords of her neck whilst she kicked and squirmed. The Sith Warrior then flicked his hand sent her flying across the cantina and against the blast doors that led into the courtyard of the Citadel. Tasha took this opportunity to save herself and stormed towards the doors, using her body weight to push them wide open. As they flung wide and greeted her with the amber glow of the sunset in the horizon, she was pounded hard in the back by a hard force, similar to a fist. The Knight tumbled and rolled out and into the paving of the courtyard, her eyes darted towards the doors to see Lexic gliding closer on the wind. The Twi’lek forced herself to stand and take her weapon once more, her energy depleting to nothing as her opponent couldn’t simply be stopped by herself. She needed to find an ally and quickly.

“I will have your head on my wall, Versea!” Lexic roared out, using her surname in a mocking tone. The Quarren wasted no time once he was within arm's range of her, and delivered quick and devastating jabs to her knees, her kidneys and the side of her ribs. He executed swift blows after blows that causes Tasha to whimper and shriek out in pain, as her lightsaber was knocked away from her hand with a flick of Lexic’s wrist. He also tossed his own lightsaber away by this point and began a full frontal assault on the Twi’leks exhausted and battered body, devoting a barrage of fists, grip moves and shoves that felt like arrows piercing her skin. Then as a finish to the flurry and a complete surprise to Tasha, Lexic swung his fist around with a built up strength that slammed directly into her face and sent her tumbling off the cliff face that the Citadel sat on. Her cerulean body soared down the cliff like a meteor and met the lake below with a crushing splash, the sound echoing up and beyond his ears. With a soft and pleased sigh, Lexic rubbed his face and recalled his lightsaber back to him. He collected his breath and began to turn back into the citadel in order to collect some sort of food left to eat. Once he turned back his chest was met with the cold and sharp steel from the dagger of the Aedile.

“Picking on Twi’leks again, Lexic? We can’t have it.” Inarya Tiberius smirked as she slowly twisted and slithered the dagger deeper, as she guided him back to the cliff top. With blood splattering from his mouth and gills, Lexic struggled to stay standing and his arms were exhausted too much to do anything. As if toying with her former colleague, Inarya carefully pushed the dagger against his chest and let go which caused the Quarren to collapse backwards and dive down towards his ironic death. The cold and stinging sensation from the winds around his body numbed the pain from the dagger somewhat until the force of the uplift yanked the steel from his chest. As he soared further down to plummet into the concrete force of the water, Lexic’s thoughts took him to the making of the cheesecake in question and how he patiently created the unique flavours and layers held within. He dreamed of the first taste from that dessert to grace his tastebuds and explode with warmth in his mouth. Then like a clash of lightning against his ear, the Quarren smashed into the lake surface.

**Into the dusk of night…**

As the consciousness slowly crept into existence for the mortally wounded Quarren, the purification of oxygen in his gills instinctively began to channel the saltwater. His strained and bruised eyes struggled to open as he lay on the coral of the lake, whilst fish and octopus nibbled at his clothing. The Sith took his time to summon the secrets of the Dark Side onto his body, and used it like a needle & thread to patch his wounds, snarling at the pain in his chest. It took little effort to patch up the open wound on his chest but the injuries inside his body needed to be addressed before they infected him. His concentration on his harsh injury close to his heart last for several hard hours, in deep meditation underneath the waters of the lake whilst the moon soared above the ripples. It was here that Lexic could reflect clearly on his purpose for the next days to come, and it seemed like the moon was a constant reminder for him. His career in this Clan was something he was unsure of, with the latest events showing him how people think of him it was simple to see others did not agree with his frustration. Daedric as a soldier of war and obedience did not have a problem with the furious anger that the Quarren gave off. It seemed infact that the ex-Blackguard enjoyed combatting with it. The ordeal with Tasha was different however, as she wasn’t a person to become angered whenever she desired, this obviously was shown in the lack of training in Djem So. Finally the quick and precise movements from his former Aedile, the one person he thought in this world he could relate to on the issues of anger did not hesitate to plant a dagger in his chest and send him off to his imminent death. All of these trials, all of this conflict and strife just for a single slice of a cookie dough-based strawberry cheesecake.

But it was his cheesecake.

That was the constant message in his mind that always brought his anger back into play, the betrayal of others towards him into firstly trying to backstab him, stealing his possessions and finally assassinating him in a cold fashion. This is what fuelled his hatred towards the sentient beings of this House and most likely the wider Clan, it was something Lexic needed to retain in his heart. He would never trust others before himself, and this is what prominently kept him tied to the rigid Sith ways.

*Through passion, I gain strength.*

This part of the Sith Code is what flashed before his eyes like the visions of a prophet, the words stood out with light aided by the moon, and the chatter from the sea life within the lake. They all synchronously said one verse whilst his mind finished with the remaining part of the quote, a strengthening reminder that fuelled his healing abilities on his body. The moon was passing over the crater and the aura of the sunrise shimmered and struck across the sky like the colours of a bumblebee. The warmth of this light filtered into the cool and calm waters of the lake, then against the gills of the Quarren as he reminisced into the past and the reasons of why he retained in the Brotherhood and this specific clan. His memory went far back to the moment Cethgus offered him a place in Naga Sadow, standing on the raging and stormy deserts of Korriban. Their eyes set on the new horizon which sat above the Valley of the Dark Lords, and that very same aura of sunrise climbed from the nothingness of space. A bumblebee aura, soft, warm and real. This is why he stayed with the members of the clan, they were real and physically capable of interacting with him. Unlike the animals who were at first scared of him, whom he had to dominate their minds once but now forfeited that power. Unlike the mystical realm of the plant kingdom that he could touch on a spiritual level, but could never receive the same reaction back from them. Not unless they were induced by the Force. This was precisely why he enjoyed the company of others, for every action there was a reaction, a relationship. Then it dawned on the Quarren like the sunrise covered the cold and harsh waves of the lake.

Lexic enjoyed sentience.

The Sith Warrior felt his wounds had healed enough, he lifted himself from his coral throne and swam towards the embankment of the water. Lexic slowly rose on to the cool sandy shores, his robes tattered and stripped from his upper half as his boots disappeared into the murky depths of the water. Lexic’s gills then retracted back into their dormant state once his head reach the warm winds of air and he ascended up the beach towards civilisation. The reflection below the waters had really sunk into philosophy this time, to think he wanted to be around other sentient life forms made the Quarren feel contempt with life in general. It was like a sensation of relief pulsated throughout his body from the heart, as he met the stone steps that led into the Hydroponic facility under Seng Karash. Lexic shook the water from his skin and robes, clenching it from the fabric parts. He then ascended further into the facility in order to find an exit. An employee of the facility quickly came to his aid and looked the Sith Warrior slowly up and down in pure disgust.

“Ew! Did you contaminate our water with your presence!?” The man said as he continued to lock his shoulders and grimace. With a soft sigh Lexic slowly rubbed neck, and then his anger returned. In haste the Quarren snapped his arm out and gripped the throat of the employee with the strength of the Force lifting him from the ground. Choking and levitating as the Dark Side ensnared him, Lexic flicked his wrist quickly and snapped the neck of the insulting man. The Sith dropped the body and continued to find the exit of this facility, so he could eventually reach the citadel kitchens and eat.

“At least plants don’t talk back to you, ah well. Fun while it lasted.” Lexic affirmed to himself, he gave off a confident chuckle to laugh off the Light Side thoughts from the lake. Now how tasty could stuffed vegetables be?