

Title: Heat of the moment

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Authors Note: The DJB sources vary in their opinion of Vapaad, so I have chosen to use the Lightsaber Guide as my reference. Personal interpretation fills in the gaps.

Blade laid in a relaxed spread eagle on the cool floor of her dimly lit quarters, surrounded by lit incense candles that made her room smell like lilacs. She didn't move at all, except for the noticeable rise and fall of her chest as she took each breath. She wasn't asleep, but rather far away in a world of her own imagination. A world that she used to great effect during meditation as it allowed her to easily represent her current state of emotions. Blade had not been the sort of person who meditated a lot, but her desire to learn Vapaad had changed all of that. She had embarked on a journey to walk a razor thin line, between completely losing control of her emotions and Vapaad's controlled channeling of emotions to fuel her fight. Some in the Sith Order would consider the latter as being rife with contradictions, but it was her belief that a lack of self-control more often than not lead to death. To that end, she dedicated her life to pushing herself to the limits of her control, but never further. Every day was a test of this principle, and today was just another day that ended in failure.

Blade suppressed these errant thoughts and focused on the task at hand, regaining self-control through meditation. Every few moments, she imagined that a blood red droplet would dribble off the curved surface of her body, revealing a bright blue interior under the blood red coat. The red coat represented unadulterated rage, and the blue represented rational control of the body. It was very much like melting off the first layer of a candle in order to get to a look at the second. Sometimes, the bright blue streaks revealed by the droplets would stay blue and other times they would turn red again. The drops pooled on the ground, and moved into small receptacles inlaid into the floor. It could be saved for later, when Blade needed it most. For now, Blade focused on keeping the surface of her body blue, the goal being to purge her consciousness of the blood red coat altogether.

She had sparred with a fellow Acolyte earlier in the day, and had pushed herself as far as the fundamentals of Vapaad would allow. There were moments in the fight that she felt as if she was a steam engine, using her passions and urge to win as fuel for her attacks. It was simply sublime, even if her control of it faded in and out. It was during one of those moments, where she lost some control, that her opponent viciously goaded her as he reveled in his acts of callous, unnecessary murder. He even mimicked his victims' cries as they plead for mercy. She completely lost control of her emotions, and Vapaad turned into pure unadulterated rage. In a normal state this wouldn't have happened, but she was now feeding her furnace with explosive rage, which created a volatile end result. She rushed her opponent in a blind rage only to find an insulting cut to the face, several bruises, and her face smushed down into the mat with a sword to her neck. She still remembered the smug look on her opponent's face as he held her life in his hands, his arrogant attitude palpable.

Blade's meditation exercise wasn't going so well as she recounted these details, but she knew that it would help her come to terms with a humiliating defeat. Failure, in whatever form it took, was an excellent teacher that would be key in her fight for self-control. She struggled against her passions, attempting to release them from her body for the time being. She pulled in memories of sparring with her father to help her focus, reliving her memories of the lilac smell of his dojo and his admonishments whenever she lost control. It didn't always make sense to her why this helped, perhaps she just wanted to prove to her father she was worthy of the title of

warrior. Her father had always preached self-control, and Blade more often than not felt as if her entire life was a fight to achieve that goal. It didn't help being a Zeltron, whose emotions often ruled the day, but her parents never let her use that excuse, nor would she.

Time passed slowly, the candles casting long shadows on the walls. Her body was half blue now, streams of red falling off her body into pools at her side. It wouldn't be long now before she was in control again, and her breathing was already in a relaxed rhythm. Each time she pushed herself she found improvement in her ability to walk that dangerous line, and it gave her hope. It would take a while, but she was optimistic that she could do it. It was either that or die at the hands of another, which proved to be good motivation for improvement. If she meditated everyday to remove excess rage that was harmful, she believed that she was capable of self-control in the face of terrible, pointless injustices. She promised herself to remain vigilant, and one day she would conquer self-control in order to master Vapaad.